



Dr. Gustavo Balderas
Superintendent

Beaverton School District
1260 NW Waterhouse Avenue | Beaverton, Oregon 97006
www.beaverton.k12.or.us

To: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Healthcare
Re: House Bill 2395-2 Opioid Harm Reduction Omnibus
Date: January 30, 2023

Chair Nosse and members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health & Health Care,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 2395, specifically the portions that pertain to school districts.

As superintendent of the third-largest public school district in Oregon, I have a responsibility to the safety and wellbeing of the nearly 40,000 students attending Beaverton schools. I therefore support HB 2395's provisions increasing access to anti-overdose medication like naloxone and protections from legal liability for individuals, school districts and school boards when such medications are provided to someone suspected to be overdosing on opioids.

The impact of opioids has been a growing concern for schools, including the risks of overdoses. Beaverton School District has lost several youth in our community in recent years to unintentional overdose from fake prescription pills containing fentanyl. Tragically, these cases show that one pill can kill. Teens may purchase what they think are OxyContin, Percocet or Xanax pills via social media, but what they get are fake pills with the cheaper, stronger and more deadly synthetic opioid drug fentanyl. It can be lethal in very small amounts, especially dangerous for those who do not have a tolerance from regular use of opioids. An unintentional overdose could happen in a school or anywhere in our community.

School staff know they must have parents'/guardians' written consent before administering medication to a student under normal circumstances. In a life-threatening emergency, delaying for parent approval could be deadly. Outside the school day, schools serve as community spaces, hosting visitors from across our community, some of whom may be experiencing opioid abuse. Schools should be confident that they can take critical action to save a person's life in an emergency and be legally protected.

Every Oregon school district has automated external defibrillator (AED) devices at school sites and trains staff and students in their use. Having defibrillators in public buildings has saved the lives of many victims of sudden cardiac arrest. Providing greater access and liability protections for anti-overdose medication will similarly save lives.

Please support the safety and wellbeing of our students and community members by giving our schools and staff greater access to these life-saving interventions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gustavo Balderas', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Dr. Gustavo Balderas
Superintendent of Schools
Beaverton School District

District Goal: WE empower all students to achieve post-high school success.

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