



March 18, 2020

TO: Oregon Board of Education

RE: Public comment - Support for OAR 581-015-2150, eligibility revisions for D/HH eligibility children ages 3 -21 (SB 13, SB 16, IDEA compliance and revise hearing criteria used for ECSE/SA)

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Dear State Board of Education Members:

I am a pediatrician, and the director of the Oregon Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Needs. We are Oregon's Maternal and Child Health Bureau Title V agency for children and youth with special health needs.

I write to **support** the eligibility changes you are considering that would allow more children age 3-21 who are deaf or hard of hearing to benefit from specialized support and services.

These changes would widen the range of hearing thresholds used to establish special education eligibility, which would allow more students to get support from Low Incidence Regional Programs. This would increase services to students with unilateral hearing loss, mild hearing loss, and those with microtia/atresia and auditory neuropathy.

Currently many of these students are falling through the cracks because they are not eligible for special education. Research shows that students with unilateral hearing loss from 25-50 dB struggle in school. Without intervention these students often have communication difficulties, and many fall behind academically.

Low Incidence Regional Programs stand ready to serve these Oregon students. Please consider passing the eligibility revisions. The changes will help this vulnerable population of Oregon children succeed in school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Benjamin Hoffman".

Benjamin Hoffman, M.D.

Executive Director

Oregon Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Needs