

To Whom It May Concern,

2/6/25

I have worked as a School Nurse in the Eugene 4J School District for 4 years now. I had over 20 years of practice in Medical Clinics and Hospitals before becoming a nurse in the School District, and my, what an eye opener. My assignment is in the District's South Region including South High, Edison Elementary, and Fox Hollow. A School Nurse's role is integral to a child's health – particularly the more vulnerable, housing unstable, stretched-thin parent households. From my perspective, the school nurse's job involves part clinical nurse, part case manager (for chronic medical conditions), part social worker, part advocate, and part counselor. Among other collaborative efforts with staff.

From the angle of a clinical nurse, social worker, advocate, and counselor mentioned above, the School-Based Health Centers play a critical role. I work closely with them to get students seen in a much timelier manner than referring to the community clinics. I refer to them for students who don't have established primary care physicians or mental health therapists already. The fact that they can only see 4J students, and offer both clinical support (with a Peace Health Nurse Practitioner), and mental health support (with Lane County Behavioral Health) is AMAZING and invaluable. They are one of the strongest tools in my toolbelt for helping students and their families. The wait times there to be seen are a small fraction of the wait times the community can offer. I also work closely with the School-Based Health Center's office staff – so I can advocate for student's (mostly) vision or dental concerns. Many parents don't understand OHP insurance or how amazing it is. They don't know their child has the insurance let alone which plan. By working with School-Based Health Centers office staff, I can get this information to the student or parents, helping the student or parent help themselves or their kids. I can also help them schedule free rides through OHP insurance -- if transportation is an issue.

Many times, I have wished South High had its own School-Based Health Center instead of having to refer South Region students to the North or Churchill Region. It is inequitable and has greatly diminished the student's success of actually getting seen. The student and I (or the Parent and I) will go through the efforts to schedule the appt, and sometimes even arrange a ride, only to see time after time they missed their appt. The location of these clinics is a barrier. It would be so convenient and such an asset for students to be seen inside their school or be referred to a clinic that is nearby, sometimes within walking distance. It would be such a blessing and a true asset to have a School-Based Health Center at South High and would be utilized like crazy. Thank you for your support in considering expanding the School-Based Health Centers in the Eugene 4J school district.

Warmly,

Allie Wieck, RN, BSN (she/her)  
School Nurse | South High, Edison Elementary, Fox Hollow  
Eugene School District 4J