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Colt Gill

Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction

MOVING EQUITY FORWARD

Senate Bill 52: LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Success Plan Senate Education Committee February 1, 2021

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Thomsen and Members of the Committee, I am Colt Gill, Director of the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 52.

LGBTQ2SIA+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/non-binary, Queer/Questioning, Two-Spirit, Intersex, Asexual, + (recognizes that there are myriad ways to describe gender identities & sexual orientations)

During the 2019 session, the legislature enacted [House Bill \(HB\) 3427](#), which established the [Student Success Act](#). Under section 25, ODE received the authority to identify and support additional statewide equity initiatives, similar to the African American/Black Student Success Plan, American Indian or Alaska Native Student Success Plan, Latino, Latina, Latinx, and Indigenous Peoples Student Success Plan, and the English Learners/Emerging Bilinguals Advisory Group.

The department has identified an additional equity initiative: [LGBTQ2IA+ Student Success Plan](#). The recommendation is to adopt the plan in statute similar to the other student success plans and efforts. This plan is needed. Often LGBTQ-identifying students are harmed by others in our schools and by institutional practices themselves. As we engaged with Oregon's LGBTQ students and communities we were able to develop specific practices and policies that could be put in place to better support all our students

The Oregon Safe Schools and Communities Coalition found that close to half of transgender-identifying youth and just under half of LGB youth indicated suicidal ideation in 2017 and that LGBT youth are up to three times more likely to miss school based on reasonable fears of bullying, harassment, or intimidation. Bias-based bullying related to gender identity or sexual orientation was reported by 1 of every 2 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer (LGBTQ+) students in 2017. In addition, 1 in 5 transgender youth and 1 in 10 LGBT youth reported they were threatened with a weapon at school in 2017. The 2017 Oregon Healthy Teen Survey found

that 21% of 8th graders who identify as transgender or gender nonconforming missed more school days.

This is unacceptable. We need to take action to support our children. The plan we have developed highlights the necessity for an intersectional framework that addresses the multiple identities of LGBTQ2SIA+ students. Student experiences related to racial identity, tribal sovereignty, religious identity, social class, disability, and immigration status interact with their experiences associated with the LGBTQ2SIA+ identity. Supporting the multiple valuable and affirming identities of these youth as assets, embracing their lived experiences, and creating nurturing environments for these youth means we need to think deeply about how our previous work to support student success has set a new foundation for our state.

In this plan we established strategies to increase inclusivity, increase student belonging, reduce bullying, address bias-based harassment and campus assaults, and improve attendance. We know from what youth share about their experiences, and what research and data shows, that our state has an opportunity to support the strengths and resilience of LGBTQ2SIA+ students.

With that, I'd like to ask our Director of Government Relations and External Affairs to share a bit more about Senate Bill 52.

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Thomsen and Members of the Committee, I am Jessica Ventura, Director Government Relations and External Affairs. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 52.

SB 52 adopts and funds the [plan](#) developed by LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Success Advisory group composed of students and community members. In establishing this plan, we want to highlight the necessity for an intersectional framework that addresses the multiple identities LGBTQ2SIA+ students occupy. Student experiences related to racial identity, tribal sovereignty, religious identity, social class, disability, and immigration status interact with their experiences associated with the LGBTQ2SIA+ identity. Supporting the multiple valuable identities of these youth as assets, embracing their lived experiences, and creating nurturing environments for these youth means we need to think deeply about how our previous work to support student success has set a new foundation for our state.

LGBTQ2SIA+ students have a right to a safe, supportive and inclusive education, free from violence, harassment and discrimination. After the Student Success Act passed in 2019, ODE

created the LGBTQ2SIA+ Advisory Group. This group then developed a [LGBTQ2SIA Student Plan](#). A key component of creating the plan was talking with the students themselves. Organized in partnership with education service districts, community-based organizations and school districts, this youth engagement consisted of four sessions (including current K-12 students and those who are no longer in school) between February and May 2020 in the South Coast, The Dalles, Southern Oregon and the Portland metropolitan area. Data from a focus group done by a Lane County school district to inform Student Success Act priorities that included students of color and LGBTQ2SIA+ students is also incorporated.

A LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Success Plan will put us on a path to decrease instances of bullying and harassment. It will also position ODE to spotlight students who often have been marginalized. The plan provides strategies and goals to create educational and social-emotional support for Oregon's K-12 LGBTQ2SIA+ students who are at significantly high risk for bullying and harassment, suffering violence while at school, sexual assault, chronic absenteeism and suicidal ideation.

The plan addresses:

1. the need for professional learning among Oregon educators,
2. equitable access to appropriate educational curriculum, facilities and activities,
3. necessary data collection through an annual climate survey and student advisory group to inform future decision making regarding this student population.

The estimated cost for the 21-23 biennium is approximately \$2.2 million. 1 full-time policy analyst position (OPA4) and \$2 million for grants to support implementation of the plan.

We urge your support of Senate Bill 52.

Colt Gill
Director

Jessica Ventura
Government Relations Director