

As a teacher - a substitute teacher I am in disbelief that the training pay grant allotted for school districts in HB 4030 has not been distributed. 50 percent of Oregon School Districts did not apply for the training grant so teachers who work for those districts would not be eligible. Why has it not worked? There was an OAR and and ORS requiring this payments but school districts decided to not follow the law. Of the districts that applied for the grant, as President of Oregon Substitute Teacher Association, many of our members report that they did not receive notification about this program. I helped a member draft a letter with the details about the program with the OAR and that member was told that because of past practice they would not pay even though the information was clear and obvious.

Past practice has changed. There was a law, money and a grants administrator at the Department of Education. This experience is a disgrace. School Districts should have contacted their teachers and created a distribution system. They have not. How can workforce improvements happen when the basic level of respect for substitute teachers is missing?

Another concern is that the original language in SB 283 that stated substitute teachers should be members of the school district instead of the private, out of state equity firms that specialize in billing school districts for their teaching staff. OSTA proved that this cost districts more money yet there was no investigation of this practice. Why did districts choose to spend more money to get teachers? One district admitted that there was a problem with the ESD not functioning? Another said that it was convenient. Instead, the solution is to create another task force idea to study the problem. Instead of returning to a system where teachers are employees of the school district, the new practice is to send money out of state and deny teachers public loan forgiveness and their retirement PERS benefits.

Along with the lack of due process for substitute teachers, this bill does very little to solve the problem of why substitute teachers are choosing to leave the profession. This bill is a solution that does not solve the problem in the profession. Why are districts not applying for grants to pay their substitute teachers? Why are school districts outsourcing and striping the benefits from their substitute teaching staff? The solutions in this bill were generated by administrators who do not listen to their teachers. Without understanding the problem there will be no solution.

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