

March 23, 2023

To: Senate Committee on Education
From: Literacy Advocates
RE: Support for SB 1045

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber, Members of the Committee,

As literacy advocates, we write in support of [SB 1045](#). It is a crucial step forward towards helping students around the state receive the education they deserve, including access to the life-changing power of reading.

Research shows that 95% of students CAN learn to read given clear, systematic, structured instruction, yet more than 60% of Oregon's 3rd graders aren't reading at grade level. It's not the kids who are the problem, it's our system.

That system is currently wildly inconsistent and unpredictable for students and teachers, not just across Oregon, but between districts and sometimes within individual schools themselves.

Families need to have confidence that our districts are meeting standards to provide the best possible learning tools that our children need to succeed. SB 1045 would help provide that assurance.

OPB published a [story](#) this week that highlights what can happen to our kids when districts don't meet standards. It points to a 20 point difference in 3rd grade reading between Lake Oswego & West Linn/Wilsonville school districts, which have similar demographics and family income levels.

West Linn/Wilsonville has been using an unapproved curriculum for almost a decade. Lake Oswego is employing a number of efforts based in brain science that confirms and explains how kids learn to read, including training its teachers in that science and using an approved curriculum. Its results are striking:

- Statewide, 8% of English Learners in 3rd grade are reading at grade level. In Lake Oswego, it's 56%
- Statewide, 20% of 3rd graders with disabilities are reading at grade level. In Lake Oswego, it's 60%
- Statewide, 21% of Latinx 3rd graders are reading at grade level. In Lake Oswego, it's 59%

The above example is not a reflection on West Linn/Wilsonville's students, families, teachers, district leaders or school board - it's a reflection on our state government that has shirked its responsibility to not only enforce standards, but to fully support districts in living up to them.

We support SB 1045 as one piece of accountability - that of districts to its students - while also acknowledging that in order for it to have a transformative impact, the state needs to live up to its own accountability to districts and to students. In line with that shared accountability, we encourage the committee to define clear Oregon Department of Education timelines in the bill to help ensure expeditiousness, transparency, and shared understanding.

Angela Uherbelau, Founder, Oregon Kids Read

Lisa Lyon, Founder, Decoding Dyslexia Oregon

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