



**Date:** May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013  
**To:** Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education  
**From:** Oregon Education Association  
**Re:** *HB 3233 [Quality Teaching Network]*

The Oregon Education Association and our 42,000 members are committed to professional excellence and within the school environment are a driving force in the success of each and every Oregon student. Educators from across Oregon are critically examining ways to support their professional learning to strengthen their practice.

In responding to the need for ongoing, focused professional learning for educators, Oregon must support the professional growth of educators across their careers. Educators are clear in the steps we need to take to ensure every student has access to a highly qualified teacher, a teacher who is consistently supported throughout their teaching career.

We believe the policy embedded in HB 3233 of creating a network addresses the following principles we believe are critical in developing and supporting an effective educator workforce, essential for helping students learn and thrive.

- 1. Recruit diverse candidates into the profession.** We need to work collaboratively with school districts and teacher education programs to create a plan for recruiting diverse candidates into Oregon teacher education programs. We must support high standards in recruitment and admission policies and support high quality preparation that includes meaningful clinical experiences prior to entering the classroom.
- 2. Ensure that every teacher has access to a qualified mentor,** from day one and throughout their career. Mentoring support and peer collaboration are important in creating a safe space to reflect on and strengthen one's practice.
- 3. Avoid a top-down and one size fits all approach to professional growth and development.** Create a culture of professional learning that is continuous, tied to the teaching assignment, embedded in the school and includes dedicated time for educators to collaborate on instructional practice.
- 4. Recognize the expertise and leadership of teachers** in determining the direction of their own professional learning. Through networking, teachers seek the

opportunity to collaborate and innovate together in developing new instructional strategies, curriculum and assessments that help them differentiate and meet the needs of diverse learners.

As policy makers we hope you will also consider other factors that contribute to student learning independent of quality teaching and instruction, namely:

1. The impact of professional growth and student learning is closely intertwined with **students coming to school prepared to learn**. Poverty, homelessness, hunger and the availability of health care, mental health and counseling services, among other supports for our children, has a significant impact on student readiness to learn. Creating a sound foundation for learning begins with ensuring the safety, physical and mental wellness of each and every student within and outside the school.

2. **Collaboration is an essential element of student success**. Teachers and school staff work with one another and with parents, families and the community to support the learning. Student learning is a critical, shared responsibility, most especially in meeting the needs of our lowest performing students.

3. Building this solid foundation for student learning goes hand in hand with high-quality curriculum and instruction. We face major unaddressed challenges, most notably in the **overreliance on standardized testing coupled with a pattern of disinvestment in our schools**. Taken together, this has narrowed the curriculum and the opportunities available within our classrooms and schools for deeper student learning and the development of critical thinking skills.

Educators speak passionately about these challenges and we hope to partner with policy makers to create an environment, inside and outside of the classroom, which allow every student to thrive.

While we are supportive of much of the underlying policy in HB 3233 we believe it is important that Oregon is providing adequate funding levels that allows a full school year, appropriate class size, and comprehensive programs for the whole child for all of Oregon's students before moving down a path of targeted funding.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on this legislation and look forward to a continued focus on quality teaching in Oregon.