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**Andrea Castaneda**, Superintendent

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Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Strong Support for House Bill 2596 – School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact

Dear House Committee on Education,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 2596, which would enable Oregon to join the School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact. This legislation represents a crucial step towards addressing the decades-long shortage of school psychologists and other critical behavioral health specialists in our state. We are deeply grateful for the committee's advocacy and sponsorship of this bill.

For too long, Oregon's children and families have faced significant barriers to accessing the vital mental and behavioral health support they need. This shortage of qualified professionals has placed immense strain on our schools, educators, and existing providers, hindering our ability to effectively support students' well-being and academic success. This is not merely a professional staffing issue, but a fundamental access to care issue that impacts the very fabric of our communities. The mental health of our youth is inextricably linked to the health and prosperity of our state.

House Bill 2596 offers a common-sense solution by streamlining the licensure process for school psychologists from other states. By removing unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles, this compact will expand the pool of qualified professionals available to serve Oregon's students, offering much-needed relief to our fragile system of dedicated but overwhelmed providers. This is a high-leverage policy that will have a meaningful positive impact on our schools and communities.

Oregon must move from worst to first when it comes to providing a robust continuum of behavioral health care for children and adolescents. We should aspire to become a national leader in high-quality education and whole-child health, attracting talented educators and specialists from across the country. Joining this compact is a tangible demonstration of that commitment.

By passing HB 2596, we can strengthen our state, provide much-needed support to our educators, and ensure that all Oregon students have access to the mental and behavioral health services they deserve. Thank you for your consideration and service to our state.

Respectfully submitted,