

**Hearing Conservation Program Equipment Needs
Testimony Prepared for the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on
Education
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Overview

Madam Chair, members of the committee, for your record my name is Bob Runkel, Director of Special Education for the Office of Public Instruction.

This presentation will cover Decision Package 54 found on page E-11.

The Hearing Conservation Program is dependent upon the equipment necessary to do the work. Much of that equipment is in need of replacement. Many of the pieces of equipment used in Hearing Conservation Program have become too old to be reliable, parts are no longer available, or the equipment is obsolete.

Over the years, clinical equipment has been replaced in such small numbers that much of the equipment dates back to the 1980s.

The majority of equipment that is in need of replacement is located at our audiological centers. The majority of Clinical Audiometers and Clinical Impedence bridges need to be replaced. Most manufacturers quote a life span of seven to nine years for this type of equipment. Almost all of our equipment is well past the expected life span. Parts for many of these units are no longer available and some of the manufacturers are no longer even in business.

The hearing conservation program also has many portable audiometers for use in our schools. Some of these units date back to the 1960s and 1970s and it is becoming more difficult to keep the units properly calibrated. This proposal would allow us to replace 44 of these units.

Overall, the equipment in the Hearing Conservation Program is sadly outdated. This one time only appropriation will ensure that all of our equipment is functional and up to date.