



Restorative Practices Programs

4531 SE Belmont Portland, Oregon 97213 - Phone: 971-888-7829

Subject: SB 1572

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Education,

I am writing to share concerns regarding SB 1572, informed by our direct work with Portland Public Schools and students who are navigating some of the most complex challenges in our education system.

Our program works closely with the restorative justice department in the Portland Public School (PPS) district to support students whose behavior signals unmet needs, trauma, or a lack of appropriate support. What we see every day is that schools are not lacking in willingness to respond differently—they are lacking **resources**. Community-based organizations like ours are being asked to fill critical gaps, and quite simply, we cannot meet the level of need without adequate and sustained funding.

SB 1572 takes a blunt approach to a deeply complex issue. While teachers absolutely need support to maintain safe and effective learning environments, exclusionary responses often remove the very students who most need connection, accountability, and guidance. These approaches do not resolve the underlying issues and frequently lead to higher long-term costs for schools, juvenile justice systems, and communities.

Restorative and relational approaches work. When schools invest in skilled restorative practitioners and community-based partners, students are more likely to remain engaged in learning, take meaningful accountability for harm, and build the skills necessary to succeed. These approaches reduce suspensions and expulsions, decrease repeated incidents, and ultimately save public dollars by preventing escalation into more costly systems.

If we want better outcomes for students and teachers, we must invest upstream. That means funding restorative practices, mental health supports, and community partnerships that keep students in school and supported—rather than relying on exclusion as a default response.



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I urge the committee to request that the bill sponsors return SB 1572 to a working group and bring it forward in a future session with meaningful input from educators, students, families, and community-based practitioners who are doing this work on the ground.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Theresa Huggins, MSCR

Restorative Justice Program Manager

Lutheran Community Services Northwest