

Presentation in Support of SB 584 – The Oregon Safe to Learn Act

**Dave Novotney, Ph.D., Superintendent
Willamette Education Service District, and
Vice Chair of the Oregon Task Force on School Safety
Before the Senate Education Committee
February 6, 2019**

- Good Afternoon! Chair Wagner, Vice Chair Thomsen and members of the committee.
- For the record, my name is Dave Novotney and I am the Superintendent of the Willamette Education Service District.
- I'm appearing today as the Vice Chair of the Oregon Task Force on School Safety and I would like to provide you with a brief overview of SB 584 - *The Oregon Safe to Learn Act* and discuss how this bill would support many of the previous bills discussed during today's hearing. We've been asked to return on February 25th to provide additional testimony to the committee. Presenting with me today is...
 - Travis Hampton, Superintendent of the Oregon State Police. Superintendent Hampton is a member of the Task Force and, as you know, a strong advocate for improving school safety in our state.
- As you may recall, the Oregon Legislature created the Task Force on School Safety in 2014. The legislation brought together policy makers from the Governor's office, the Legislature, education, law enforcement, fire and rescue and public mental health to collectively focus on strengthening safety in Oregon schools.
- Since then, the Task Force has worked diligently to identify effective and sustainable school safety strategies. Our work has been collaborative in nature and includes a wide-range of stakeholders who are reaching beyond traditional silos to solve critical issues that will make our schools safer for students and staff. *The Oregon Safe to Learn Act* is the result of these collaborative efforts.
- The Task Force recommends that the Legislature authorize and fund SB 584 - *The Oregon Safe to Learn Act*. This act will establish a Statewide School Safety and Prevention System administered by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE).

- A biennial budget of \$3.87 million will allow ODE to hire 15.1 FTE to implement this system, which will create an infrastructure for supporting ALL Oregon schools and education service districts in three critical areas:
 - Bullying and harassment prevention
 - Youth suicide prevention and wellness promotion
 - Multidisciplinary safety assessment teams

[Refer to the Informational Flyer Titled “Oregon Safe to Learn Act” – Discuss Highlights of the System](#)

- The proposed system will:
 - Assist schools in implementing effective, evidence-based **bullying and harassment prevention** programs to help school personnel curtail the persistent problem of bullying and harassment in our schools.
 - Concerns about bullying and harassment are the most frequent issues reported through SafeOregon, our statewide school safety tip line.
 - Bullying and harassment continues to be one of the most significant concerns reported by 8th and 11th grade students in the Oregon Healthy Teens survey.
 - Assist schools in implementing effective **youth suicide prevention and wellness promotion** programs to help school personnel combat the tragic and ongoing issue of youth suicide in our state.
 - Suicide remains the second leading cause of death for Oregon students between the ages of 10 and 24.
 - In 2017, 107 youths between the ages of 10-24 took their own lives. A significant increase from the previous year.
 - Assist schools in implementing **multidisciplinary safety assessment teams** to help school personnel to identify, assess and support students who present a potential risk for violence toward others.
 - Safety assessment is a promising practice recommended by a long list of organizations, including the US Departments of Education and Justice, National Association of School Psychologists, the FBI and US Secret Service.
 - Assist schools in **promoting the use of SafeOregon**, our statewide school safety tip line.
- It’s also important to emphasize that the *Oregon Safe to Learn Act* provides the infrastructure that could provide support and technical assistance to school districts in

implementing other new legislation such as the bills discussed earlier today during this hearing. [Discuss SB 52 – Adi’s Act](#)

- The Statewide School Safety and Prevention System will align with the Oregon Equity Lens in order to mitigate any potential disproportionate impact on students of color; students who identify as LGBTQ; female students; students with disabilities; as well as other protected classes of individuals.
- This proposal has received support from Governor Brown, the Joint Committee on Student Success and many other organizations, including the ...
 - Oregon Department of Education
 - Oregon State Police
 - Oregon School Boards Association
 - Confederation of Oregon School Administrators
 - Oregon Association of Education Service Districts
 - Oregon Education Association
 - Oregon School Employees Association
 - Association of Community Mental Health Programs
 - Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police
 - Oregon State Sheriffs’ Association; and
 - Oregon Fire Chiefs Association.
- The Task Force is grateful to the Legislature for its vision, support and commitment to maintaining safe schools. We urge your support of SB 584.
- Thank you! I’ll turn the presentation over to Superintendent Hampton now.