



Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 16

April 22, 2019

House Committee on Education

Deborah Riddick

Good afternoon Chair Doherty, Vice Chairs Alonso Leon and Helt, and members of the committee. My name is Deborah Riddick. I am the Director of Government Relations for the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). We represent 15,000 registered nurses throughout the state and the Nurse Practitioners of Oregon. The ONA supports SB 16, which would expand the list of qualified providers who are able to perform and report exams to establish special education services for students.

It's been well-documented that unmet physical, emotional, and mental health needs negatively impact a student's ability to remain engaged and ready to learn. In order to meet the unique needs of our entire student population, we must ensure that every student has supports that optimize learning. The ONA supports SB 16's updates to our current special education evaluation process because they offer students, and their families, additional providers to meet their needs. It's an appropriate legislative response to expand the network of providers who are available to assess and support educational readiness.

Similarly, we believe that the reporting requirement is a common-sense fix that promotes interdisciplinary collaboration to ensure that student needs don't fall through the cracks. Student performance and progress are inseparable from the strategies and tools that our educators have at their disposal. This bill provides crucial information to help our educators obtain resources to meet students where they are.

Providing broader access to evaluations and formalizing a professional feedback loop demonstrates the State's commitment to our students, their families and addresses the diversity within our great state. We respectfully request your support on SB 16.