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Dear Oregon Legislators,

I write to you today with concerns regarding HB3199 in hopes you will consider extending your evaluation to include grades kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade in your review. As you may already know, the new physical education requirements for elementary students requires 30 minutes of instruction per day. Physical education is currently the only content area with mandated instructional minutes. While the value of physical education is not in debate, the daily mandate forces teachers and administrators to prioritize PE over reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. It goes without saying that our schools are under immense pressure to address learning loss due to the pandemic. The current PE requirements interfere with the professional discretion and decision making that allows teachers to respond to the needs of students. Additionally, the facilities needed to comply with the PE instructional minutes simply do not exist in many of the school buildings across the state. For example, in an elementary school of 500 students there are typically 20 or more sections of classes. If a school is lucky enough to have a gym separate from a cafeteria, the gym would need to be scheduled for 10 hours per day to serve all 20 sections for 30 minutes daily. On top of that, most school days are only about 7 hours long in total length from arrival to dismissal. Of course, on some occasions you may be able to have PE outside, but it is weather dependent and unpredictable. If your school has a gym that serves as a cafeteria, the situation is even worse. Out of the 7-hour school day, 3 hours of that day the gym is utilized for food service resulting in having about 4 hours of time per day to schedule PE. Additionally, it is important to note that most elementary students experience daily recess minutes ranging from 45 to 60 minutes per day in addition physical education times scheduled throughout the week. Currently, those minutes do not count towards the calculation of physical education activity each week. In our district, all elementary classes have at least 60 minutes of PE each week. We are currently out of compliance with the standard and will struggle to meet (if ever) in the coming years if the mandate continues. As the leader for our district, I have an extremely difficult time supporting the required PE minutes when we have such limited time to instill foundational skills involving reading, math, science, writing and social studies during the elementary years of schooling. Many of my colleagues feel similarly and I hope they join me in the advocacy to examine the issue in more depth.

In summary, I hope this information provides some insight into the challenges associated with the current PE requirements. The K-5 PE minute requirements are excessive, pose undue hardship on school facilities and detract from a teacher’s ability to make professional instructional decisions. Please consider an amendment to HB3199 that incorporates the study to include grades K-5. Thank you for your service to our state and schools.

Sincerely,

Walt Davenport  
Superintendent  
Central Point School District 6