



Mission: FACT Oregon empowers families, youth, and communities to navigate disability systems, advocating together for disability justice and policy change so that people with disabilities have what they need to thrive at home, in school, and in their communities.

February 3, 2025

Chair Courtney Neron

Vice-Chair April Dobson

Vice-Chair Emily McIntire

Members of the House Committee on Education

Support for HB 2729 – School-Based Health Centers / Mental Health

Dear Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Dobson, Vice-Chair McIntire and Members of the Committee, FACT Oregon is a family-led nonprofit that supports families, youth with disabilities, and partners to hold high expectations, navigate special education and disability systems, and advocate for the supports needed to thrive at home, in school, and in the community. Since 2012, we have served as the state and federally designated Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) for special education.

Access to school-based mental health services is vital for all students. Studies in Oregon found that youth are more likely to seek mental health support at a school-based health center (SBHC) and that when they receive these supports, they are less likely to report a depressive episode, have suicidal ideation and are less likely to attempt suicide.

Students with disabilities and their families report having significant additional barriers to accessing timely and effective mental health supports, which can have long-term consequences on a student's ability to succeed in school and beyond.

HB 2729, particularly Section 5, is critical in addressing these barriers by increasing funding for school-based mental health and substance use prevention services, ensuring that students—regardless of whether their school has a school-based health center—can access the care they need. Additionally, Section 7 acknowledges the need for sustainable funding by directing the Oregon Health Authority to study and improve reimbursement for school-based mental health services. This is a crucial step toward ensuring that these services remain viable and accessible for all students, including those with disabilities who disproportionately rely on school-based supports.

FACT Oregon urges the committee to support HB 2729 to address the urgent mental health needs of students across Oregon. Investing in school-based mental health services is an investment in student success, inclusion, and well-being.

Thank you,

Christy Reese

Executive Director, FACT Oregon