

Dear Senate Committee on Education,

That Oregon does not currently have notification requirements for school districts upon receipt of report of an act of harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyberbullying is a grievous oversight. I'm a parent of two young children that attended our local public school. One of my children shared with me that their sibling and our neighbor's child had been bullied repeatedly on the bus for several weeks. When I expressed my concern to school staff, I was upset to learn that the bus driver and school employees had been aware of an issue, but weren't required to notify us. My child said they were too embarrassed to ask for help, that they didn't want to make a big deal. Yet, they said that after I had talked with school staff, the situation improved. Parents can't advocate and facilitate change for their children when they aren't aware of an issue.

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Carson Bride: a young man I babysat for many years. Carson succumbed to suicide following repeated cyberbullying by students of his high school. It is my understanding that school staff were aware of bullying that Carson may have experienced at school, of which his parents were unaware.

A CDC Report titled "The Relationship Between Bullying and Suicide" states, "...youth who report any involvement with bullying behavior are more likely to report high-levels of suicide-related behavior." In a separate report, the CDC states 19% of children reported that they were bullied AT SCHOOL. It is apparent that the CDC is aware of the negative outcomes associated with bullying. Therefore, to not require schools to notify parents: those most likely to connect their children with support following an experience of bullying behavior, seems negligent.

On behalf of Carson, my own children, and the nearly 1 in 5 children that report having been bullied at school, I urge you to support HB2631.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Conachy