

Testimony in Support of HB 3395

My name is Kimm Stewart, and I have served adults with disabilities in Oregon for the last 5 years via Vocational Rehabilitation. Many of my clients come to our program after leaving a school transitions experience. I can personally attest to the resilience demonstrated by clients who have been served during their school years by an in-school social worker.

School social workers should be able to provide services to youth and families in school settings in the elementary and middle 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 Master of Social Work (MSW) and school social work licensure preparation programs, students 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 & 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 & communities
- Advocacy skills to assist individuals, families, and communities
- Resource navigation for basic needs
- Working with systems like DHS, juvenile justice, and/or healthcare

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

- 500 hours on direct practicum experience in a school with experience in:
 - Direct classroom instruction
 - Facilitating groups
 - Assessments and interventions for individuals, families, organizations, & 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 course in the school of education

We are not asking for school social workers to be licensed teachers or to fill those jobs. The skills school social workers teach in 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 best practice for learning.

Please vote YES on HB 3395.

Sincerely,

Kimm Stewart, Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP)