



Multnomah Education Service District



Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Todd Nicholson, and I am the Principal of Rivercrest Academy, a recovery high school serving adolescents in recovery from substance use and co-occurring mental health challenges. I am writing in opposition to SB 1583.

SB 1583 would destabilize systems of care built under Measure 110 by transferring oversight and funding authority for Behavioral Health Resource Networks and deflection programs away from the Oversight and Accountability Council and into a new committee housed within the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission

While coordination with public safety systems is important, this structural shift risks re-centering behavioral health services within a criminal justice framework rather than a public health one.

At Rivercrest Academy, we rely on a stable, community-based recovery ecosystem to support students and families. Our work is inseparable from local Behavioral Health Resource Networks, peer-delivered services, culturally responsive providers, and low-barrier recovery supports. Many of our graduates go on to become peer support specialists, recovery mentors, and youth support workers—precisely the workforce that Measure 110 investments were designed to grow. Disrupting funding streams or governance structures that support these pathways directly undermines recovery-oriented education and workforce development.

Providers and communities have spent years building capacity, trust, and collaborative infrastructure under the current system. Recovery high schools, in particular, depend on **consistency**—in referral pathways, peer support availability, and community partnerships. Abrupt governance changes create uncertainty for providers, educators, and students alike, and risk fragmenting care at moments when continuity is most critical.

Youth in recovery are especially vulnerable to system instability. When services shift, pause, or disappear due to administrative restructuring, students and families experience that disruption as abandonment. Recovery is not linear, and schools like ours depend on reliable access to peer support, treatment linkages, and recovery services that are not mediated through criminal justice involvement.

Oregon should be focused on strengthening existing programs, improving accountability and data systems, and supporting workforce development, not dismantling or relocating oversight structures that are still maturing. Meaningful reform should build on what is working—not introduce uncertainty that could undo hard-won progress.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose SB 1583.

Thank you for considering my testimony and for your continued commitment to health-based, recovery-oriented responses to substance use in Oregon.

Respectfully submitted,



Todd Nicholson

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Portland, Oregon