

April 12, 2017

Testimony in Support of HB 3395

Dear Chair Doherty and Members of the House Education Committee,

School social workers should be able to provide services to youth and families in school settings in the elementary, middle and high school levels. School administrators and communities should be able to make the decision if a school social worker or counselor is a better fit for the needs of the community.

Through their Masters of Social Work program and school social work licensure preparation programs, social workers learn about:

- Holistic assessments of youth and families, understanding how their environment and family context influences students and their abilities to learn
- How to do whole-class instruction and classroom management
- How to facilitate groups for: social-emotional learning, behavior management, issues related to family dynamics (including substance abuse or incarceration), bullying, sex abuse prevention, and/or friendship skills
- Assessment and interventions for individuals, families, organizations, and communities
- Advocacy skills to assist individuals, families, and communities
- Resource navigation for basic needs
- Working with systems like DHS, juvenile justice, and/or health care

In order to be licensed as a school social worker, school social workers must adhere to the National Association of Social Workers values and ethics that include social justice, equity, and empowerment. A few additional requirements to obtain the school licensure include:

- 500 hours of direct practicum experience in a school with experience in:
 - Direct classroom instruction
 - Facilitating groups
 - Assessments and interventions for individuals, families, organizations, and communities
- 500 hours in a community-based organization that serves youth in order to gain diverse tools
- Experience with youth across *all* age groups
- Ethical and legal coursework in the school of education

We are not asking to be licensed teachers or to fill those jobs. The skills we teach in our guidance lessons are meant to enhance learning, and teachers should be there in order to reinforce all throughout the year the information that is being taught. This is the best practice for learning.

Please vote YES on HB 3395.

Sincerely,

Anna Esko
Masters of Social Work Student
Former Youth Advocate in school settings across Multnomah County