



Matthew Eide
Administrator

PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Reconnection Services
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March 8, 2019

Dear Education Committee Members,

School Social Workers make a difference. They make a difference in the lives of our students, in the culture of our schools, and in our ability to improve graduation and completion rates.

As an administrator of a district-wide drop-out recovery program, a small alternative school, and a federal school improvement grant, I can attest to the importance of having Social Workers in the building as part of a school staff. Every day, our School Social Workers provide essential support to students, families, and staff. Without them, we would not be able to meet the needs of young people who are navigating poverty, dealing with trauma, and experiencing mental health crises.

School Social Workers make a difference, in large part, because they are part of a school's staff, community, and culture. Many of our students resist referral to outside mental health and substance abuse providers. However, they welcome the opportunity to connect with school based social workers because they are here every day, in classrooms, in the hallways, and in students' lives.

With that in mind, I strongly urge the Education Committee to invest in making School Social Workers a part of every school community. Every building in the state would benefit from a school based social worker. If we want to make a difference in the lives of our students, if we want to close achievement gaps, if we want to improve graduation rates...School Social Workers can make a difference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Eide".

Matthew Eide

Administrator, Reconnection Services
Director, PREP Project
Portland Public Schools