

Chair Neron and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Cameron Fischer, and I am a Bend-La Pine School Board Director. I also teach future teachers, social service providers, and community support workers at Oregon State University. In my class, Family, School, and Community Collaboration, we delve into the research around community schools and learn about the tremendous impact they have on students, families, and communities. I am writing in support of HB 3941 and the implementation of full service community schools in Oregon.

In my Central Oregon community and across Oregon, we are seeing high rates of chronic absenteeism, significant mental health challenges, low test scores, and a general lack of engagement and sense of belonging in schools. In addition, we are seeing a significant number of students experiencing food insecurity, housing insecurity, and homelessness due to the high cost of living. Moreover, Deschutes County has the highest youth suicide rate in the state.

We are doing what we can to address these issues, but we are missing a comprehensive framework that brings key partners together - families, students, educators, and community members - to ensure that we are collaborating to use our resources in ways that best meet the needs of each unique community.

Schools are natural community hubs, and full-service community schools allow us the opportunity to transform them into the public community-driven service delivery and community engagement spaces that support and uplift families.

I strongly support community schools because I believe they will have a tremendous impact on our communities. Please pass HB 3941.

Thank you,

Cameron Fischer, D.Ed.