



RE: HB 2056

Chair Alonso Leon
Vice-Chair Neron
Vice-Chair Weber
Members of the House Committee on Education

February 2, 2021

Dear Chair Alonso Leon, Vice-Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the House Committee on Education,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. **As representatives of the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO)**, we would like to express our strong support for HB 2056. APANO unites Asians and Pacific Islanders to build power, develop leaders, and advance equity through organizing, advocacy, community development, and cultural work. We are committed to a just world where Pacific Islanders and Asians and communities who share our aspirations have the power and resources to thrive.

Oregon is home to a diverse community of people, including Pacific Islander and Asian communities, with one of the highest growth rates in the state¹. This expanding API community means many cultures are taking root in our neighborhoods and our schools where the curriculum centers English-speaking standards. Youth who speak languages other than English are then required to take on additional coursework to complete their education in a language that they are not proficient in yet. As our API communities know, comprehending and mastering the state standards is the goal -- language is only a tool to achieve success.

While all students are required to obtain knowledge in many content subjects such as math, science, or social studies, the language of instruction does not have to be one single language such as English. As a matter of fact, children in other countries learn math or science using many other languages very successfully. In today's schools where more and more children come with multiple languages, it is time for Oregon to provide opportunities for students to meet the state standards not only in English, but also in other languages of their native countries.

By allowing students to complete high school language arts requirements in their home languages, we begin to create more inclusive and equitable environments for Pacific Islander, Asian, and other historically underserved students.

¹ https://www.oregon.gov/das/OEA/Documents/OR_pop_trend2019.pdf



We are also pleased to support this measure in participation with Oregon Partners for Education Justice, a group of community advocates, providers, and organizations that are collectively endorsing HB 2056, in our 2021 Legislative Agenda (enclosed). Thank you for your consideration of this measure and we respectfully urge you to vote yes on HB 2056.

Sincerely,
Wei-Wei Lou--C4 Board Chair
Lanea Olson--APANO Asian Youth Organizer

Enclosed:
[Oregon Partners for Education Justice - 2021 Legislative Agenda](#)