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Colt Gill

Director of Public Instruction

HB 2026: Trauma-Informed Practices
House Committee on Education
January 30, 2019

Good afternoon, Chair Doherty, members of the committee. For the record, Jan McComb, the legislative coordinator with the Department of Education. With me is Cheng Fei Lai, formerly with the Chief Education Office and now with our department, overseeing the project. We are here to ask for your support for HB 2026, which will extend the trauma-informed pilot project created two years ago and transfer the program from the Chief Education Office to the Department of Education.

The CDC has found childhood stress significantly affects a person's health well into adulthood. An "Adverse Childhood Experience" (ACE) is defined as abuse, neglect, and family/household challenges in a person under 18 years of age. These experiences include physical, sexual, and emotional abuse; household violence and substance abuse; family criminality; mental illness within the family; poverty; divorce and separation; and physical or emotional neglect.

As the number of experiences increase, so do the likely consequences. The CDC has found an elevated risk of the following conditions among children with ACEs: depression, alcoholism, sexual violence, heart disease, financial stress, smoking, adolescent pregnancy, and suicide attempts. Trauma actually changes how the brain functions.

At school, these children are more likely to have poor academic achievement, poor attendance, behavior problems, special health care needs, social-emotional delays and are more likely to repeat a grade. School staff are not trained to recognize the signs of trauma; often these students are viewed as problem kids, rather than kids with problems. Interventions are key to helping these kids be happy, healthy, and successful.

The 2016 Legislature enacted HB 4002¹, which set up pilot program using trauma-informed approaches to education, health services, and intervention strategies in schools in an effort to decrease rates of school absenteeism. The Chief Education Office would lead the three-year pilot and use existing trauma-informed models in coordination with CCOs, public health agencies, the justice system, parents, and nonprofits. The legislature appropriated \$500,000 for the pilot program. Two schools were chosen to participate: one in Central School District

¹ The contents of HB 4031 was amended into HB 4002; see testimony on HB 4031 (2016).

(Independence) and one in Tigard-Tualatin School District. A final report on the pilot program is due October 2019.

HB 2026 does three things:

- 1) It extends the Trauma Informed Practices (TIP) pilot program for two additional years. Extending the pilot allows Oregon to research effective strategies then form a statewide approach to examine longitudinal effects on TIP on student outcomes and promising system wide TIP implementation, starting in school systems. Currently, there is no consensus on a definitive approach to Trauma Informed Practices in the national educational community.
- 2) It transfers the program from the Chief Education Office to the Department of Education, in recognition of the CEO sunseting.
- 3) It extends the due date of the report from October 2019 to June 30, 2020 (preliminary) and June 30, 2022 (final).

Thank you for your attention. I hope you can support HB 2026. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.