

House Committee on Education

Testimony in Support of SB 1521

February 15, 2022

Chair Alonso Leon, Vice-Chairs Neron and Weber,
Representatives George, Hudson, Owens, Reardon, Ruiz,
Smith Warner, and Wright,

For the record, I am Jackie Leung, Co-Chair of the Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs. I am writing to you in regards to SB 1521 - protections for the Superintendent of schools. We urge you to support SB 1521, which would provide greater protections against retaliation against school superintendents if they [the superintendent] are following state or federal laws.

1. OCAPIA's role is to work toward economic, social, political, and legal equity for Oregon's Asian and Pacific Islander population. We do this through advocacy, public policy research, leadership development, and partnerships.
2. In our statutory role of bringing equity focus and community voice into Oregon policy making, OCAPIA strongly supports SB 1521.

We have seen the harm caused from the superintendent removals in Newberg and Albany. As stated in a letter written by the President of the Oregon Association of School Executives (OASE), over a two-year period (2018-2019 and 2021-2022), there were 127 superintendent vacancies in Oregon. Having a large number of vacant spots for the superintendent in the schools is alarming and harms Oregon residents. ¹

¹ <https://www.opb.org/article/2022/02/03/oregon-legislature-bills-school-superintendent-firings-without-cause-termination/>

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Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs**

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Further, SB 1521 provides employment protections, potentially attracting applicants who are underrepresented in Oregon’s leadership. Woodson, McLennan, and Pérez (2021) released a study on the challenges experienced by BIPOC superintendents. While nearly 40% of Oregon’s 560,000 students are diverse, only nine superintendents identify as BIPOC, or only 4% of all superintendents in the state.² To match the student population makeup, there has to be 71 BIPOC school superintendents to match the student population make up.³

Passage of SB 1521 would provide much needed protections for superintendents to do their work, especially BIPOC superintendents who face additional stressors in their position by account racism.

We urge you to pass SB 1521 to protect Oregon’s superintendents and children and their families from retaliation efforts.

Sincerely,



Jackie Leung
Co-Chair, The Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs

² <https://www.salemreporter.com/posts/5960/new-study-highlights-why-so-many-of-oregons-superintendents-of-color-are-leaving>

³ Woodson, T. T., McLennan, D., and Pérez, K. (2021). Exploring the lived experiences of superintendents of color in Oregon: Understanding systems of support, challenges, and recommendations for recruiting and retaining superintendents of color in Oregon. Education Northwest.

