



Mission: Empower Oregon families experiencing disability in their pursuit of a whole life by expanding awareness, growing community, and equipping families.

March 10, 2023

Chair Dembrow
Vice-Chair Weber
Members of the Senate Committee on Education

RE: Support of SB 549 – School Health Crisis Response Act

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber and members of the Senate Committee on Education,

FACT Oregon is a family-led nonprofit that works toward a future where communities are accessible, inclusive, and empower the self-determination of people with disabilities. We support families, youth with disabilities, and partners to hold high expectations, navigate special education and disability systems and advocate for the supports needed to thrive at home, in school, and in community. Since 2012, we have served as the state and federally designated Parent Training and Information Center [PTI] for special education.

FACT Oregon has supported families from 31 counties over the past six months with 41% of support requests about behavior related topics. At a time when students are being place on shortened days, there are workforce shortages in education and educators and students are living with the trauma of the pandemic, community schools can help bring resources that are customized to each school community to improve learning outcomes.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] ensures that students with disabilities have available a Free Appropriate Public Education [FAPE] that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet the student's UNIQUE NEEDS and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. The services described in this bill are evidence-based and equitable approaches to addressing the mental health and behavioral issues that are impacting kids and the school environment and can help create access to care for those communities that are underserved and under resourced.

FACT Oregon supports SB 549 The School Health Crisis Response Act. There is a youth mental health crisis in Oregon and your support is critical to ensuring that youth and families are able to fully access the education that every child deserve.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

Christy Reese, Executive Director
FACT Oregon