

## Legislative Testimony in Support of a Standardized Student Information System

Chairperson Neron, Vice-Chair Dobson, Vice-Chair McIntire, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the critical need for a standardized method to manage student data. For the record, my name is Wendy Niskanen, and I am testifying on behalf of the Oregon School Nurses' Association in favor of HB2508. As a school nurse in Oregon for 16 years, I have used several different student information systems. Implementing a uniform system will enhance student safety, improve the continuity of health services, promote equity among school districts, and make them more efficient.

Currently, when students transfer between districts, their nursing records and care plans frequently do not follow them. This is due to the absence of a standardized mechanism to ensure that these essential records are confidentially integrated with the rest of a student's files. As a result, school nurses must re-establish care coordination, consuming valuable time and resources that could be directed toward other student health needs. Ensuring that student health records, including alerts and immunization records, are easily transferable, will facilitate smooth transitions, promote continuity of care, and eliminate the massive amount of work done each year re-entering student health data.

Furthermore, developing standards for safe and effective student information systems is a matter of equity. School districts, particularly smaller ones with fewer resources, often rely on vendors when selecting a system. Unfortunately, several districts have experienced situations in which they were assured that emergency health alerts would transfer during system upgrades, only to find that critical alerts did not transfer or transferred inaccurately. This left staff without accurate health information for weeks, creating unnecessary risks for students. All districts, regardless of size or financial capacity, should have access to student information systems of the same quality, with comprehensive health record integration.

Establishing standards for interoperability between student information systems and essential software, including electronic health records, is vital for medicaid billing and compliance with nursing licensure. By implementing standards for SIS, schools would protect nursing licenses and optimize resources, maximizing income and minimizing staff FTE needed to bill Medicaid.

I urge the committee to support HB 2508. Doing so will ensure student safety, reduce duplicative work by school staff, and pave the way for equitable access to high-quality information systems across all districts. Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Respectfully submitted,**

Wendy Niskanen

Acting Executive Director

Oregon School Nurses' Association

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