



Tigard-Tualatin School District 23J
Larry Hibbard Administration Center
6960 S.W. Sandburg St.
Tigard, OR 97223
503-431-4000; FAX: 503-431-4047
www.ttsdschools.org

Testimony on HB 2224
Oregon House of Representatives Education Committee
March 11, 2019

Chair Doherty and members of the House Education Committee,

As Superintendent of Tigard Tualatin School District, I write to request your support of HB 2224 “Meeting the Social Emotional and Mental Health of Students” legislation. As a member of the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators Policy and Leadership work group sponsoring this legislation, I had the privilege of working side by side with a broad constituency of educators, parent, community and health care providers all focused to addressing the current mental health crisis impacting Oregon’s students. This legislation will make a critical investment in improving the social, emotional and mental health needs of all of Oregon’s students by funding foundational resources such as social workers, school counselors, nurses and mental health workers to school districts.

Statewide our school districts continue to be “first responders” in identifying and addressing our students’ health and social service needs. A student’s ability to access instruction and achievement is impaired when they struggle with the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and subsequent mental health issues left unattended. As a superintendent in two districts, Springfield Public Schools and now Tigard Tualatin, as well as a former public health nurse, I know the impact on classrooms and teachers when students’ mental health needs go unmet. I know the power of providing a strategic system of mental health wrap around supports that can weather state school funding cycles, having built such as system through community partnerships in Springfield. As a result of those partnerships, Springfield Public Schools’ graduation rate increased by 10%, reaching those students who were most impacted by the effects of poverty, drug addiction and mental health crisis. Effective, cost efficient and thus sustainable “just in time” access to mental health care is key to many of our students’ ultimate academic success.

HB 2224 creates a funding stream designated specifically for just such a system, investing \$84 million in the “Student Social and Emotional Health and Development Fund. This fund will be managed by the Oregon Department of Education and will distribute funding based on ADMw, with a minimum of \$10,000 for each district. Your support of this bill will help my district and districts across the state streamline student access to mental health professionals resulting in improved student health and academic outcomes and allow us to deliver on the promise of public education, to positively change and affirm the lives of our most precious resources, Oregon’s children and our state’s future.

Sue Rieke-Smith, Ed.D.
Superintendent