Dr. Charlene Williams
Director of the Department of Education

January 27, 2025

Dear Representatives,

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the 2024 Oregon Student Health Survey for 6th-grade students. We value your engagement and the thoughtful concerns you have raised about the survey.

The Student Health Survey (SHS) is developed and administered by the Oregon Health Authority and serves as a vital tool to better understand and support the well-being of Oregon's students. The data collected in the survey helps identify trends, address disparities, and inform policies and practices that promote safe, inclusive, and supportive school environments. OHA has been administering the SHS since 2000, in collaboration with educators, health professionals, and community partners, ensuring it aligns with current research on relevant and appropriate health survey development.

We recognize that topics such as race, gender identity, and mental health can evoke differing perspectives. These topics are included to ensure that schools and districts have the necessary information to address the diverse needs of their students and create environments where all students can thrive. The survey's design reflects an intentional effort to balance these priorities while remaining sensitive to age-appropriate considerations and the diversity of family values across Oregon.

We appreciate your concern about the survey's developmental appropriateness, scientific accuracy, and sensitivity to family values. While ODE does not write or determine survey questions, we can share these concerns with the team at OHA, who continuously evaluate the survey's effectiveness and its role in supporting the well-being of Oregon's students.

Your input is instrumental in our shared mission to support the success and health of every student. Thank you for taking the time to advocate for Oregon's children. Please feel free to reach out with any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dr. Charlene Williams
Director, Oregon Department of Education