



March 15, 2025

Dear Members of the Joint Subcommittee on Education,

I am writing to urge your support for increased funding for Regional Inclusive Services through Senate Bill 5515. As a Special Education Administrator and an Occupational Therapist, I work closely with specialists providing services to students with low incidence disabilities in Central Oregon.

The services we provide enable students with cerebral palsy to have the specialized wheelchair needed to get from class to class. Our services allow autistic students to learn the social skills required to participate alongside their peers. Students with vision impairment get access to braille and other tactile learning materials so that they can have the same learning opportunities as the student in the next seat.

The funding for Regional Inclusive Services has remained unchanged since 2009, when adjusted for inflation. The population we serve has increased by about 45% since 2019. Our ability to provide quality services to students with autism, orthopedic impairment, deaf/hard of hearing, traumatic brain injury, and vision impairment is significantly strained by this gap in funding.

By removing barriers for our most vulnerable students, these services are crucial to ensure that all students in Oregon have access to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). While our specialists are exceptional and deliver high quality services, it is clear that our current funding level is unsustainable to maintain the quality of services needed for our students in the long term. A reexamination of the funding structure is essential. Without additional funding, students with disabilities will face significant barriers to receiving the education they are legally and ethically entitled to.

SB5515 is a step in the right direction to ensure our students receive the specialized services they need in order to achieve meaningful inclusion in their schools, achieve their educational goals, and prepare for life beyond school.

I appreciate your leadership and commitment to ensuring all students, regardless of ability, receive a high-quality education. I respectfully ask for your support of SB5515.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katie-Ann Kailey".

Katie-Ann Kailey
Special Programs Administrator
High Desert Education Service District