



Teresa Alonso Leon
State Representative

May 4, 2021

Chair Smith Warner, Vice-Chairs Drazan and Holvey, and Members of the House Rules Committee,

My name is Teresa Alonso Leon and I am the Representative for House District 22 which incorporates Woodburn through the north part of Salem. I am writing in support of HB 2166.

As Chair of the House Education Committee and a member of Governor Brown's Racial Justice Council's Education Recovery Committee (ERC), this legislation is very important to me. HB 2166 is a result of many hours of collaborative work with my colleagues in the 40-member committee, agency partners, and community members. This bill will strengthen our seamless system of education from cradle to career, so that every child has the opportunity to learn, grow, and achieve their full potential.

Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program

Improving equity in education must begin in early learning environments. HB 2166 ensures that our youngest children - those 2- and 3-year olds in child care - are not pushed out of their program due to their race or disability. This is especially important for children of color, who are disproportionately impacted by approaches in white-dominant culture settings rather than culturally-responsive spaces.

Establishing the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program will give parents and childcare providers access to much needed mental health consultation and technical assistance to keep children in their programs without imposing a ban on the practice of suspension and expulsion.

Social Emotional Learning Content Standards

HB 2166 also includes provisions centered on mental health, that emphasize a strengths-based, resiliency building, equity-centered, and social/emotional learning model. Mental health is framed as a cornerstone of education, a part of a continuum of care needed to support student learning. This was developed in partnership between ODE and OHA to guarantee that schools have full access to mental health resources.

It is more critical now than ever that we invest in developing social emotional content standards to best meet the needs of our students and our educators as they return to our buildings after a year in distance learning.

Supporting Educator Equity

HB 2166 clarifies authority to the State Board of Education, in consultation with the Educator Advancement Council (EAC), to provide oversight of public school districts working to diversify the educator workforce.

Educators that come from and look like the communities they serve are important in establishing the caring and trusting relationships that ignite student learning. It is well known that a more diverse educator workforce improves support, engagement, and outcomes for all students.

Higher education has become increasingly unaffordable, especially for students who have been economically disenfranchised. Increasing award amounts for the Oregon Teacher Scholars program to \$10,000 is a necessary improvement to more fully and equitably support future Oregon educators.

Nontraditional Pathways

Two barriers to increasing access to licensure for those of culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse backgrounds are the continued increase in cost and limited flexibility of traditional educator preparation. Non-traditional pathways to licensure can address barriers while maintaining rigorous preparation standards and thereby broaden the potential pool of qualified applicants beyond that provided by traditional career pathways.

The incoming -6 amendment reflects the close collaboration between the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission and educator preparation programs that is necessary to establish high-quality non-traditional pathways to licensure.

I have seen first-hand the time, hard work, and thoughtfulness put into this bill. I urge you to join me in supporting this timely and important legislation. Thank you for reading my testimony. Please don't hesitate to contact my office if you have any questions about this bill.

Sincerely,



Teresa Alonso Leon
State Representative, HD 22
Chair, House Education Committee