

**COURTNEY NERON**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
**DISTRICT 26**



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**Testimony in Support of [HB 2729](#)**

January 5, 2025

Vice Chair Dobson, Vice Chair McIntire, and members of the House Committee on Education,

I strongly **support HB2729 (with amendment)**. This is a bill to expand strategic and needed investments in the mental and physical health of our students and their families. **These investments and services keep people in school, improve educational outcomes, provide access to care, and even create jobs.**

With rising costs, it is critically important that we take steps to ensure the viability of the school based health center (SBHC) model. This bill will allow for **inflationary adjustments and changes to grant amounts**. These changes will support the long term viability of the model in Oregon.

The services provided by our SBHCs and school nurse model, are critically important; and with the community input process, as this bill proposes, can be especially effective at providing access to services families might not have otherwise. I appreciate this bill's focus on **studying mental health support, providing substance use prevention, and linguistically specific services**.

As an educator at Tigard High School, where we had a school-based health center, I had many students who utilized the services on-site for their health. I think about one student with an infected finger who got it bandaged up and returned to class quickly; another with a swollen knee for weeks who said her mom wouldn't take her to the doctor, but she was able to be seen the first day she asked for an appointment at the health center next to our classroom. I myself even ran down to the health center once before classes began to ask if they could test my sore throat to tell me if I had strep throat. I was able to get an answer right away.

I know the pain of losing students in the school to mental health challenges. The SBHC model is part of an important continuum of care for our communities. **Where investments have been made in school based health services, data shows notable reductions in rates of depressive episodes and suicides attempts.**

At a time when we need to do everything we can to address absenteeism, increase academic outcomes, and ensure strong communities, **SBHCs are a critical part of a broader solution.**

**I urge your support of Oregon's School Based Health Centers. Please support HB2729.**

Sincerely,

Representative Courtney Neron