

Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Erica Johnson, and I serve as a doctorate-level physical therapist in the Clackamas Education Service District. I have been in this role for four years, during which I have had the opportunity to provide essential health services to students while collaborating closely with the educational team.

I am writing in support of House Bill 2423, which proposes the establishment of the School-Based Health Professionals Taskforce.

As a physical therapist, my role is to increase and ensure access, full participation, safety, and engagement for students with low-incidence and complex disabilities. I work closely with classroom staff, teachers, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, and adaptive physical education specialists to ensure that adaptations and accommodations are in place for each student.

Over the course of my career, I have observed that current licensing requirements—despite their good intentions—do not always align with the unique needs of the school environment. For example, my license requires me to work at the top of my training, education, and competencies, but I have encountered situations where administrators request that I not perform certain aspects of my licensure, stating that "we are not medical providers in the school system."

I have had to compile research comparing my licensure with Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs) to demonstrate that I am, in fact, required to take vital signs when necessary, provide concussion management and accommodations, and ensure medical safety for students using adaptive equipment—especially post-operative students or those showing signs of poor tolerance. This often requires close collaboration with private medical providers and families.

In speaking with other school-based physical therapists, I have found that many feel administrators are overstepping their authority when they attempt to limit our scope of work, reducing our ability to practice in accordance with our licensure and professional standards.

Having a clear policy that supports school-based health professionals in working safely at the top of their license is imperative. Obstacles created by administrators due to a lack of understanding of our licensure add unnecessary challenges to an already demanding workload and work environment.

We need well-aligned licensing standards and targeted legislation to ensure that both health professionals and students thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Erica Johnson

Physical Therapist, Doctorate Level  
Clackamas Education Service District