

Firstly I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Morgan McQuade and I am a current student in the Teacher Education Prep Program at Oregon State University.

I graduated from Wilsonville High School in 2010, and knew then that I had a desire to go down the career path to become a teacher. Eleven years later I am finally making that hope a reality. Needless to say, it's taken me quite a while to reach this point, and I have to say that I am immensely proud of myself for getting here. I will be graduating this year with two Bachelor's degrees along with a teaching license. I bring all of this up because I think it is important to consider the number of barriers that existed for me throughout this journey. Finances, support, and knowledge of resources were large barriers for me. Financially, I was in a position where my mother had an income that did not afford me much financial aid, but she was not in a position to help me pay for school. That said I had to work multiple jobs to afford my education until I was able to file for assistance on my own as an adult. In addition, I was a first generation college student who had little support or direction for navigating college and seeking out resources. I believe that these are all very real, very common barriers for many students of color, especially those falling in the lower middle class, who don't qualify for financial assistance, yet may struggle to find assistance and support elsewhere. This heavily impacts the ability of students to commit to a program such as the teacher prep program, in particular the student teaching practicum that requires full time commitment for an entire academic year. Between attending classes as a full time student, and obtaining over 700 hours of work and observation in the field, it is almost impossible for students to work full time, or even part time to support themselves. For students of color who may not have any other type of familial financial support, this isn't a program that is conducive to their financial needs and success. Furthermore, if they are not given support, or made aware of resources available to them, they may ultimately choose to drop out, or abstain entirely from education programs.

On a more personal note, I would like to address the reality that while I have always had a passion for teaching, supporting, and serving others, this was entirely an intrinsic passion. Throughout my entire educational experience (spanning roughly 23 years), I have had only 2 educators of color. My ESOL professor, and my Spanish instructor at OSU who were both latina. I would suggest that students of color would feel more compelled to pursue a career in education, were they able to encounter teachers and professors of color as role models in the career path. This reality has sometimes acted as a hindrance to my own desire to become a teacher, yet it has also inspired me to be that teacher for my future students of color. I want my students to see a successful, mixed race, female teacher who loves her job, because the reality is that that is a narrative that is still not often seen or shared. Finally, I would like to suggest that if we had a larger number of skilled and knowledgeable professors of color within education programs there might be a greater focus and emphasis on preparing student teachers of color for encountering the realities of being a person of color in a position such as teaching, and all of the socio-emotional complexities that may come from that. Often I feel that curriculum might address how teachers should approach students of color, but often I have felt that this then assumes that the teacher is always white. I have wrestled on my own with questions surrounding these complexities, and wondered how I, a teacher of color, might respond to these materials. But I have also often considered how beneficial it would have been to have professors who could engage in these discussions and complexities alongside me. I believe that these concerns are also applicable when it comes to thinking about continued professional development beyond the collegiate experience.

With all of this said I want to note that my experience in the OSU program has been an incredibly positive and educational one. It's a program that I would highly recommend. But from my perspective as a student of color, these are the aspects of it that I feel made it at times inaccessible to me. Overcoming these challenges was a major part of what caused my time of study to be so prolonged. Many students would have likely given up. And, with that being said, to recruit and perhaps more importantly retain students of color in educational programs, I offer the suggestion that these types of factors be considered. Thank you.