



February 1, 2019

Representative Margaret Doherty
Chair House Education Committee
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Doherty and Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Head Start Association is in opposition to House Bill 2318. The bill is very generic, and the terms listed in the bill could have some far-reaching and unintended consequences on our pre-school programs.

We feel that conversations around the Kindergarten Assessment are warranted and that work can be done to improve the assessment; however, much time, money and effort have been invested in the tool. It would make more sense to improve the tool rather than eliminate it.

The language in House Bill 2318 is concerning for Head Start centers around assessing pre-kindergarten children. Federal Head Start performance standards require Head Start programs to assess children three times a year. The assessment information is used to determine growth in learning. Teachers use the information to write lesson plans and individualize learning.

The information is shared with parents and, in many cases, the elementary schools in their catchment area when Head Start children transition to kindergarten. We have found that this assessment helps children, families, and future schools to better ensure that children from our programs will succeed long-term. Because it states in statute that Oregon Pre-Kindergarten (OPK) follows the federal Head Start performance standards, OPK must do this assessment. This bill could make it impossible to comply with federal rules.

The Oregon Head Start Association asks that this does not move forward in its current form, and would encourage further input from stakeholders to protect programs like Oregon Pre-kindergarten programs from potential unintended consequences.

Best regards,

Donna Schnitker
President, Oregon Head Start Association