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Senator Roblan and members of the House Committee on Education:

Beaverton School Nurses strongly support SB 187. Please fund the previously unfunded vision screening mandate that was HB 3000. This is an issue of equity and parity for all Oregon students. All students deserve equal access to a quality, effective vision screening program. Access to a quality program that meets the minimum requirements of HB300 may be financially problematic for some districts. Enacting HB 187 would “level the playing field” for our students around the state.

HB 187 directs ODE to reimburse education providers for expenses incurred from providing vision screenings and establishes a Vision Health Account for the purpose of making reimbursements.

We know that identification and early treatment of correctable eye problems can greatly improve student outcome. In one Beaverton pilot program, we found that 25% of our intensive readers at one title 1 school needed reading glasses. Why can't Johnny read well? Johnny cannot read well because he cannot see! If 80% of learning is visual, we are denying these children access to an appropriate education. Ensuring that a child has needed glasses may also reduce the costs of providing intensive interventions.

We ask you to support HB 187 as all Oregon children deserve to have vision issues identified and addressed. Distribution of needed funds will enable all districts to provide a vision program that will meet the mandates in HB 3000.

Sincerely,

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