



**Columbia Gorge Education Service District**  
*Dedicated to Enhancing Education Opportunities*

Feb 5, 2024

Chair Nosse and Members of the Committee:

My name is Pat Sublette and I am the Superintendent of Columbia Gorge Education Service District. I'm writing in support of HB 4070, which provides critical resources that youth and families across Oregon need now. Oregon is ranked last in the nation for youth mental health, and it's showing in our schools through rampant behavior issues and high rates of chronic absenteeism. HB 4070 provides evidence-based resources that will be quickly available for schools to support youth mental and physical health. A study conducted in Oregon found that youth are 10-21x more likely to seek mental health support at a school-based health center (SBHC) and that SBHCs that increased mental health capacity were 12% less likely to report a depressive episode; 16% less likely to report suicidal ideation; and **18% less likely to report a suicide attempt.**

Several years ago, we began to work toward improving health for children and students in Wasco and Hood River Counties. This has made a difference, but we still need much more. During COVID we began partnering to offer tele-mental health services. We are working on expanding Nursing services. These were very positive steps, but they are not enough. Districts need support for school health resources across the age span, because, from preschool to highschool, we are seeing a dramatic increase in a need for health services. I support this bill because this is what our students and families need across our two counties. There is currently one Student Based Health Center in one district. A second is underway. However, when I go into classrooms, the number one issue is support for health, mental health, behavioral health, or physical health. Our kids need your support. These resources will allow for an immediate increase in our capacity to support them. I urge you to vote yes on HB 4070."

Thank you,  
Patricia Sublette, Ph.D.  
Superintendent