

Stabilize Funding for the Oregon Student Health Survey

Significant investments in school mental health are likely in the 2019 Session to address concerns raised by multiple stakeholders through the Joint Committee on Student Success process, particularly students. The Oregon Student Health Survey, the only statewide survey of student health in Oregon, can help track data to assess the efficacy of investments, but it does not have stabilized funding or staff capacity necessary to tell educators and policymakers if the investments are making a difference. The Joint Committee on Student Success has directed the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to work with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to combine current student surveys into a valid, reliable statewide student and school climate survey **which is a good first step.**

Currently, Public Health programs at OHA pool limited programmatic dollars to fund survey administration. There is inadequate capacity at the state level to provide schools and districts that participate with meaningful feedback or technical assistance on what their data “say”. To many schools and districts, the survey is often viewed as a burdensome exercise, leaving schools unaware of the wealth of information available about their student population and without the necessary information to make data-informed decisions.

Proposed Solution

Stabilize funding for the Oregon Student Health Survey by dedicating an estimated \$1 million/biennium of General Fund dollars to fund:

- Administration of the survey once/biennium.
- Three additional staff positions in the Oregon Health Authority (Program Design and Evaluation Services) to support communication and liaison with schools for survey administration, data analysis, and technical assistance. This added capacity would provide schools/districts with the support they need to better utilize and understand their local survey data and foster greater buy-in and support for the survey.

Stabilize the system that can help show if the investments made in mental health are moving the needle. Please provide the critical resources to help schools and communities make data-informed decisions about the health and well-being of their students now and for years to come.

For more information, contact:

Liz Thorne, MPH. Chair of the Healthy Kids Learn Better Coalition

liz@cairnguidance.com

