



Please Support House Bill 2224: Meeting the Social, Emotional, & Mental Health Needs of Students

SUMMARY

HB 2224 makes a meaningful investment in improving the social, emotional, and mental health of our students by providing resources to school districts to hire social workers, school counselors, school nurses, school psychologists, mental health specialists, and other professionals to work with students and their families. Resources are also available for professional development around trauma-informed practices and social and emotional learning for educators and students.

THE CHALLENGE

Our students are facing serious challenges outside the classroom that impact their ability to learn at school. Students experiencing trauma walk into Oregon classrooms every single day, and our schools lack the resources and infrastructure necessary to support them, leaving thousands of kids without adequate tools and strategies to deal with their experiences in a healthy and productive way. Adverse childhood experiences affect students across the socioeconomic spectrum and in communities across Oregon, and these experiences have significant impacts on the health and academic capacity of students.

THE SOLUTION

While schools alone cannot address the unmet social, emotional, and mental health needs of students, schools are uniquely positioned to deliver many of the critical services that children and their families need. By creating a funding stream designated specifically for school-based wraparound services, we can streamline student access to mental health professionals and improve health and academic outcomes.

POLICY AND FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

HB 2224 will invest \$85 million in the “Student Social and Emotional Health and Development Fund,” which will be managed by the Department of Education and distributed directly to districts based on their ADMw, with a minimum of \$10,000 for each district. These funds may be spent in four areas: 1) hiring and contracting with student and family support professionals, including counselors, nurses, social workers, mental health therapists, school psychologists, and family engagement specialists, to serve the health needs of students and families; 2) facilitating the implementation of high quality professional development and training on social and emotional learning, mental health, and trauma-informed care that is culturally responsive (with recommendations from ODE); 3) co-locating and coordinating services between school districts and healthcare organizations; and 4) creating a statewide Data Sharing Implementation Team to eliminate barriers between education and healthcare providers.

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