

May 14th, 2025

Attn: Senate Committee on Education

Re: HB 2596 - Enacts the School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact

My name is Lisa Baker, and I am in my 5th year as a school psychologist. I came into this field knowing that our profession is very much needed by students, families, and school communities; I also came in knowing that we were nowhere near staffing our schools in Oregon at the NASP-recommended 1 to 500 ratio. At no point in my training could I have predicted what the actual impact of this chronic understaffing would feel like on a day-to-day basis.

In my work in a comprehensive middle school setting, I wear many hats on a daily basis. As a professional trained in mental health working within school systems, I often provide direct intervention (such as suicide screenings) as well as consultative support to teams supporting youth with a variety of needs. Given the prevalence of suicidal ideation in Oregon's youth, with 15% of Oregon's youth reporting serious thoughts of suicide and 25% reporting at least one major depressive episode in the past year, I could be busy all day just addressing this. However, I also conduct psychoeducational evaluations, functional behavior assessments, and support compliance with special education law. Additionally, I work with our pre-referral and Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports teams to support interventions so that we can appropriately address the rates with which we identify students as eligible for special education services, and target disproportionality in special education practices. My training is unique within my building, as I am one of the few staff who can fluidly transition each of those hats on and off each day. The workload is astonishing.

My district has recently taken the very positive step of increasing our school psychologist FTE district-wide in order to improve access to comprehensive and preventative services for our students. This step initially had an unfortunate, yet predictable, outcome: There were not enough applicants for our in-building positions, and FTE was filled by online contractors. I believe that passing the ICSP would be a meaningful step in addressing these shortages, and supporting districts and schools trying to make positive changes that support students. Should ICSP pass, we will be able to encourage highly qualified applicants to move to our beautiful state. The ICSP qualifying criteria is aligned with NASP's Professional Standards that guide the graduate preparation and practice of school psychologists; it will be easier for these highly-qualified school psychologists to accept jobs and make the transition to practice in Oregon. Additionally, school psychologists whose spouses or partners require frequent moves will be able to continue to practice, even if they move between different states participating in the ICSP; they will be able to continue their vital work without administrative delays. This could have a profound positive impact on school psychologists and the school communities they serve.

Please support the enactment of the ICSP--any step we can do to support our youth and our schools simply cannot wait.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Baker, EdS NCSP

School Psychologist