

March 23, 2017

Attn: Senator Arnie Roblan  
Senator Dennis Linthicum  
Senator Sara Gelsler  
Senator Mark Hass  
Senator Jeff Kruse  
Ref: Senate Bill 111

Dear Senators of the Committee On Education,

I am writing to encourage you to support and pass SB111. Currently I am the only school nurse in Forest Grove School District that is available to address the healthcare needs of children in the 14 school buildings and locations. Within these buildings there are approximately 6000 students many of which have chronic illnesses that are life threatening. In addition to helping the students optimize their educational opportunities in spite of chronic illnesses, situations occur daily that affect a student's ability to learn and stay in school. I do the best I can to provide services for both chronic and sudden health issues but mostly I just put out fires and try to case manage student needs. This is woefully inadequate.

Research supports that having a school nurse readily available is one of the ways that student graduation rates, attendance and test scores are positively affected. Research also validates that school nurses provide services essential to the safety of students during school and also while on school sponsored activities. It is impossible for one nurse to do this yet the district's budget is already stretched so thin that even one additional nurse is not being considered. Without additional funding the recommendation of one nurse for every 750 students is not realistic.

Senators, these students are precious and every life is irreplaceable. These students are also our future. The better prepared they are to face that future the better for all of us. Your understanding of the benefits of additional school nurse funding and support for this funding has the potential for insuring that Oregon students grow up healthier and sufficiently educated to make Oregon's future bright and prosperous.

Respectfully submitted,  
Donna Wellington, MSN, MBA, RN  
Forest Grove District Nurse