

March 13, 2025

Joint Subcommittee on Education
Oregon State Legislature

Subject: Support for an Amendment to SB 5515 to Fully Fund Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education

Dear Members of the Subcommittee,

I am writing on behalf of the Clackamas Education Service District to urge you to support the increased funding for Early Intervention (EI) and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) programs in our state, **particularly through the amendment of SB 5515 to allocate \$432.8 million** for these critical services. As someone who cares deeply about the future of our children and the well-being of families in Clackamas County and across our great state, I believe it is crucial that we ensure all young children, especially those with delays and disabilities, receive the support they need to thrive to their fullest potential.

Early intervention is a proven, cost-effective strategy that helps children with disabilities develop essential skills during the most formative years of their lives. Providing timely support to help children develop essential communication, social and cognitive skills, EI/ECSE programs significantly improve their readiness for kindergarten and reduce the need for costlier interventions later in life. Studies consistently show that children who receive early intervention are less likely to require expensive special education services in the future, thus saving the state money in the long run. For every \$1 invested in these services, we save \$7 to \$17 in future educational and social costs.

However, despite the clear benefits, due to lack of funding children are currently facing increased wait times for services or limited services. Without increased investment in EI/ECSE, children are at risk of falling behind and not receiving the support to which they have a legal right to and are necessary to succeed.

The amendment to SB 5515 that would allocate \$432.8 million for EI/ECSE is a critical step toward addressing these issues. It will ensure that children in need of early intervention services can receive timely and effective support. Increased funding is not just an investment in the future of individual children but is fiscally responsible and morally just to fulfill Oregon's obligation to **these youngsters' legal rights.**

I respectfully ask that you support the amendment to SB 5515 and advocate for the increased allocation of \$432.8 million for EI/ECSE. Every child deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential, and it is through your leadership that we can make this a reality.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter. I look forward to your support in ensuring that all children in our state receive the services they need to succeed.

Sincerely,

Rick Larson
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