



February 23, 2021

TO: House Education Committee  
FR: Parasa Chanramy, COSA  
RE: HB 2001 Testimony

Good afternoon Chair Alonso Leon, Vice Chair Neron, Vice Chair Weber, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Parasa Chanramy and on behalf of the Coalition of Oregon School Administrators and our 2500 members across Oregon, we appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on HB 2001, a bill that is focused on retaining teachers of color during layoff decisions and further protecting the progress that our state has made in diversifying our educator workforce.

COSA is deeply committed to supporting initiatives and investments that diversify our educator workforce -- from advocating for the Educator Equity Act to securing funding for Grow Your Own Programs. In addition to our policy and advocacy work, as a professional organization we are working to support more educators of color in becoming administrators and superintendents.

Oregon has made some progress in diversifying our educator workforce, but we also still have a long way to go in order to realize the goals of the Educator Equity Act. Here are some key takeaways from [Oregon's 2020 Educator Equity Report](#):

- *In 2018 – 2019, diverse teacher candidate (n = 857) enrollment in educator preparation programs increased almost fifty percent, however the overall cohort completion rate was only 59 percent (n = 351).*
- *In 2019 – 2020, the percentage of racially, ethnically, and/or linguistically diverse educators is much greater for educational assistants (19.74 percent) than teachers (11.7 percent) or administrators (12.5 percent).*
- *Growing student diversity continues to outpace the incremental increases in educator diversity.*

One of our top priorities this legislative session is to advocate for policies and investments that ensure that districts are able to recruit and retain a diverse workforce, even in the face of budget challenges.

With that, our members support the goals of this bill and identified two areas where they would like to see improvements.



- 1. Merit and Competence.** After consulting with our members and reviewing different contracts, we found that merit had been bargained out of most of the current collective bargaining contracts. In light of that, our members recommended that we explore adding to the current definition of competence because: 1) it exists in current contracts, and 2) they have experience with utilizing competence to help retain teachers during layoff decisions.

If expanding the definition of competence is not feasible, our members would be supportive of renaming “merit” to another term that would cover linguistically- and culturally-responsive practices and approaches.

Under that updated term, we would like to see:

- a. Languages spoken fluently by the teacher that are not English (including heritage and tribal languages) as preferred by the district and reflective of languages spoken by students and their families; and
- b. Additional duties and responsibilities taken on by the teacher

Both changes would be additive to a teacher’s training, experience teaching in schools where at least 25 percent of the student population is diverse, and participation in a program or efforts that advance the goals of the Educator Equity Act.

- 2. Diversity Ratios.** The diversity ratios outlined in the bill may work for our members who work in large- and medium-sized school districts. However, for our members who work in small districts, they are concerned that the diversity ratio may not be feasible to implement due to the current diversity of their workforce and regional teacher preparation programs. Attrition of teachers of color in our smaller school districts could also negatively impact their diversity ratios over time. Additionally, for our members who work in Education Service Districts who employ Teachers on Special Assignment, we would need to have some guidance on how the ratios would be operationalized in their context.

We are committed to working with Stand for Children, Oregon Education Association, and other key stakeholders on ensuring that we are able to support and retain our teachers of color.

This proposed policy is an important step, one of many, when it comes to helping ensure that we are able to work towards an educator workforce that reflects Oregon students.

Our organization is also dedicated to the implementation of the Educator Equity Act and Grow Your Own efforts to support Oregon students in becoming Oregon educators. This work alone is not enough, and we recognize that more work must be done to transform our systems and practices so that we are supporting, promoting, and retaining our educators of color.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our feedback on HB 2001.