

Oregon students need and deserve HB 3395

This bill opens doors to allow Oregon Schools to best meet the ever-changing needs of their students and communities.

1. Social Workers serve myriad roles in schools related to dropout prevention, poverty services, mental health counseling and referral, family outreach, special education, interfacing with community agencies, enhancing poverty services, and the building of trauma informed, inclusive, and anti-oppressive schools.
2. Social Workers have often served in “counseling” or “Child Development Specialist” (CDS) positions that implement the state Framework on Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling in each school.
3. These positions are especially important because they are the ones that are most broadly funded and also the ones that allow for a consistent presence in a school that makes it possible to truly support the school community and impact levels of trust and engagement by all families.
4. Social Workers can and do provide the key services outlined in the Framework and are in fact trained in ways that have always emphasized a holistic approach, which is the direction that school counselors have now recognized as important (see grid from Framework).
5. School social workers do teach anti-bullying curriculum, sex abuse prevention, positive behavioral supports, and can and do provide classroom supports. They are not certified as teachers and cannot take over a classroom all day. But they do take the lead in facilitating these skill trainings. Best practices and their level of certification guide us to have teachers present in the classroom to observe these lessons so that they are prepared to provide ongoing follow-up and support of these trauma-informed or preventative curriculums.
6. Oregon schools (and the children and families of our state) will be best served if we eliminate “unfair trade restrictions” or the efforts of any one discipline to own certain positions. Principals should have the option to hire the TSPC-licensed professional who is best qualified to meet the needs of their particular school.
7. **Making sure these core counseling or CDS positions are open to social workers is a no-cost way to allow for the enhancement of services related to addressing trauma and mental health crises, reducing absenteeism, preventing drop out, and increasing family engagement and inclusivity.**

Susie Snyder LCSW
Professor Emeritus
Portland State University School of Social Work