

Testimony in Support of HB 3395

My name is Dr. Julie Prindle, and I am writing in support of HB 3395. I have been working as a school social worker for the past 16 years serving some of the highest needs students and school communities in Portland. I cannot begin to express how important this bill is for our students, families, staff and school communities in a time of great uncertainty and limited resources. I am asking for us to choose this bill as a choice to better support our students and families at this time and to give choice to administrators who are begging for the support of school social workers in their schools.

Passing this bill would mean:

- We are creating an opportunity for districts and administrators to be able to choose who would best meet the needs of the school community.
- We are opening the door for social workers to fully assess the needs of the school community and design the support based on these needs.
- We are allowing school social workers who are experts in the field of trauma-informed care, multi-tiered systems of support, and equity work to support our students and families.
- We are providing teachers and school staff access to resources, support, and training from school social workers who have expertise in the area of supporting schools at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
- We are providing schools full time access to mental health support.
- We are hiring school social workers who are skilled at addressing barriers to attendance, academic achievement, the opportunity gap, and graduation.

As an adjunct professor with Portland State University, I teach students how to be social workers in schools and can specifically speak to the intensive training and knowledge they are expected to have in order to become licensed to work in schools. They are trained in educational law and policy; special education laws and how to support the IEP process and plans; ethical guidelines around working in schools; how to develop and facilitate multi-tiered systems of support; how to engage and support youth in post-secondary education and career paths from a strengths based perspective; how to work to address equity issues and disproportionate discipline; how to work with early childhood – 12th grade students; how to engage families; how to develop and support trauma-sensitive schools; how to support staff; how to develop and provide evidence-based practices in schools; and how to contribute to research and analysis in the field.

Allowing schools to choose based on the needs of the community is the equitable choice. Students, families, and staff deserve to have access to school social workers who can provide the support needed to achieve school success.

Please vote YES on HB 3395.

Sincerely,

Dr. Julie Prindle, Ph.D., LCSW
Senior Manager of Social Work Services
Portland Public Schools