

Members of the House Education Committee,

This statement was submitted to the Oregon Public Education Network by Dr. Yong Zhao for submission to the Oregon House Education Committee in support of HB 2318.

Dr. Yong Zhao is Foundation Distinguished Professor in the School of Education at the University of Kansas. He previously served as the Presidential Chair and Director of the Institute for Global and Online Education in the College of Education, University of Oregon, where he was also a Professor in the Department of Educational Measurement, Policy, and Leadership.

In his widely read book, *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Dragon?*, he writes:

“Going to kindergarten is not a job interview. Children do not need to be ready for kindergarten; kindergarten needs to be ready for children.”

He authorized this excerpt from pp. 112-113 of his book for submission in support of of HB 2328:

“The opportunity to learn is critical, especially for our neediest students. The opportunity gap increases as the opportunity to learn decreases. For example, as a group, students labeled as economically disadvantaged or poor never score higher on standardized tests than their non-disadvantaged peers in any state on any grade level currently tested under NCLB. As we present, those students more frequently receive a restricted curriculum. The opportunity to experience and learn a broad, quality curriculum cannot be understated.

Like many medicines, educational policies and practices carry real risks of unintended side effects and complication, so trade-offs are necessary. Many proposed panaceas for the perceived ills of public education, such as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) initiative and national high-stakes testing, might not be as effective or safe for certain groups as currently claimed by those who market these initiatives.

In fact, those interventions can increase the educational opportunity gap that exists between children of the poor and those of the wealthy. In this chapter we draw on lessons of the past and from other nations to show that the current prescription of closing the achievement gap – common curricular standards and test-based accountability – will not close the opportunity gap but, instead, might widen it.”