

House Committee On Education

HB 2801

February 18, 2016

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Testimony on HB 2801

Chair Doherty and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Education Committee on House Bill 2801.

I have been a principal at the elementary, middle and high school levels as well as a system-wide director of special education. As a matter of transparency I am currently a non-paid volunteer on the board of Metropolitan Family Service.

My testimony will be from the perspective of a retired educator who has witnessed a decline in Oregon schools national ranking from 22nd to 49th over the last 35 years. My perception of the attempts to solve this slide while failing to keep pace with the actual costs of educating students and yet raise expectations has had the effect of exacerbating the problem.

Education doesn't need more expectations it needs creative support. One such approach is to utilize non-profit agencies that can work effectively in concert with educators and schools to promote greater student success.

The evidence-based academically-aligned literacy model, spoken to in the bill, utilizes effective non-profit supportive agencies for selection and

training of senior volunteers and implicit evaluation of the program's effectiveness.

There have been successful models as witnessed by the community schools movement. I have experienced the impact of such success while serving as principal at a middle school in outer southeast Portland. With the support of outside agencies, the staff was able to devote an increase in instructional time with students. The impact was positive communitywide support and improved effectiveness of instruction.

This literacy proposed program has the potential to support the best use of current practices in schools by supporting the efforts of the professional educators through the strategic organization of volunteer services. This approach is completely compatible with the operation of schools. This early intervention program is supported by considerable national research and utilizes an intergenerational approach.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

Michael H. Harris