



March 1, 2023

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

My name is Reed Scott-Schwalbach and I am the President of the 41,000 member Oregon Education Association.

Our members span the diversity of the education workforce, from classroom teachers to custodians to community college professionals. Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for HB 3177 and 3178, which are important concepts to the state discussion on educator recruitment and retention.

HB 3177 is a budget ask of \$20 million dollars to the Educator Advancement Fund for the purposes of recruitment, retention and professional learning opportunities for educators. **We advocate that this also fund expansion of programs like the Teacher Scholars Program**, which reduces barriers to licensure for linguistically and ethnically diverse students in educator preparation programs by providing grants for tuition of up to \$10,000 per year.

HB 3178 –1 amendment would allow a further expansion of the Teacher Scholars Program, which since 2017 has awarded hundreds of grants to pre-service educators. You will hear some of these stories today and can read more from written testimony in OLIS. We know that including others, like school counselors or school health professionals, in tuition support programs will address the workforce shortage crisis, **and we also are open to the conversation about how we ensure we are investing in those who commit to Oregon schools beyond their initial year.**

Supporting recruitment, retention, and continued professional development are key strategies to building diverse, quality educators that offer Oregon students a world class education. For our newest educators, reducing the financial barriers to licensure and increasing retention strategies like mentors, are key to retaining educators beyond their first years, which can often be the hardest. Providing current educators an opportunity to grow ensures skills sets that are able to meet the changing needs of our students. OEA is excited to continue partnering with the state to be innovative in our approaches. We urge your support of these bills.

Respectfully,

Reed Scott-Schwalbach

Oregon Education Association President