



January 30, 2023

To: House Committee on Education
From: Oregon Education Association
Re: Support for HB 2618

Dear Chair Neron and members of the House Committee on Education,

The Oregon Education Association represents over 41,000 educators and education service professionals across the state, from pre-k to community colleges. Our members are teachers, bus drivers, custodians, teacher assistants, nutrition specialists, community college professionals and more.

More than ever health professionals in schools are in a staffing crisis and without this critical workforce and access to these services for our students, we further the student mental health crisis we see every day.

Appreciate the House Education committee hearing this bill specifically for speech language pathologists, occupational therapists and physical therapists. When it comes to caseload, we need specific, focused goals and long-term strategy to ensure success. We also want to highlight that Oregon's chronic school nurse shortage remains critical—we have a goal of 1 nurse for every 750 students, however we nearly 6 times that with 1 nurse for every 4,572 students.¹

As we embark on the path toward ensuring we have proper guidance and goals for caseload management, we must continue to demand that resourcing for our schools is an essential piece toward long-term success and a better future for students.

The OEA supports HB 2618 and want to encourage support for health professionals in schools through this bill and through HB 2959, which looks at overall scope of practice and statewide framework for licensed health professionals in schools.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Michele Ruffin

Oregon Education Association

¹ https://www.oregoned.org/uploads/02_docs/EducatorStaffingCrisis_Report_2021_v2.pdf