

STANFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT



1120 North Main Street • Stanfield, OR 97875
www.stanfield.k12.or.us

March 20, 2025

Representative Annessa Hartman
Chair, House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services

RE: Public Input for HB 2374

Dear Chair Hartman and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of Stanfield School District to support House Bill 2374 to expand the CARE Program in Oregon to assist families and improve school attendance. We are particularly encouraged by the language in Section 1 (2): *The purpose of the program is to support families in this state in fostering a positive environment that promotes school attendance and academic success.* There are many ways that our district works to promote strong student attendance. Our teachers are working hard to make sure that their instruction is engaging and meaningful. We continue to elevate student voice, and our course offerings reflect student interest. Our facilities have undergone \$18 million worth of upgrades and are safe, clean and welcoming. I am very proud of the culture and climate of our schools. Yet, for some of our students, what is missing in all of this is parent/family involvement and support.

Umatilla County is currently utilizing a process that is similar to what is proposed in HB 2374, and it is working. For the few families with chronically absent children, our communication and efforts to express concern and a willingness to problem-solve have proven ineffective in motivating parents to partner with the schools to improve school attendance for their children. Our process includes multiple phone calls and letters, team conferences, offering additional County resources, and home visits by staff before moving on to more formal directives from agencies outside the school district. Without a willingness to change systems in the home, chronically absent students continue to miss out on valuable instruction and learning and social opportunities when their guardians do not prioritize school attendance. Engagement in parenting effectiveness programs opens opportunities for districts to work together with families to better serve their children at school. In order to do our best work, we need to see these children at school more often.

I appreciate your efforts to support our students and staff in Stanfield and across the state in our efforts to increase and maintain regular attendance for all students. Clear accountability for parents, as well as resources to support them as they work to overcome barriers to school attendance, can only aid in our existing efforts to strengthen and reinforce good attendance habits. I urge you to continue to support the passage of House Bill 2374.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Beth Burton'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Beth Burton
Superintendent, Stanfield School District