

March 1, 2023

To: House Committee on Education
From: Tracy Rear, Coordinator of the Western Regional Educator Network
RE: Support for HB 3177

Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Wright and Hudson and members of the committee—

My name is Tracy Rear and I am the Coordinator of the Western Regional Educator Network supporting educators across Lane, Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB 3177, which would give much needed funding to the Educator Advancement Council to continue the critical work in connection with our Regional Educator Networks around the state to engage in meaningful recruitment and retention of the education workforce.

Research tells us that in order for students to reach their fullest potential, they must have access to highly trained and passionate teachers. That is the **why** at the center of the Regional Educator Network Initiative. So, through funding the Educator Advancement Council, you are supporting regional networks that provide connection, decrease isolation, and mitigate teacher burnout through localized strategies. For example, the Western Regional Educator Network brings educators together in a variety of formats such as professional learning communities, so we can learn faster, together, for our students. We provide a variety of career advancement opportunities through coaching, access to funding for college courses, and support with navigating the licensure process. The educators we support tell us stories about how being a part of our network, and having access to resources we provide, has reinvigorated their passion for their profession, provided them access to a broader community they would not have otherwise, and kept them in the profession when they had been feeling isolated and deflated. I would love to share a few powerful quotes from teachers:

[The WREN] is reimagining what education can look like. We are doing social justice work in Oregon, which I think is so unique. What we're doing here is really identifying needs, engaging educators, and treating them like highly skilled, highly effective, highly trained professionals. We are creating relationships between teachers and students, [administrators], and community based organizations.

[Because of the WREN coaching I received] **I believe I am capable of learning a new skill, whatever that may be.** I have to believe that with continued practice and with continued coaching I will get to the point where I will feel even more skilled [in my profession]. Through this process, I feel empowered to make decisions [about] what I think is best for my students.

I have been in education for a long time. I have never experienced anything like the WREN. I have never been supported like this.

So supporting funding for the Educator Advancement Council means that you are supporting access to high quality professional development for educators that promotes equitable outcomes through high leverage instructional strategies for students. You will be supporting resources that empower teachers to learn new skills to benefit their students. You will be supporting a network that listens to teachers and makes sure they have everything they need to feel supported and successful. Thank you for your support today.

Tracy Rear
Western Regional Educator Network Coordinator/Specialist
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