



Date: March 24, 2017

To: House Health Care Committee, Chair Greenlick and Members

From: Laurie Wimmer, OEA Government Relations

RE: *HB 2408 [Trauma-informed care and school-based health centers]*

On behalf of OEA's 44,000 members, it is my honor to testify on HB 2408, which would significantly boost Oregon's ability to meet the mental and physical health needs of our public school students.

OEA supports the concept of this bill, with the caveat that the resources required would exceed the state's ability to provide them unless sufficient new revenues may be found to first fund vital services to which the state is already obligated. This includes at least the no-cuts State School Fund budget level of \$8.4 billion for the 2017-2019 biennium.

Were the will found to raise the revenues needed, our members believe that the next most vital need is to serve students whose unmet mental and physical health issues impair their ability to learn. Our members have documented cases of trauma-related outbursts in some of the youngest students we serve. Weekly "room clears", destruction of property, and violence to other students and to staff have become a regular part of the school day in districts across the state. Clearly, our students need support and intervention services, as well as basic health supports. Attending to their physical and mental health challenges will enable all students to focus on their learning. The need for expansion of these services is great.

It is our members' hope that the 2017 Legislature is able to resolve its structural deficit, raise the resources our students need, and compensate for the probable loss of federal dollars so that our students are able to achieve their dreams, irrespective of the challenges they face.

HB 2408, though it carries a fiscal impact, also carries the promise to begin to address those needs. We therefore add our voice, as a partner in the push for better health care for all our youth, in favor of this expansion of the SBHC and trauma-informed care pilots, should the resources be available to provide these services.