Glenna Gallo, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education  
OSPI, PO Box 47200  
Olympia, WA 98504-7200

Re: Use of funds to promote inclusionary practices

Dear Superintendent Gallo,

I am writing on behalf of Investing in Student Potential regarding use of funds to promote professional development of inclusionary practices for classroom teachers. Investing in Student Potential is a coalition working to create a school system where “Every individual thrives in a learning-friendly environment where they feel safe, supported, and challenged.”

First, thank you for the time you and your staff have given us this past year; your accessibility helps us better understand how we can support and advocate for students with disabilities.

Regarding the inclusion funds, we are writing to ask that you consider carefully the needs of students who are in the most restricted settings and that you include behavior support alongside elements like differentiated learning.

Only 6 percent of students with intellectual disabilities are in a least restricted environment; 60 percent are in the most restrictive settings. When we segregate and isolate youth, we end up segregating and isolating adults. This affects all aspects of life, including their health.

Inclusion is more than differentiated learning and students who are most isolated may face barriers that staff may need targeted support to address.

We ask that you prioritize:

- Universal Design for Learning
- Co-teaching
- Fidelity in functional behavior assessments and individualized intensive behavior supports
- Access needs of students in middle and high school across programmatic elements, including career and technical education and avenues to higher education

School staff must understand how to welcome, support and nurture the potential in all students. Unfortunately, if you look at the results from the Healthy Youth Survey you can see distinct patterns that flag alienation and sadness.

**Students who often or always enjoy school:**

- 8th-graders: 38 percent
- 8th graders with disabilities: 25 percent. This continues to drop in high school
Students who report bullying

- 8th-graders: 27 percent
- 8th graders with disabilities: 46 percent

Students who report that schools try to stop bullying

- 8th-graders: 50 percent
- 8th graders with disabilities: 40 percent

And perhaps the toughest to absorb: Children’s Hope Scale

- 8th-graders who are highly hopeful – 52 percent
- 8th-graders with no or very little hope: 5 percent
- 8th-graders with disabilities who are highly hopeful – 31 percent
- 8th-graders with disabilities with no or very little hope – 14 percent

It gets worse in 10th grade.

Developmental relationships are critical, and exclusionary and segregated schools put students with significant disabilities and behavior support needs at a distinct disadvantage. All students should graduate feeling engaged and empowered and able to contribute to their communities.

Sincerely,

Ramona Hattendorf, on behalf of the Investing in Student Potential Steering Committee:

The Arc of King County
League of Education Voters
Open Doors for Multicultural Families
Roots of Inclusion
Kevin Jacka, CEO, The Rural Alliance
Washington State Charter Schools Association