



## Oregon School Employees Association

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February 7, 2024

Rep. Courtney Neron, Chair  
House Committee on Education  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 4077 – Dash 2 Amendment

Chair Neron and members of the House Committee on Education,

The Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) represents workers in all levels of Oregon public education, including Head Start programs, K-12 school districts, education service districts (ESDs), parks and community colleges. On behalf of the over 24,000 education professionals we represent, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill (HB) 4077, the Incident Reporting Bill.

Classified employees are a key group of frontline caregivers who support Oregon's students, including students in historically underserved populations and those who are the most medically fragile. As the behavioral health needs in our communities increase, school districts across Oregon are experiencing critical staffing levels. This means there are often fewer staff available to support the students who need it the most. This seriously increases the potential for behavior dysregulation, especially among students dealing with serious issues outside of school, such as poverty or houselessness. Dysregulated behavior from students, coupled with insufficient staffing, creates an environment where school employees face assault and injury in the workplace on a daily basis.

Often, when a licensed or classified educator is hurt on the job, there are not a lot of people who can step in to help. Classified staff are deeply committed to showing up for the students they support; sometimes, they do not take the three days off work required to trigger a report to the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), even when it might be justified. Though all injuries, including those that don't rise to the level of an OSHA log, are supposed to be reported per school district and ESD policy, our members tell us they are not reporting injuries to their employers because they do not want to miss work and/or because they do not have time in their workday to complete their district's reporting process, among other reasons. They are attempting to provide the best education support they can while feeling unsupported themselves.

This bill, HB 4077, is the next necessary step to creating a safer and higher quality learning environment for all students and the staff who support them. It would give the state and





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school districts a clearer picture of what is happening in educational facilities. The intent is to create an online form, process and database that may be accessed on a smartphone or computer. When the e-form is filled out, a copy will go to the worker filing the form, one to the school district and the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) will also receive a copy, allowing the state to track these incidents while keeping the local school district process in place. This online form will be available in many languages in order to be as inclusive as possible. The bill requires the form to be created with input from a workgroup of state and education stakeholders, including a representative for classified staff, and requires the form to be in place by 2026.

Having one statewide incident form adds state oversight to better ensure educators are safe on the job while giving the state decision-makers more on-the-ground information. The bill will provide more transparency for the state and increase safety for the professional educators who deliver quality educational experiences to all of Oregon's students every day. It moves the conversation on education workplace safety from anecdotal to data-driven.

OSEA launched our "Work Shouldn't Hurt" campaign in 2012 to increase awareness of worksite injuries in education and to advocate for safer working conditions. I see this bill as an important piece of that work and I am thrilled to testify in support of this vital legislation.

Please support the dash two amendments and a technical fix that includes training to the form criteria so that the state can monitor how well our educational workforce is trained.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

Sarah Wofford  
OSEA State President

