



March 4, 2019

For the record, my name is Janet Soto Rodriguez, Policy & Innovation Director for the Chalkboard Project.

**Chalkboard Project is here today in support of HB 2440.** We believe it is crucial for the state to create a culturally specific Latino student success plan and support the formation of an advisory group to develop a sustainable strategy for the Bill's success.

For more than a decade, Chalkboard Project has invested in research and projects aimed at understanding how educators can best support students. We have learned that we cannot positively affect student achievement without acknowledging the persistent disparities that impact our students of color, students living in poverty, and rural students.

The Latino population in Oregon represents 22.6% of all K-12 students and while more Latino students are graduating from high school, an alarming achievement gap still persists.

Personally, I can attest as a Latina regarding the critical need for a plan to address unique barriers. I am an immigrant to this country, my parents supported my success emotionally, but did not know first hand how to navigate the U.S. education system. I nearly dropped out in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and it was largely because I felt alone; invisible in the histories we are taught, with no academic role models, and socio-politically made to feel like an outsider. We need a plan that leverages students and families' strengths, cultivates community, and breaks down cultural and social misunderstandings that will lead to better outcomes for all student's success.

HB 2240 will create a statewide plan to address the unique barriers faced by Latino students by providing high-quality, equitable learning environments that affirm each child's culture, needs and strengths.

We urge your support of HB 2440 to improve the educational outcomes for all students by providing positive, affirming, and culturally-responsive practices to help us achieve Oregon's goal of graduating every child with a strong plan for the future.

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Thank you for your consideration and work on this legislation.