



**COALITION OF
OREGON SCHOOL
ADMINISTRATORS**

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Date: March 13, 2025
To: House Committee on Revenue
From: Morgan Allen, COSA
Subject: Support for House Bill 2953A - 11% Special Education Cap

Chair Nathanson, Vice Chairs Walters and Reschke, and Members of the House Committee on Revenue

On behalf of the Coalition of Oregon School Administrators (COASA) and our 3,000 members statewide, we want to share our appreciation for today's discussion about special education funding within the State School Fund (SSF).

2025 Is the Time to Invest in Special Education Funding

Our members were very pleased with Governor Kotek's budget proposal for the State School Fund of \$11.36 billion for the 2025-27 biennium. The changes the Governor has proposed to the Current Service Level (CSL) calculation are a much more accurate estimate of the inflationary costs that school districts and ESDs expect in the next budget cycle. It has also cleared the path for today's hearing about investments in our system of public education.

This House Education Committee's passage of House Bill 2140 to implement key parts of the CSL update was the first phase of our collective work to support students in 2025. Today's hearing is the beginning of phase two of that work - finally addressing our outdated, inadequate, and inequitable funding models to support our students with disabilities. After listening to the presentation last week from ODE on Special Education funding, it is clear that the time to take action is this Session in order to close a \$750 million biennial gap in special education funding.

Our members support raising or possibly eliminating the 11% Special Education Cap in the State School Fund, significantly increasing the High Cost Disability Account appropriation, and investing in our Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education and Regional Inclusive Services to meet the needs of the children and families who utilize these critical programs.

The most exciting part of today's hearing is the broad based coalition of parents, advocates for students with disabilities, educators, non-profit organizations and education system partners.



that have come together around a common agenda for Special Education Funding. In more than 18 years of K-12 advocacy, I have never seen so many system partners, who sometimes have divergent priorities, agree to unite for one common purpose and goal. I have submitted a copy of our Special Education Funding Coalition one-pager to OLIS and urge you to take a moment to review it.

House Bill 2953A and the Need for Additive Funding

As the number of students in Oregon schools who are eligible for special education services continues to grow, it is clear that one of the most antiquated and inequitable components of the SSF is the 11% cap on funding for special education - it was established in 1991 after the passage of Measure 5.

The percentage of students utilizing special education services in our state is approaching 15% and it is clear that we need to add hundreds of millions of dollars to the State School Fund to truly meet the charge of serving every student equitably. Absent this change, school districts will continue to move money from their general fund to cover the shortfall for these critical services and supports.

We urge any discussion of raising the 11% Special Education Cap not to overlook the need to account for the costs of the additional weights. And if we must make tough choices regarding special education investments due to limited resources, we urge the Legislature not to forget to provide funding for the 11% Special Education Cap Waiver. Without accounting for this expenditure, we will continue to underfund the true costs to provide services to our students with disabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. I would be happy to answer any questions for the Committee.