

March 1, 2023

To: House Committee on Education
From: *Nancy Arteaga, Regional Mentor MCREN*
RE: Support for HB 3177

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

My name is Nancy Arteaga and I am a Regional Mentor for the Multnomah Clackamas Regional Educator Network. 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.

My educational career started in 2013 as a paraprofessional for Hillsboro School District then became a classroom teacher for Portland Public Schools in 2016. Soon after starting the job, the weight of being only 1 of 2 teachers of color in a diverse Title 1 school started to take its toll. I had a colleague tell me about the mentor program available to me through the District. I was fortunate enough to be paired with a mentor of color for 2 years. While never giving me directives, he instead guided me through the beginning stages of my career by helping me reflect on my practice and constantly reminding me of the teacher I said I wanted to be, one who built community with students through exploration of their own identities, joys and creativity.

As part of the program, I was able to observe experienced teachers and debrief with them afterwards. I am grateful for the opportunities I was given through the program, like receiving college credit, which helped move me along the pay scale, and curriculum mapping days, where I was able to meet and build relationships with others, especially teachers of color, around the district who I could share curriculum with. As I met educators outside of my building, slowly some of the feeling of isolation began to fade.

After my 2nd year teaching I knew I wanted to become a mentor and work in collaboration with adult learners. I got to work on attaining the needed qualifications for the job, by going back to school, developing my leadership skills and taking on new building roles. During my 6th year, I transitioned into the role of a mentor for the school District. In this new role, I worked with new educators who needed and were seeking additional individualized support. This year I became a regional mentor helping teachers across many Districts. With new educators, in collaboration, we analyze student work, discuss classroom management, lesson plan, focus on beliefs and bias, develop sustainable practices and provide social, emotional and day to day support.

With additional funding, we can support new educators to build connections and resiliency through peer observations, curriculum mapping events and professional development days. With funding, they can receive stipends for the additional work they are doing accelerating their teaching practice. All these things matter for keeping them in the profession long term.

Mentorship is a key strategy in retention of our educators. Quality mentorship programs provide new educators the support they need to stick with it and offer experienced educators the professional development they crave to grow in their career.

In this workforce crisis, where we are constantly looking for avenues to support educators to stay and grow, if we seek to be successful in this strategy long term we must put our resources where we say our values are.

I encourage the committee to support HB 3177 and dedicate more resources to mentoring and the overall recruitment and retention for Oregon educators. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Nancy Arteaga
Regional Mentor MCREN