



Testimony in support of SB 584
School Safety and Prevention System

February 25, 2019

Dear Chair Wagner and Members of Senate Committee on Education,

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP), and as a member of the School Safety Task Force, I would like to express our support for SB 584.

As indicated by the number of tips to the Safe Oregon tip line concerning bullying, substance use, and suicide risk, it makes sense to focus our efforts on addressing bullying, harassment and suicidal behaviors among our students. We know that we need to work on increasing protective factors to prevent suicide and reduce other bad outcomes for students, including not finishing high school, chronic substance use disorders, and incarceration. To this end, we especially support School Safety and Prevention System components that:

- Build connections between youth and with supportive adults
- Increase resiliency and positive decision-making
- Incorporate evidence-based healthy school climate and upstream prevention programs
- Increase access to behavioral and physical health care providers

We also support Multnomah County's concerns about profiling students of color and groups who tend to be victims of bullying and harassment in the implementation of multidisciplinary student safety assessment teams and agree with ensuring practices that safeguard against profiling are embedded in the student safety assessment protocol. We understand these concerns will be resolved within the rulemaking part of the process and agree with this approach.

Sincerely,

Cherryl L. Ramirez

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Director, AOCMHP