

April 15, 2021

To Oregon's Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Dear Representatives:

I am a Fellow of the Academy of Orton-Gillingham and a certified Structured Literacy/Dyslexia Specialist and have been teaching students with dyslexia and training teachers about dyslexia for four decades. I am writing to ask that you appropriate funds to train teachers to teach students with dyslexia (15%) and the other 45% of learners who need direct, explicit, systematic instruction to learn to read.

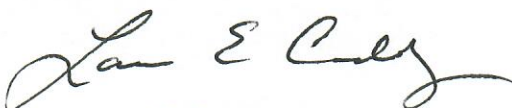
The number of students struggling in Oregon including here in the Rogue Valley is overwhelming. I get numerous calls every day from parents whose children need help learning to read, which they are not getting in their schools, and from teachers who are looking for ways to better serve all learners. I cannot tell you the number of times teachers in my trainings have asked why they didn't learn about the Science of Reading in their education programs.

The COVID pandemic and the Alameda Fire that devastated our community have only increased the urgency for helping students who are falling behind, and Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading & Spelling (LETRS) is a superb program based on the Science of Reading. I am currently taking the LETRS course myself and can personally attest to its excellence. Furthermore, this program provides teachers the knowledge they need so that they can use the concepts taught with whatever curriculum their school systems have currently adopted. As Louisa Moats, one of the authors of LETRS states, "Informed teachers are our best assurance against reading failure. While programs are very helpful tools, programs don't teach; teachers do."

The dire consequences of not being able to read well are widely documented and far-reaching. I urge you to provide the funds needed to create a better future for our Oregon students. Providing LETRS training to K-5 teachers and reading specialists in our lowest performing schools would be a wonderful start and immediately reach the most vulnerable students including those at Phoenix Elementary. Requiring scientifically-based reading instruction in Oregon Educator Preparation programs will go even further to address the reading crisis in Oregon. I cannot think of a more important investment for Oregon's precious children or for the future of our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurie E. Cuddy".

Laurie E. Cuddy