

JASPER MOUNTAIN

Hope for Children & Families

Jasper Mountain ♦ 37875 Jasper-Lowell Road, Jasper, OR 97438 ♦ (541) 747.1235 Fax (541) 747.4722
SAFE Center ♦ 89124 Marcola Road, Springfield, OR 97478 ♦ (541) 741.7402 Fax (541) 726.9869

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To: State School Fund Task Force
From: Dave Ziegler, Ph.D.
Date: 3/18/14
RE: LCTC and Oregon Funding Formula

I am the Executive Director of Jasper Mountain, which is an organization that works with some of the most abused and challenging children in Oregon. One of our services is a specialized school for children in our two residential treatment programs as well as children who are failing in our public school system.

I am a psychologist and founder of Jasper Mountain outside of Eugene. When the public school system was unable to effectively provide the education for the seriously abused young children in our treatment center, in 1989 we designed an academic program in consultation with our public school partners. Over the last 25 years we have modified and improved this educational program to the point that we not only effectively educate the children in our two residential programs but we have developed a learning environment designed for the way abused children learn best and we now serve referred children from all sixteen public school districts in Lane County.

We do not exclude children for any serious behavior and we do not suspend or expel any child from our program for any reason. Our job is to understand and meet the child's learning needs and we not only keep the children in school, but our data indicates they make significant gains. It is hard and expensive work that we do in order to give these deserving children the chance at success in life through a good start to their academic careers. We have a variety of methods to provide our children with success in the classroom including: high teacher to student ratios, advance technology, integrating mental health care in the classroom and consultation with a team of adults including the child's parents, teacher, psychiatrist, therapist and others. As I said, it is expensive to do this work correctly and successfully.

Currently LTCT per diem rates are significantly less than what it takes to operate our program. We estimate, in fact, that the current funding formula is 30% under what is needed to serve our students appropriately. **Over the last two years our school has run a deficit of \$347,000 and we are projecting an additional deficit of \$71,000 during the current school year.**

Despite the high cost, consider the alternative to not doing a good job of educating this population. Without education to open doors to a better tomorrow these children would likely follow in the steps of the parents and adults who abused them and who fill our correctional facilities. Changing the funding formula can make a significant difference for our academic program and for other programs that educate children who are the responsibility of the State of Oregon.

