

Date: March 7, 2023
To: House Committee on Education
From: Dr. Christine M. T. Pitts, Parent, researcher, and advocate
Subject: HB 3288 - Support

Dear Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Wright and Hudson, and members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Christine Pitts, and I am a constituent from House District 42. I am writing as a parent, researcher, and advocate to support HB 3288.

During Covid-19, I lead the study of a portfolio of racial justice partnerships in a large urban Oregon school district. We analyzed how culturally and identity-affirming services supported student engagement and academic outcomes for historically underserved students. This exploration allowed us to formally document and elaborate on our racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students' experiences during the pandemic crisis – **in partnership with our community partners.**

Inviting community organizations to the evaluation table in new ways meant we were thinking about data from their worldviews. We heard loud and clear from our partners that race and ethnicity data must accurately reflect the nuanced identities and experiences among our diverse K-12 student population if we were to tell their stories and enact transformative change. Unfortunately, this is not the case across Oregon's 197 school districts.

There is *no* uniform approach to collecting and aggregating race and ethnicity data across Oregon schools. On an individual level, we are truncating students' identities by inaccurately reflecting who they are, which in turn undervalues and disappears their individual stories. At scale, undercounting and misrepresenting students when aggregating and analyzing data to make programmatic recommendations risks overlooking critical improvements and supports for historically underserved students in Oregon.

Creating data standards through HB 3288 is a solid first step toward data justice. And, we can [learn from the infrastructure](#) the Oregon Health Authority created to plan for, implement, and monitor progress toward statewide data standards. If we are going to commit to equity and justice in Oregon schools, we cannot maintain a data system that mutes students' stories and truncates their identities.

With this in mind, I urge you to pass HB 3288 so that we can see and prioritize our racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students in all settings, studies, and decisions.