



Date: February 1, 2021

To: Senate Education Committee, Chair Dembrow and Members

From: Laurie Wimmer, OEA Government Relations

RE: *SB 55 [School Facilities Inventory]*

On behalf of OEA's 42,000 members, it is my honor to testify in support of Senate Bill 55, which would authorize the Office of School Facilities in the Oregon Department of Education to help school districts assess their building inventories.

As the pandemic has raged, challenging districts to open safely due to infrastructure-related concerns, it has become increasingly clear that a statewide analysis of the age, safety, and deferred maintenance issues of our public school buildings would have been extremely helpful in rationally considering the time and resources that would be needed to upgrade HVAC systems, ensure classroom air quality, and other issues.

Twice in the past, the Oregon Legislature has authorized such facilities assessments, including to determine whether schools had the physical capacity to increase physical education periods for all students. Neither of those assessments were, in the end, completed successfully. By ensuring that the Department's Facilities Division has the authority to accomplish this project, we believe that we will finally be able to determine the status of the 2,000-some buildings in school districts across the state.

We have worked with the Office of School Facilities on the administration of the facility matching grant program, and we know their work to be collaborative, professional, and well-administered.

For all these reasons, we applaud the ODE for requesting this bill and heartily support its passage.

Thank you for considering our input.