

Susan McLain  
State Representative  
House District 29



May 15, 2019  
Joint Committee on Student Success

Chair Smith Warner and Roblan, Members of the Committee:

For the record, I'm Susan McLain, State Representative for District 29, West Hillsboro, Cornelius, and Forest Grove.

For the past several years, I, like many of you, have heard from parents, students, and educators across my district raising the alarm about the crisis of disrupted learning. Students arriving to school with unmet needs, whether food insecurity, housing insecurity, trauma, a lack of socialization, screen time issues for students or parents, all manifesting in extreme ways in the classroom: violent outbursts, an inability to focus, disrespect toward teachers and other students, sometimes causing room clears– or classroom evacuations– harassment of other students, and occasionally injuries to classroom teachers and other staff.

While we have a clear sense of how this is materializing in society, and the impacts it is having on our schools, the reality is that no one has arrived on a completely clear sense of why; or what to do about it.

HB 2902 begins to that process– ensuring we begin to look at what is truly happening in our schools, and beginning to collect some data that will allow us to begin to get a real sense of the magnitude of the problem, and to explore patterns that exist that might lead to some clues about the underlying causes.

Additionally, we need a better sense of how to get more mental and behavioral health professionals into our schools to respond to this crisis.

Finally, we need a better way of learning about, and replicating programs and responses that work. We have 197 school districts across Oregon. Some are doing innovative things to respond to this crisis. These responses could be helpful to other districts across the state who are wrestling with the same challenges. We need a way to track and share good ideas and best practices that could be formalized in pilot programs in the future or funded through grants or other methodologies statewide. But that infrastructure doesn't currently exist.

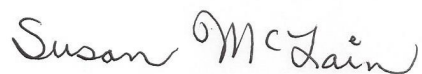
HB 2902 responds to these problems in multiple ways:

1. It Requires school districts to report on the number of classroom evacuations or “room clears” that occur in their classrooms. This isn’t designed to stigmatize anyone– we know these incidents are occurring in districts in every part of our state. I know there is a wariness around additional reporting. I have it myself. But this is information we truly need in order to respond to this crisis.
2. Directs school districts to identify the number and type of injuries sustained by employees from students.
3. Directs ODE to investigate options for sharing best practices related to improving student behaviors.

The disrupted learning crisis is complex, and I believe there are a number of factors leading to this challenge in our schools. It is going to require a variety of methods to address it.

I hope you’ll join me as we take steps forward to respond to this urgent issue together. HB 2902 will help provide much needed information that will allow for an informed response to the disrupted learning crisis in Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan McLain". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Representative Susan McLain