House Bill (HB) 2676
Special education funding

Problem: Funding for special education is significantly less than what’s needed to provide an appropriate education to all identified students while providing training and other resources to the staff who work directly with these students. Oregon’s school funding formula caps the additional weighting for special education students at 11 percent of the district’s population — even for a district with a higher percentage of its students needing special education services.

Solution: HB 2676 raises the cap on the proportion of students qualifying for additional weight in the state school funding formula. The new cap should be the current statewide average of 13 percent of the student population.

Background: Over time, federal funding to states for special education has been consistently inadequate and special education enrollment has been increasing. Oregon school districts have been forced to spread their special education resources more thinly as a result, jeopardizing the quality of education for students and, in some cases, even endangering staff and student safety. Oregon districts now have special education populations averaging 13 percent of their enrollment, with a number of districts reporting 15 percent. But the cap on additional weight in the school funding formula for students in special education has remained at 11 percent for at least 20 years.

As districts remain challenged to meet educational goals and ensure the safety of students and staff, it is past time to update the school funding formula to reflect the realities of Oregon’s schools today.


For more information, contact Government Relations Specialist Bob Estabrook, 503-508-5203, bobe@osea.org.

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