

February 6, 2017

To: Representative Margaret Doherty, Chair
House Education Committee

From: Katie Loewen
School Counselor
daVinci Arts Middle School, Portland, Oregon

Re: HB 2529 Support

Testimony in Support of HB 2529

Chair Doherty and members of the House Education Committee:

Thank you so much for your willingness to read my testimony. I am a full time counselor at the middle school level in Portland in my seventh year of the profession. I am writing in support of HB 2529. In order for school counselors to be able to effectively and professionally accomplish their goals and responsibilities tasked to them by the American School Counseling Association, they must have the support of an administrator who truly understands the breadth of their work.

Career and College Readiness for all students has been a major goal for educational efforts both at the national and state level and will remain so for years to come. Career and College Readiness is key not only at the high school level but also at elementary and middle. Oregon's graduation rates and attendance rates are of concern to all educators and to those concerned about education. Student personal, social/emotional and mental health issues are often the source of students not attending school on a regular basis and thus not graduating.

In examining the coursework required for school administrators to earn the Preliminary School Administrator License awarded by Oregon's Teacher Standards and Practices Commission reveals that administrators are not required to take any coursework that prepares them to understand the role of the school counselor nor the issues that school counselors are assigned to work with. Many school counselors in Oregon are still being inappropriately evaluated using processes and forms created to evaluate teachers rather than utilizing school counselor appropriate evaluation processes.

Administrators do not have the necessary preparation to respond to the national and state focus on Career and College Readiness for all students agenda. In addition, they do not have the know-how to support their school counselors in achieving this goal. At the same time that educators are reporting increasing concerns about students social/emotional, behavioral and

mental health issues, neither district nor building leaders have had any educational preparation regarding best practice in working with their school counselors to respond to these issues.

In moving forward, to be awarded the Preliminary School Administrator License, administrators should be required to take coursework addressing Oregon's comprehensive school counseling requirements and best practice in the following areas: appropriate evaluation of the work of school counselors, working with their school counselor to promote the Career and College Readiness of all students, and working with their school counselor to address students' social/emotional, behavioral and mental health issues.

In order to provide professional development to school administrators already licensed by TSPC, TSPC will specify that professional development units be submitted by school administrators for renewal of licenses on the following topics; comprehensive school counseling program requirements of OAR 581-022-1510, Career and College Readiness for all students and how to work with school counselors to accomplish this goal, best practices in addressing students' social/emotional, behavioral and mental health issues and how to work more effectively with school counselors and other professionals to assist students and families with these concerns.