



COALITION TO END ISOLATION AND REDUCE RESTRAINT

Sent via email

April 14, 2025

Washington State Senate
Capitol Court Building
1110 Capitol Way South, Room 210
Olympia WA 98504

RE: Funding for School District Demonstration and Pilot Sites

Dear Members of the Senate,

Thank you for [E2SSB 5263 Sections \(2\)\(1\)\(b\)\(iii\)](#) and (6), and [SHB 1357 \(6\)](#) to continue critical funding for school districts to [reduce restraint and eliminate isolation](#) (RREI). We are demonstration/pilot site participants and community members who have witnessed RREI's dramatic impact on educators and students. We thank you for your innovative leadership and ask for continued support as difficult budget decisions loom.

We want to share some of our successes with you.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RREI funds precipitated a dramatic reduction in restraint and isolation use across participating districts. This increased student instruction time as well as student access to specially-designed instruction and the general education curriculum. Staff regained time and resources with reduction of student dysregulation and student removal. Schools say this resulted in a more dignified and engaging school climate, with increased attendance and decreased suspensions. Funds made targeted professional development and coaching available for teams who needed it most. Funds allowed districts to pay staff to debrief crisis incidents and collaborate to improve student instruction and social emotional support. School leaders said debrief time was a high-leverage practice, that boosted fidelity to student support systems and enhanced support for all students. In large part, this would not have happened without RREI funding.

ANACORTES SCHOOL DISTRICT

RREI funding allowed Anacortes to provide training for best practices in behavior intervention. In a small district, it is necessary to train all staff (including general education staff, paras, and principals) because the district doesn't have behavioral programs. Skilled intervention needs to start in general education, where most dysregulation occurs. Funds allowed Anacortes to start working on district culture, to recognize behavioral needs are skill deficits that need to be explicitly taught. This would absolutely not have happened without RREI funds.

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AUBURN SCHOOL DISTRICT

With RREI funding, Auburn has not used an isolation room once this year, and the last active room will be dismantled this summer. Targeted professional development allowed impactful student behavior training in two buildings. All classrooms were provided with supplies to create calming spaces, and every district building has a designated regulation classroom where students have individual needs met. Auburn has capitalized on the community of practice, visiting other demonstration schools across Washington, adopting practices developed in rural districts, and equipping other districts with tools, like its standardized and automated incident reporting system. This would not have been possible without RREI funding.

BREMERTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

With RREI funds, Bremerton has been able to offer monthly crisis intervention training to ensure all new hires receive training within 30-60 days of employment.

CENTRALIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Centralia has seen an 82% decrease in the use of restraint and isolation from the 23-24 to 24-25 school year. This is a direct result of the professional development and systems the district created with RREI funding. RREI funds pay for staff time to create collaborative plans for the most challenging students. This has radically changed student behavior, reducing aggression, behavior escalation, and repeated student suspensions. It has freed additional staff time and resources because students who were once in crisis no longer need so much additional support. The funding has helped revamp Centralia's multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), particularly strengthening tier 1 and 2, which benefits all students. Centralia now has calming spaces in all classrooms, positive stores in all schools, and small group skill development related to social skills and emotional regulation. Centralia is small and can adopt systems quickly. This allowed Centralia to lend support to neighboring rural districts, including a new behavior matrix, discipline systems, improved data systems and new class and building routines. RREI made all of this possible. Additionally, these dollars motivated Centralia District to improve student learning and engagement, attendance, and mental health, surpassing what was spent with RREI dollars.

DAVENPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT

For Davenport, with less than 1000 students, RREI has been transformative. With limited access to specialized services and a tight budget, this essential funding reshaped elementary school culture through targeted professional development with Character Strong and Dr. Lisa Hoyt. Focusing on proactive behavioral strategies directly addressed significant behavioral challenges, which heavily impact morale in Davenport's close-knit community. RREI empowers staff with effective strategies and demonstrably improves student behavior and overall school climate. Continued funding is critical to solidify gains and ensure lasting positive outcomes, preventing a return to previous, less effective practices, and allowing these positive changes to be sustained long term.

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EVERETT SCHOOL DISTRICT

RREI funding allowed Everett to shore up building systems and processes and provide elementary behavioral classrooms with student regulation support. Funds allow Everett to pay staff for time to debrief restraint and isolation incidents, which directly contributed to a drastic drop in use. Everett is down from 450 incidents at the end of last year to 148 incidents this year. The funding to pay staff for time to debrief was instrumental.

FIFE SCHOOL DISTRICT

RREI-funded professional development focused on de-escalating, recognizing signs of escalation, and improving overall response effectiveness. This opened critical dialogue around student behavior and staff response, increased understanding of student behavior, and led to more informed and empathetic interventions. Fife's behavior response team identified and closed gaps in preventive measures which strengthened early intervention strategies. Fife recognized the need for and implemented a comprehensive post-incident debrief system. Sustained funding will be vital to continue this. Fife realized a 65% reduction in restraint and isolation, as well as a reduction in restraint or isolation-related injury, and attributes this to proactive measures including better use of environment, stronger skill set to support escalated students, and stronger understanding of lasting emotional harm done to all stakeholders with restraint use. Partnership with OSPI-contracted technical assistance provider, True Measure Collaborative, provided professional development for all elementary staff, with targeted professional development and coaching for special education and life skills staff. Other RREI funded benefits include noticeable increase in family involvement and positive partnering, a more dignified school climate, and less student classroom removal. Additionally, Fife's elementary now has calming corners, strong morning meetings, and an evolving buddy room support plan for students who need a breather in another classroom.

PULLMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Pullman used RREI funds to pay special education staff an additional 90 minutes per week to: debrief student escalation incidents, review classroom and program instruction delivery, and create materials or systems to support student-expected behavior in the learning setting. Each debrief session results in action steps. This time has strengthened educator teams, the special education learning community, data-informed student programming, and student access to specially designed instruction and the general education curriculum. Funding has also been used for ongoing professional development and coaching from OSPI. Pullman went from 180 incidents of restraint and isolation in the 2023-24 school year to 10 incidents recorded this year. It is essential for continued student success that funds are provided for staff debrief time and continued educator learning.

ROCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

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RREI funds have been an invaluable resource for staff training, student learning, and calming environments. Funds provided valuable training for classified and certificated staff in trauma-informed practices and supporting students who need strategies to manage and regulate themselves. The grant reinforces a multi-tiered student support system, including the Foundations Team. In primary, this team taught “I can manage my body,” to all classrooms with reinforcement in group settings. The 92% reduction in restraint and isolation use in primary school shows how powerful the work is. Support for sensory regulation is critical to help students succeed. With RREI funds both primary and elementary schools have sensory spaces open to all students. RREI made this possible, and continued funding will allow Rochester to expand supports to upper grades, so all district students benefit.

SNOQUALMIE VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

RREI funds provided targeted training, expanding access to crisis response and ongoing professional development with Conscious Discipline, a curriculum which provides proactive, relationship-centered strategies for managing behavior and building emotional regulation skills. Snoqualmie Valley used funds to equip staff with trauma-informed tools that decreased reactive measures and fostered safer and more inclusive environments, especially for students with behavioral, emotional, or developmental needs. RREI funds reduced district reliance on restraint and isolation and fostered the dignity and engagement of students. Restraint and isolation incidents dropped 55%. This work increased students’ sense of safety and belonging and improved attendance and engagement.

CONCLUSION

The RREI demonstration and pilot sites are a proven, fiscally prudent approach to managing classrooms with a return on investment that surpasses legislative funding. For educators and students alike, restraint and isolation reduction decreases injury and eliminates long-term harm like post-traumatic stress, depression, anxiety, and other disabilities that come with repeated restraint and isolation use. This project provides tools that support student engagement and belonging, improve student outcomes, boost fidelity to systems of student support, and provide self-regulation skills for staff and students. Thank you for funding this work and making Washington classrooms calmer, safer, and more engaging spaces for learning.

Sincerely,



Andrea Kadlec
Staff Attorney
Disability Rights Washington



Patrick Mulick
Director of Student Engagement
Student Special Services
Auburn School District

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Annie Cairo, Senior Manager
Crisis Prevention Institute

Arik Korman, Director
League of Education Voters

Adam Moline, MA, BCBA, LBA
Centralia

Brandi Monts, Executive Director
Washington State Development
Disabilities Council

Chad Prewitt, Superintendent
Davenport School District

Cindy Taylor, Territory Account Manager
Crisis Prevention Institute

Dom Ventresco, Assistant Director of
Special Services, Pullman School District

Jenna Schuenemann, former special
education administrative law judge and
education attorney, Feeney Law PLLC

Julie Athens, Education Specialist
Centralia School District

Karen Pillar, Executive Director
TeamChild

Kelley Clevenger, Executive Director
Special Services, Everett School District

Kristen Koehler, Director of Student Support
Anacortes School District

Laura Staley, Director of Special Services &
Assessment, Rochester School District

Lorena Gonzalez, Esq., Legislative Director,
Integrated Advocacy Department,
ACLU of Washington

Nicholle Mineiro, president
Attorneys for Education Rights (AFER)

Ramona Hattendorf, Dir. of Public Policy
and Civic Engagement, Arc of King County

Rachel Dickson, Director of Student Services
Fife Public Schools

Samantha Fogg, Co-President
Seattle Council PTSA

Sarah Butcher, Director,
Roots of Inclusion

Sarah Okun, Executive Director
True Measure Collaborative

Sharonne Navas, Executive Director
Equity in Education Center

Stacy Dym, Executive Director
Arc of Washington State

Stephanie Salazar,
Fife Elementary Assistant Principal

Tammie Jensen-Tabor, M.Ed, Exec. Dir. of
Special Services Centralia School District