



3/8/21

Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon School Based Health Alliance would like to enthusiastically endorse SB 356. With a mission to strengthen and sustain school-based health systems and services, we work in partnership with the Oregon School Nurse Association to ensure that K-12 students have comprehensive school health supports.

We have been able to work closely with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to help make progress on our goals, but have found it challenging to partner with the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) because their school health staffing is so minimal. It's not only important for us to partner with ODE, but also for OHA and ODE to work in partnership. The current public health crisis as well as the emphasis on health in the Student Success Act demonstrates the need for ODE to play an active part in supporting the health of students, and adding a nurse to ODE's staff will improve their ability to do so.

While there has long been some resistance to the idea that schools provide health services, research and experience have clearly shown that students will not learn if they are not healthy in body, spirit, and mind. Communities are supporting this idea by emphasizing a need for health supports during community engagement sessions that were conducted for the Student Success Act.

This is a simple, common sense bill that will help us to create systemic changes to better support kids and remove health related barriers to learning. We urge your support on SB 356.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maureen Hinman".

Maureen Hinman
Interim Executive Director
Oregon School-Based Health Alliance