

Submitter: Benjamin White  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3063

Good afternoon, esteemed representatives!

I am writing to offer my professional experience and support for HB 3063 - a bill that allows for Oregon school-age students to remain enrolled at their home schools while they are temporarily hospitalized for longer than the current 10 school day threshold.

I work in an acute level adolescent psychiatric hospital in Multnomah county where I see nearly 500 middle and high school students per year from every county in the state. I have been working as the lead teacher in the Hospital School Program for 13 years now, serving over 5,000 students and their families. There is no question that the current "10-day unenrollment rule" is an added stressor for the students and their families on top of a doing their best to manage a mental health crisis. Nearly all of our students have recently survived a suicide attempt, and over 80% of those patient-students are experiencing crisis-level depression, debilitating anxiety, trauma-related challenges and, often, underlying ADHD. My specialty is partnering with these students while they are hospitalized to assess where they are emotionally, how to engage them at the appropriate level of learning and to help craft a plan moving forward. Most of these students already feel the frustration of many years of school challenges, misunderstanding, mismatched support and often straight-up rejection. A removal of the "10-day rule" would alleviate the painful experience of being divorced from their school work or access to key school support while they are putting their lives back together here in the hospital over a typical 10-14 calendar day stay. Specifically, this would allow a much more collaborative and streamlined course for an informed and supportive re-entry process from hospital-to-school. This will foster ongoing communication between my team inside the hospital and the school teams that will be supporting the patient's re-entry to school with meaningful supports and plans in place.

There is no other single challenge that has been more frustrating to the families of my students than the "10-day rule", and I am elated for the possibility of it's modification with this bill.