

My name is Neelam Gupta, and I am on the school board for the Lake Oswego School District. I was appointed to serve on the school board in June 2020. I am testifying in support of SB 732 that requires school districts to establish educational equity advisory committees.

The Lake Oswego School District established an equity advisory committee three years ago following hate incidents in the middle schools and high schools. I was selected to serve on the committee, which started meeting in August 2018. I was co-chair for a year and now am the school board liaison to the committee. The committee includes parents and guardians, school staff, students, and community members committed to creating safe and inclusive spaces for students, their families, and district staff.

During the first year, the committee developed an equity policy to create access and opportunity for each and every student, and the school board passed the policy in June 2019. Then, the committee worked with the superintendent to develop an equity lens that provides a decision making tool when taking action.

This past year, the Lake Oswego School District equity committee has focused on several priorities, which include but are not limited to:

- Promoting anti-racist, culturally responsive curriculum,
- Advising on the implementation of the All Students Belong policy and restorative practices,
- Discussing school reopening, and
- Examining the recruitment, hiring, and retention of teachers and staff from diverse backgrounds.

Our superintendent has stated that work of inclusivity, equity, diversity, access and belonging is the most important work we are doing in LOSD, especially during this time of heightened awareness of the impacts of systemic racism, and the equity committee has been a critical advisory body to the school board in that work. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 732.