

Submitter: Jennifer Federighi
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2729

Dear Chair Neron and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jennifer and I am parent and nurse of a child with additional emotional and mental needs that tends to struggle in school. I'm writing in support of HB 2729, which provides critical resources that youth and families across Oregon need now. Oregon is ranked 49th in the nation for youth mental health, and it's showing in our schools through rampant behavior issues and high rates of chronic absenteeism. HB 2729 provides evidence-based resources that will be quickly available for schools to support youth mental and physical health.

A study conducted in Oregon found that youth are 10-21x more likely to seek mental health support at a school-based health center (SBHC) and that SBHCs that increased mental health capacity were 12% less likely to report a depressive episode; 16% less likely to report suicidal ideation; and 18% less likely to report a suicide attempt.

I support this bill because I have a child who struggles with depression and anxiety and has used the resources in her school for help during the school day. I also have a 13 year old nephew who has missed most of his 7th grade classes due to mental health issues related to bullying and feeling of depression and anxiety. It has caused him to cut himself and have suicidal ideations on the regular. My sister and her spouse are working parents and frequently have him home to watch to be sure he is safe. They are working closely with teachers and counselors there at the school to be sure he is safe and thriving mentally, scholastically and socially.

These resources are are so critical and any support is needed for our teachers and school systems to help these kids thrive. Our youth needs this now and these resources will allow for an immediate increase in our capacity to support them. I urge you to vote yes on HB 2729.

Thank you,
Jennifer