

Good evening co-chairs and the joint committee. Thank you for having me today. My name is Megan Pine and I am the Education Director of Serendipity Center. I am speaking today in support of the capital allocation to increase Serendipity's capacity to serve more of some of Oregon's most vulnerable students. I am speaking on behalf of Serendipity's students and their families as well as the referring school districts we serve.

Everyone wants students to be served in their local school or district. The districts work very hard to support their students with the resources and expertise they have. However, some kids need even more support than their district can provide to be successful. At Serendipity we typically serve around 100 of those students from over 20 referring districts in 7 surrounding counties in the Portland Metro area – we have a wait list every year. Our districts rely on us to be able to support their students and families with the most complex needs and we specialize in this.

With COVID- restrictions, it's even more obvious how a lack of physical space impacts how many students we can serve:

- We need more space to implement evidence-based practices to support a very dysregulated student population and allow them to have space outside of the classroom to re-regulate.
- They need space to practice and learn school appropriate and safe coping strategies.
- To have 1-1 conversations with staff out of earshot of their peers to protect student's privacy and allow them to be vulnerable enough to let us help them to try new behaviors.

While this could sound minor to you, but it makes a big difference to our students and staff. Our ability to have the space to develop healthy supportive relationships with students is one of the most protective factors we can provide to students who have

- failed to develop these relationships in the past and
- have on occasion brought weapons to their former schools but
- more typically have long history of physical aggression toward public school employees and their classmates before their district reaches out to Serendipity to ask us to help.

Without the one-time investment from this legislation, we will be unable to expand Oregon's continuum of care by providing a safe space for the area's most vulnerable students to heal and learn.

Please help us build a more trauma informed campus so we can better support our future students and their communities.