



March 1, 2023

TO: House Committee on Education

RE: Support for HB 3177 & 3178 - Support for Expansion of Teacher Scholars Program

FROM: Nate Waas Shull, Senior Administrator, Career Pathways & Partnerships, Multnomah Education Service District

Chair Neron, Vice Chair Hudson, Vice Chair Wright, and members of the committee.

My name is Nate Waas Shull and I work as Senior Administrator for Career Pathways & Partnerships at Multnomah ESD. I'm here to testify in support of **increasing funding for the Oregon Teacher Scholars Program**. This program has been a truly game-changing state investment when it comes to diversifying the education workforce in Oregon.

In Multnomah County, more than half of our students are students of color, while only 17% of our teachers are people of color. Representation matters and we have seen how the legislature's investment in the OTSP is creating **hope, access, and reliable support** for individuals who have been marginalized and excluded from educator preparation programs for a wide array of reasons - among them the prohibitive cost of earning a college degree in our state.

At Multnomah ESD, I help manage the regional Grow Your Own program, known as [Multnomah Educators Rising](#), where we provide highly-supported degree pathways specifically for racially diverse future educators.

In partnership with Portland Community College, we have enrolled more than 100 classified district staff of color in education coursework toward their goal of becoming licensed educators. We also recruit future educators through our partners at the Latino Network, the Black Parent Initiative, the NAYA Native American Youth and Family Center, and the Oregon Alliance of Black School Educators. As our participants approach completion of their Associates degree, we help every single one of them to complete the application for the OTSP and move on to Bachelors or Masters-level educator preparation programs.

The bills before you today do **two critical things** when it comes to this important program:

- First, HB 3177 will **increase the state's overall investment in the program**. It is absolutely critical, based on our experience, that this remains a non-competitive program. OTSP stands as an unequivocal commitment on the part of the Oregon legislature to tell aspiring educators of color that - if you are successfully admitted into an educator preparation program, then we are here to knock down the financial burden that could hold you back. Period. While all qualified applicants to date have received the scholarship, there's a risk that this might change. The word is out about the program - which is a very good problem to have - as individuals and communities have become increasingly aware of this support. But without increased investment - unfortunately, in the coming year, applications could exceed the available funds. This bill can help ensure that we don't undercut our momentum just as it's getting going.
- Second, HB 3178 will expand the Oregon Teacher Scholars Program to provide support to aspiring **school counselors and other licensed school professionals**. Here in Oregon's most populous county, the number of American Indian / Alaska Native school counselors is 3. We have a total of only 13 Black counselors, 24 Latinx counselors, and exactly one Pacific Islander school counselor in all of Multnomah County. This has to change, and bills before you today will be a critical step in the right direction.