

Oregon School Psychologist's Association (OSPA), strongly supports HB2596. School psychologists are uniquely trained to help children and youth succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. In collaboration with families and other school staff, we help create safe and supportive learning environments in which all students can thrive. School psychologists are [uniquely qualified](#) school based mental health professionals who serve the entire school community. Students are [six times more likely to access mental health services when offered in schools](#) and [youth from racially and ethnically minoritized backgrounds are more likely to receive services at school](#). School psychologists also have unique training in serving students with disabilities who experience a higher prevalence of [mental health needs](#) and [disciplinary exclusions](#). Oregon has the highest rate in the nation of youth reporting serious thoughts of suicide, with 15% of Oregon's youth between the ages of 12-17 reporting serious thoughts of suicide and 25% reporting at least one major depressive episode in the past year. Despite this need, [Oregon ranks last in the nation](#) for youth access to mental health care. Over 60% of students with depression do not receive any services. Mental health provider shortages pose a particular challenge in rural areas, [with twenty-six regions in Oregon noted as not having any mental health providers and many more facing significant gaps](#).

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) recommends a ratio of 1 school psychologist for every 500 students; however, school psychologist's average current ratios in Oregon are [1:1,148](#) and are worsening. Many Oregon districts and Educational Service Districts are serving students with ratios more than 10 times NASP's recommendation or over 5,000 students per school psychologist. School psychologist shortages significantly limit the availability of high-quality and comprehensive services to students, caregivers, and schools.

The Interstate Compact for School Psychologists streamlines the systems of licensure mobility in member states while upholding a high standard of school psychology practice and would benefit our state, our state education agency, school psychologists, and ultimately the students and families we serve. This legislation would increase our ability to recruit school psychologists to Oregon and complements OSPA's recommended state legislation to address shortages including [Oregon Tuition Service Obligation Grant](#) and [NASP State Model Legislation](#). Oregon recently also passed the [Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact](#) which is a similar Compact that helps address teacher shortages in Oregon.

The ICSP is an occupational licensing Compact which will help alleviate barriers that School Psychologists face when relocating or seeking employment in a new state. School Psychologists holding a Compact eligible license can apply for licensure in another member state and receive the closest equivalent license without submitting additional materials, taking state-specific exams, or completing additional coursework. Additionally, renewal will be based on keeping one license active, opening new doors for School Psychologists to practice in multiple states.

The ICSP preserves the regulatory authority of each Compact member state to protect public health and safety through the existing state regulatory structure. Unlike national licensure

initiatives that supersede state regulatory authority, interstate occupational licensure Compacts allow a member state to continue to determine the requirements for licensure in that state.

We do not anticipate substantial additional costs for states participating in the Compact. There may be costs associated with the attendance of your state's chosen Commissioner to the annual in-person ICSP Compact Commission meeting once the Compact is enacted in seven states.

The ICSP has many benefits for Oregon:

1. Preserving the existing state-based licensure system;
2. Creating an alternative path to licensure for School Psychologists relocating to a new state;
3. Improving communication between states:
 - a. Supporting information sharing between Compact member states;
 - b. Ensuring that all adverse actions and disciplinary sanctions are reported regularly to the Commission and shared with member states;
 - c. Providing a venue for joint problem solving and discussion;
4. Requiring criminal background checks;
5. Improving licensure portability for School Psychologists;
6. Improving mobility for military spouses.

According to the Department of Defense, [military families move every three years on average](#). The Compact helps military spouses relocate and begin work without delay by reducing the amount of time and effort needed to gain authorization to practice in a new state. As a member of the Compact, Oregon may become a more attractive option to call home for a military family with a School Psychologist: military spouses will have peace of mind that with Oregon as their home state, they will always be able to move to another ICSP member state without encountering licensure barriers.

The ICSP will support military families and increase license portability for School Psychologists based in Oregon, while maintaining the current system of state licensure. Additionally, by ensuring the sharing of investigative and disciplinary information among member states, the ICSP will allow member state regulatory entities to better protect the public.