

4/8/2025

Chair Frederick, Vice Chair Weber, Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Willis Homann, and I am a Government Relations Specialist for the Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA). Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 581. OSEA represents 25,000 classified school employees including library assistants, cooks, bus drivers, maintenance crews, information technology and instructional assistants. Our jobs are varied but our mission is focused: to provide the best possible support in the education of the students. Expanding the pipeline of licensed, trained, and culturally competent behavioral health professionals will not only make a huge difference in the lives of our students, but will also help support our classified workforce who too often need to take on roles that are outside of their job description and training.

Across Oregon, our schools are facing a serious shortage of behavioral health providers, and classified educators are often left to pick up the slack. When students are in crisis and there aren't enough trained professionals to step in, it's classified staff who step up. But our members aren't mental health clinicians - and too often, our members are being asked to do work outside their training and job descriptions because the supports simply aren't there.

SB 581 is a smart investment. It will help bring more psychologists into school settings, especially those who reflect the diversity of our students and are equipped to meet their needs. That directly supports student mental health—but it also supports the classified workforce by easing some of the pressure they face every day in under-resourced behavioral health rooms, special education classrooms, and other high-needs environments.

OSEA has fought hard for training and transparency to support our members - for example, ensuring access to student behavior and safety plans and securing state investment in de-escalation training. While SB 581 is an important step to ensuring a trained workforce, it is clear more training for classified educators is also needed to ensure the safety and well-being of our students and workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, we urge a yes vote on SB 581.

Sincerely,

Willis Homann

OSEA Government Relations Specialist