
February 4, 2019

Chair Doherty and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Judy Newman and I am testifying today in my role as the Director of Early Childhood CARES, the early intervention and early childhood special education (EI/ECSE) program for Lane County. I also am a member of the Eugene 4J School Board and the Early Learning Hub Governance Consortium in Lane County.

I believe everyone here – whether you are for or against this bill - shares the same goals of ensuring ALL children in Oregon enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and that every student will meet or exceed the third grade benchmarks in reading and math and on time and have strong social emotional skills. I believe that HB 2318 will seriously hinder our ability in Oregon to achieve these goals.

We need some standardized tests to evaluate our efforts to improve graduation rates and to ensure that early learning and K-12 is providing equal access and equal opportunities to ALL students so they can succeed. I understand that currently many teachers and parents feel we spend too much time and too many resources on standard tests from K- 12th grade and I would urge the ODE to work more quickly to reduce this burden on schools and teachers. However HB 2318 does little to nothing to rectify this situation in fact it would have far reaching consequences that hinder our ability to reach our shared goals.

HB 2318 bill focuses on the pre-k through second grade and there is only one required school age statewide standardized assessment at entry into kindergarten. This one relatively brief assessment provides invaluable information to the emerging early learning system in Oregon regarding where we need to focus our efforts and resources to create rich early learning experiences and environments and who needs access to them.

HB 2318 could have a negative impact on Oregon's EI/ECSE programs because it would prohibit the state run EI/ECSE program from requiring the administration of the assessment it currently requires for all children enrolled in EI/ECSE programs. The assessment is the AEPS- Assessment Evaluation and Programming System which is a commercial assessment. The AEPS is a formative and developmentally based assessment tool that provides invaluable information to educators for targeting appropriate goals for individual children and monitoring each child's progress towards meeting their goals at regular intervals. This gives information to teachers and service providers that enable them to make adjustments to instruction and interventions as soon as possible to keep a child on track to achieving their goals. By using the same tool statewide for all EI/ECSE programs ODE is able to aggregate this data in a way that it can also be used to do the mandatory reporting to the federal government on specific outcome measures. It is a useful tool for children, parents, educators AND we can use the aggregated data for mandated federal reporting. This is what I call a win-win – win and if HB 2318 passes, we will lose this ability.

Some of the other statewide early learning programs that could be negatively effected include Oregon's Pre kindergarten program because they are required to use the curriculum based, formative and developmentally appropriate TS Gold assessment for all children. And Preschool Promise Classrooms that are required to use either the AEPS or TS Gold assessment. In addition many school districts use formative assessments to monitor and guide instruction so additional supports and adjustments can be provided where they are most needed.

The assessments used by the programs I work with help develop high quality early learning experiences, environments and systems that will help children thrive and learn and close the achievement gap before children enter kindergarten so they can read by 3rd grade and be on a solid path to high school graduation. I urge you to help us achieve our shared goals and not to pass HB 2318!

Thank you,
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