



TO: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care
FROM: Stacy Michaelson, East Multnomah County Schools
DATE: February 14, 2023
RE: HB 2979

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Goodwin and Nelson, Members of the Committee:

I submit this testimony on behalf of the six school districts in East Multnomah County: Centennial, Corbett, David Douglas, Gresham-Barlow, Parkrose and Reynolds, as well as Multnomah Education Service District. Combined, these districts serve roughly 40,000 students from highly diverse backgrounds.

Among the six school districts in East County, there are three “Health Sciences” Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs: one at David Douglas High School, one at Parkrose High School, and one at the Center for Advanced Learning, which is a charter school sponsored by Gresham-Barlow School District and operated in partnership with Centennial and Reynolds School Districts. Grant funding to add exploratory courses in the dental health field to our existing CTE array is of great interest to our districts.

One of the priorities for CTE programming is that districts focus on high-wage, high demand career fields. There is great promise in connecting students with a field like dental assistant; it gives them the ability to earn a living wage without needing a post-secondary degree, or allows them to make a decent wage working part-time while pursuing further education should they choose to advance in the field.

These are exactly the type of opportunities we want to provide our students. But it does require an up-front investment, which can be a heavy lift for districts. The grant funding provided in HB 2979 makes it feasible for districts to consider adding curriculum and courses specific to the dental professions to our Health Sciences CTE offerings. For this reason, I urge your support of HB 2979.

Thank you.