

TO: House Committee on Education

SUBJECT: Support HB 4079 to Safeguard Students and Families

Chair Hudson and all the members of the House Committee on Education

My name is Janie Ramirez and I work for Latino Network as a Program Manager for various sites in the Gresham, Centennial, and David Douglas School Districts. Previously to my current role I was an In-School Coordinator for Reynolds School. I am writing in **strong support of HB 4079 to Safeguard Students and Families.**

Federal guidance designating schools as “sensitive areas” was rescinded in 2025 created uncertainty regarding on-campus ICE actions. Federal enforcement actions have increased in the areas around schools. In recent months, schools have been forced to go into lockdown procedures, sometimes several schools in a single day.

Schools are hubs of learning, engagement and safety, and they must remain that way. Any time there is an incident involving law enforcement or unknown persons with access to weapons in or around school locations there must be clear process and communication.

During my time as an In-School Coordinator, I provided services to an average caseload of 40 students. I am proud to share that throughout my time in this role, student identified our office as one of their safe spaces. I believe strong and consistent communication played a key role in that trust. By being included on the school's staff email list we were able to receive timely updates regarding safety concerns and other important school-wide information. This also allowed us to work collaboratively with administrators and teachers to address situations involving law enforcement or potential safety threats, shut down misinformation, and reassure students steps were being taken to keep them safe.. Additionally, we were also able to communicate accurate information to concerned parents, particularly during

times when the front offices experienced high call volumes and were difficult to reach. Rather than creating unnecessary stress, this transparent approach helped families feel informed and supported, especially when the information was coming from their child's trusted mentor in a language parents can understand. Parents expressed appreciation for receiving clear updates as they became available.

Now, as a Program Manager I advocate for my team and I to be included in schoolwide communications, especially during these times of heightened stress. Students are now experiencing heightened anxiety levels due to ICE activity around their school and their community. Students should not have to attend school fearing an encounter with ICE agents on their campus and fearing they will be detained. Likewise, parents should not have to stress about their student's safety at school and must be kept up to date on any safety concerns involving the school their child attends. School should be a safe place for students to be. Ensuring transparent, timely communication is essential to protecting student's well-being and maintaining trust between schools and the community they serve.

This bill lays out proactive and reactive communication expectations to keep everyone safe. Consistent application and consistent communication is needed so that all students, parents and staff regardless of which school they attend, are able to be safe and informed when something happens in their community. Oregonians know when we are informed we can be stronger together.

HB 4079 is part of the 2026 Immigrant Justice Package and is backed by a broad coalition of immigrant justice advocates, civil liberties groups, unions, and community based organizations. I urge you to support these community-led policies to protect the freedoms of all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

*Janie Ramirez*