

Submitter: Caty Buckley
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2729

Chair Neron and Members of the Committee:

My name is Caty Buckley and I am a licensed clinical and school social worker (LCSW, LSSW) at David Douglas High school. I'm writing in support of HB 2729, which provides critical resources that youth and families across Oregon need now. I provide mental health support to students at David Douglas High School and often collaborate with the staff at our student based health center here on campus. My self and another .5 FTE social worker provide as much support as we can for our students but we have 2,300 students and cannot provide mental health support to all who have needed it. The SBHC has always been a tremendous member of the mental health team here at our school. Without them, students would be unserved and dealing with deteriorating mental health on their own.

I have effectively referred high needs students to the health center for years. I will frequently walk students over to the cliniçi to provide a "warm hand off" and I know that these students are in capable hands, whether it be for reproductive health, mental health care, or a place to discuss medications for mental health symptoms.

However, the last few years has seen some turnover at the SBHC with clinicians who provide behavioral health support. This has resulted in my caseload and that of my colleague to skyrocket. In order to meet the needs of our students (and those of our community), there must be more adequate staffing at the SBHC. We need to have additional support at the school.

In my experience, students in our Title 1 school have many obstacles in finding mental health support outside of school. Either their parents are working too much and can't get them to appointments, even the co-pay is too high of a cost to the family, the family does not have insurance or there is a dearth of consistent, reliable providers in the area. Being able to provide mental health support on campus is a critical part in making health and mental health care accessible and effective. I can't say enough about the gratitude I have for the staff and the support that they have provided to our students. Please increase their capacity to support our students and community. They provide an essential role here at the school and without them, I fear serious consequences for the students in our community. I urge you to vote yes on HB 2729.

Gratefully,
Caty Buckley