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Date February 3, 2020

TO: The Honorable Margaret Doherty, Chair
House Committee on Education

FROM: Dean Sidelinger, State Health Officer
Oregon Health Authority

SUBJECT: HB 4132 - Student Health Survey

Chair Doherty and members of the committee;

I am Dean Sidelinger, State Health Officer with the Oregon Health Authority. I am here today to talk about the Student Health Survey.

First, a little bit of background. Every two years since 2001, we have surveyed students about their health. Our survey is available on paper or on a computer, currently in English or Spanish. It is anonymous and confidential. It is also voluntary – for school districts, for each school, and for every parent and student.

For 2020, we streamlined two different surveys into one, now known as the Student Health Survey. Previously we surveyed 8th and 11th grade students, and this year we are adding 6th graders. Also previously, we would select a representative sample that included about one-quarter of those students, but now we will encourage any and all school districts that wish to participate.

We worked closely with the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and other partners to develop questions on topics including:

- School climate and bullying
- Mental health and suicide
- Access to health care

- Nutrition and exercise
- Sex education and preventive measures, and
- Use of tobacco, alcohol, and other substances.

This survey is the primary source of reliable, population-based adolescent health data in our state. It helps schools, school districts, state agencies, and local communities:

- Understand their greatest health challenges
- Identify health disparities among different student populations
- Make plans to improve student health
- Solicit funding for those plans, and
- Measure the outcomes.

A key benefit of the survey is that it can reveal connections between health and academic outcomes, because we know that healthier students are better able to learn.

A major challenge for the Student Health Survey is funding. There is no dedicated funding for the survey. Instead, we identify funds from various programs within OHA that each have a question or two they would like to get answered. This makes the funding unstable, and it does not support the robust capacity desired to engage youth and other partners to craft the survey or to help schools and communities understand and use their results.

The Oregon Health Authority's overall goals regarding the Student Health Survey are to:

1. Connect the survey with the Student Success Act through our strategic partnership with ODE
2. Encourage school districts to participate in the survey by making it meaningful and relevant to their goals
3. Provide direct assistance to districts and communities to help them understand and apply their findings
4. Better engage stakeholders, including students of color and students with disabilities, and consult with Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes, in creating the survey and interpreting the findings
5. Ensure that the survey is accessible to all students and complies with race, ethnicity, language and disability data collection standards, and

6. Stabilize funding for the survey so it is not tied to particular questions or topics.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions you might have.