



February 3, 2021

TO: Senate Education Committee
FR: Morgan Allen, COSA
RE: Testimony in support of Senate Bill 52

Good afternoon Chair Dembrow and members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Morgan Allen and on behalf of the Coalition of Oregon School Administrators and our 2500 members across Oregon, we urge your support for Senate Bill 52. This legislation will fund implementation of a statewide student success plan for Oregon students who identify as LGBTQ2SIA+.

This work is urgent and necessary to help support our students who identify as LGBTQ2SIA+, and who represent a growing number of Oregon's K-12 students. For example, the 2019 Oregon Health Teens Survey estimates that one out of ten high schools students identify as part of this community. And our educators know that for many of these students we are not meeting their social and emotional needs in our school system.

Data from the 2017 Oregon Safe Schools and Communities Coalition should serve as a call to action for every Oregonian. We know that:

- LGBTQ+ students are up to three times more likely to miss school based on fears of bullying, harassment, or intimidation;
- One out of every two LGBTQ+ middle school students has reported bias-based bullying; and
- Nearly half of LGBTQ+ youth and half of trans-identifying youth indicated signs of suicidal ideation.

It is imperative that the Legislature make this investment and send a strong message of support for every student who identifies as LGBTQ2SIA+ in Oregon. Passage of SB 52 shows that we care about each of these students by making the investments to provide the support and structures they need to be successful and thrive in our schools.

Every student deserves to feel supported and affirmed that they have a place in our school community. Funding the LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Success Plan is a major step toward affirming the identities and lives of our students and helping them heal from years of marginalization in our school system.

COSA members have identified passage of this legislation as one of our top priorities for the 2021 Session. We appreciate the work of the Oregon Department of Education and all of the students who brought this legislation forward and we urge your support for SB 52.