

SB 1002: Supporting Districts with School Safety & Emergency Management
Senate Education Committee
March 25, 2023

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the Senate Education Committee, my name is Gene Biggs. I am the Emergency Preparedness Consultant with the School Safety & Emergency Management (SSEM) program. I serve the Central Coast region which includes Willamette ESD Linn, Benton, Lincoln - ESD and Lane – ESD. This large region has a vast variety of districts, including the 2nd largest district in Oregon to some of the smallest districts in Oregon.

This program helps to create equity between districts by giving smaller districts the opportunity to have the same support as the larger districts. The SSEM's work closely with the School Safety and Prevent System (SSPS) teams and the schools to give a broader support in school safety. These approaches compliment each other while working to support the schools in a much different way. The focus of SSPS is on behavioral safety with individual threat assessments, suicide awareness and prevention, interventions and postvention plans. Where SSEM focuses on the security of the environment around the school, the physical structure of the schools. They work with the schools to help develop plans and procedures around Prevention, Protection, mitigation of all threats (i.e. gun, bomb, person) and hazards (i.e. Wild fire, flood, earthquake) both internal and external.

This program helps to ensure the safety of the students and the staff by way of helping them update older plans, develop new plans and exercise these plans. So, no matter what the threat or hazard the school might face the community can have comfort that our children and the staff will be prepared to respond quickly with the confidence and knowledge needed no matter what size the district is or resources available. So many districts now rely on the support of the SSEM team both large and small in their prevention, response to and their recovery from all threats and all hazards.

These teams have been working closely with each other and the schools to support as much as they can but this takes time to reach all the schools and all the districts. The funding shift from grant supported to state supported will ensure that this work can continue and every school in Oregon can be the safest it can be. All schools no matter the size will be properly prepared and have the ability to respond to anything that might threaten the safety of all our children.

Help keep our children safe! Support SB 1002 for Oregon K-12 schools and districts.

Thank you.

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