



Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St NE  
Salem, OR 97301

### **Re: Concerns Regarding HB 2359 – School Start Time Requirements**

I am writing to express my concerns regarding HB 2359, which proposes changes to school start times for Oregon students. While I understand the intent behind the bill, I believe it does not fully consider the unique challenges faced by rural school districts.

The bill does not provide a clear definition of "rural schools," leaving uncertainty as to which districts will be affected. Some high schools in our school districts may be considered "rural schools" while others may not. Rural schools operate under different constraints than urban and suburban schools, including transportation logistics, funding limitations, and workforce availability. Without a clear definition or exemption for rural schools, this bill creates significant planning challenges for districts like ours.

One of the primary issues is transportation. In rural districts, all students (K-12) share the same bus routes due to limited resources. Some of these routes span over 30 miles one way, making it impractical to implement staggered start times for elementary, middle, and high school students. We simply do not have the capacity—either in buses or staffing—to run separate routes for different grade levels.

Additionally, current school start times are structured to accommodate working parents who drop off their children before heading to their jobs. A later start time would not only disrupt families' routines but could also impact local businesses and the broader community. Parents rely on our current schedule, and shifting it could create childcare challenges and financial strain on families.

Another significant concern is that later start times inevitably mean later end times. For rural school districts that operate on a four-day school week, this presents serious challenges. Extending the school day would push after-school activities, including sports, later into the evening. Many of our students already travel long distances for athletic events, and a later school dismissal would mean students arriving home even later—sometimes after 10:00 PM—making it difficult for them to complete homework and get adequate rest. Additionally, this could reduce

participation in extracurricular activities altogether, as students and families may struggle to balance later school days with other commitments.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to reconsider the provisions of HB 2359 and to either exempt rural school districts or provide additional resources to address these logistical challenges. I appreciate your time and attention to this matter and hope that you will take the concerns of rural communities into account as you review this legislation.