



EAST MULTNOMAH COUNTY SCHOOLS

TO: House Committee on Education
FROM: Stacy Michaelson, East Multnomah County Schools
RE: HB 4079
DATE: February 5, 2024

Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Wright and Hudson, Members of the Committee:

For the record, I'm Stacy Michaelson, representing Centennial, Corbett, David Douglas, Gresham-Barlow, Parkrose, and Reynolds School Districts, as well as Multnomah ESD. Collectively, these districts serve nearly 40,000 students.

These school districts have the following proportions of their student populations that qualify for special education services:

Centennial - 14%

Corbett - 18%

David Douglas - 13%

Gresham-Barlow - 14%

Parkrose - 14%

Reynolds - 17%

However, school districts in Oregon are limited to only receiving additional weight in the State School Fund (SSF) for special education for up to 11% of students. Each of the districts that I represent must, therefore, find the funding to serve students over that 11% cap in their general budget. This discrepancy means there is less money available for other programming or to invest in things like technology upgrades.

This is a perennial bind that districts find themselves in. On the one hand, our state acknowledges in the SSF formula that there are additional costs associated with providing special education services to students, but on the other, we only provide funding for a portion of the students who qualify for services. It would be a major step forward to recognize the actual cost to school districts of fully funding special education by removing the 11%.

But in order to make this an actual investment, the removal of the 11% would also need to come with additional funding. If we simply remove the cap without additional funds available, then we will thin the proverbial soup for everyone rather than make meaningful gains. With that, we ask you to consider the removal of the 11% cap, in conjunction with the appropriate level of funding. Thank you.