



## Oregon School Employees Association

www.osea.org

State Office: 4735 Liberty Road S, Salem, OR 97302-5036

P: 800-252-6732, 503-588-0121 F: 503-588-8307

March 16, 2023

Senate Committee on Rules  
Senator Kate Lieber, Chair

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 2708

Chair Lieber and Members of the Senate Committee on Rules:

My name is Sarah Wofford, and I am the president of Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA). I live in Grants Pass, where I have worked at Rogue Community College for 12 years as a classified accounting specialist.

On behalf of the OSEA, thank you for the opportunity to express strong support for House Bill (HB) 2708. OSEA represents more than 23,000 professional classified education employees in all four corners of the state and in nearly all levels of Oregon public education, including Head Start programs, K-12 school districts, education service districts, special districts like parks and rec, and community colleges.

By identifying the first week in March as Classified Employees Week HB 2708 marks an important course correction for the state to acknowledge this core group of frontline workers-who have been frequently overlooked and underrepresented in state educational policy.

The education of all of Oregon's youth is imperative to Oregon and to our nation; professional classified school employees is a term used to identify the myriad of employees who support the care and education in the daily life of a student. In a typical elementary school day, the ratio of classified public education staff to licensed staff is roughly 7 to 1.

To better understand the diversity and importance of our roles, here is a short list of positions that include: special education, general education, medical, library and health assistants, media specialists, secretaries, clerical staff, interpreters, bus drivers and transportation staff, nutrition services, information technology workers, custodial staff, facilities staff, before- and after-school caregivers, campus monitors, safety and transition specialists. All of the above positions individually and collectively, are a vital component of Oregon's public school system.





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Right now, Oregon's school districts are moving beyond the COVID closures. As professional educators, we are experiencing the reality that Oregon's students need more social, emotional, behavioral, and academic support than they ever have. To respond to the needs of our students', classified employees continue to show up (daily) for our students, and we are proud to share this important work. Typically, we are the first to arrive and the last to leave our buildings.

The retention of classified employees starts with acknowledgement of us and the value of our work. That's why HB 2708 is a critical step to supporting a quality public education experience.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

Sarah Wofford,  
OSEA State President

