

Submitter: Cathleen Lemke-Wallace
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure: HB3198

I am a Reading Specialist with an M.Ed-Reading Specialist degree, trained in “Reading Recovery,” teaching reading and writing as a specialist for 20 years, and tutoring elementary children in schools and privately.

I believe this proposal to train teachers to teach reading and writing and fund tutoring programs for students is a step in the right direction. I only hope that every school district in Oregon will take advantage of the grants that are being offered.

I have come in contact with teachers in my local school district whom I believe have not received instruction in how to teach children to read. These teachers have been told that reading a story to a child then asking the child to read the story is an effective reading strategy. And after speaking to the district’s curriculum director, this “strategy” was confirmed.

There is also an issue with textbooks used to teach reading. The district uses “basal readers” which is a collection of stories focusing on grade level interest not grade level readability. A typical basal reader has stories with readability levels ranging from below grade level to far above grade level. The most effective and appropriate books should be individually leveled books that match each student’s reading level, regardless of grade level. There are several publishers that provide high-interest, low-reading level books for students who are reading below their grade level.

I hope that HB3198 is just the beginning of the state addressing the phenomenally high number of students who are not receiving effective reading instruction, are not learning to read, and are not proficient readers by the end of third grade.