

Submitter: Zachary Steele
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1572

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Zachary Steele. I serve as an elected school board member for Dallas School District 2, and I am submitting this testimony in my individual capacity, not on behalf of the board or district as a whole.

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 1572.

My perspective on this bill is shaped not only by my role in school governance, but also by my family. My wife is a special education educator here in Oregon, and through her work I see firsthand both the incredible dedication of our educators and the growing challenges they face in classrooms that are increasingly difficult to manage safely and effectively. I deeply respect the need for inclusive practices, trauma-informed care, and appropriate supports for students with complex needs. At the same time, I believe those goals must coexist with safe, functional learning environments for all students and staff.

As a school board member in Dallas School District 2, I regularly hear from teachers and administrators who feel caught between expectations and reality. They are responsible for maintaining order, protecting students, and delivering instruction, yet too often lack clear, workable authority to address repeated disruptive or unsafe behaviors unless an incident reaches an extreme threshold. This disconnect has real consequences: lost instructional time, escalating behavior, staff burnout, and, in some cases, educators choosing to leave the profession altogether.

Senate Bill 1572 directly addresses this gap. The bill provides teachers with clear authority to remove a student who repeatedly interferes with instruction, while also requiring structured safeguards to ensure fairness and due process. These include parental notification, timely placement review committees, consideration of mitigating factors, and, when appropriate, behavioral or mental health evaluations.

This is not about punishment; it is about restoring order, safety, and dignity to the classroom while ensuring students receive appropriate interventions and support.

From a governance standpoint, SB 1572 brings much-needed clarity. It empowers educators with defined tools while maintaining accountability and oversight. Importantly, it recognizes that learning cannot occur in chronically disrupted environments and that protecting instructional time is essential for student success.

The bill's broader focus on essential learning skills, early literacy, and academic readiness reinforces this point. High expectations, clear standards, and orderly classrooms are not at odds with compassion — they are necessary conditions for it. Students who struggle behaviorally deserve support, but so do the students whose learning is disrupted and the educators tasked with serving them all.

Based on my experience as a school board member in Dallas School District 2, and as the spouse of a special education educator in Oregon, I believe Senate Bill 1572 represents a thoughtful, balanced, and necessary step forward. It reflects what educators have been asking for: clear authority, structured processes, and meaningful support to do their jobs well.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your support for Senate Bill 1572.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Zachary Steele
Elected School Board Member, Dallas School District 2
(Testifying in an individual capacity)