

February 2, 2023

House Committee on Rules  
Representative Julie Fahey, Chair

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 2708

Chair Fahey and Members of the House Committee on Rules:

Thank you for the opportunity to express strong support for House Bill (HB) 2708 on behalf of the Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA). I am a school lead secretary, and I can attest to the essential role that classified employees and professional education staff play in the success of our children. They are often the unsung heroes who work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that our schools run smoothly and our students receive the support they need to succeed.

From the school custodian who keeps our buildings clean and safe, to the office staff who handle countless administrative tasks, to the educational support professionals who provide one-on-one assistance to students, these individuals are integral to the functioning of our schools.

That is why I believe it is a good idea to increase awareness and respect for these individuals as professional education staff. By recognizing their contributions and providing them with the support they need to do their jobs effectively, we can create a positive and supportive working environment that benefits everyone.

Through events like a classified appreciation week, we can acknowledge the hard work and dedication of these individuals and show them that they are valued members of our educational community. By providing professional development opportunities, we can also help these professionals improve their skills and knowledge, which will ultimately benefit our students.

In conclusion, classified employees are professional education staff who are critical to the success of our schools, and it is essential that we increase awareness and respect for them as professional educators.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

Justin Dowel

Member, OSEA Gresham