

March 24, 2023

Chair Michael Dembrow
Vice-Chair Suzanne Weber
Members of the Senate Education Committee

RE: SB 275-4 - Improving Alignment Among State Education Agencies

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the Senate Education Committee,

On behalf of Foundations for a Better Oregon (FBO), we would like to express our appreciation to the Chair in bringing forward the -4 amendment to SB 275, which provides an intentional process to improve state education agency alignment by exploring solutions with stakeholders at the table.

Foundations for a Better Oregon (FBO) is a project of Oregon's five largest foundations, working to ensure Oregon's public systems support every child to learn, grow, and thrive. Over more than a decade of work, FBO has invested in efforts to support and uplift the voices of Oregon educators, understanding that a diverse and well supported educator workforce is critical to meeting our goals for Oregon children.

While we have not taken a formal position on the bill, **we previously met with Chair Dembrow to express significant concerns with the following provisions related to the Educator Advancement Council (EAC) in Section 61 of the original -1 amendment to SB 275:**

- **The -1 amendment removed the intergovernmental agreement and moved the EAC under the sole control of the Oregon Department of Education.**
(p. 92, lines 1-10)
- **The -1 amendment removed the authority of the Council, whose majority is made up of classroom educators, to name an Executive Director.**
(p. 92, line 28 through p. 93, line 6)

The EAC was created in 2017 to ensure Oregon has high-quality, well supported, and culturally responsive educators in every classroom. This innovative body was designed to align strategies and investments into a sustained and cohesive effort to ensure Oregon's K-12 and early childhood workforce is supported from recruitment through retirement with robust preparation and ongoing professional learning.





To accomplish these important goals, the EAC was created through an intergovernmental agreement to provide a much-needed coordinating function across Oregon's fragmented education system. In fact, the EAC is the only body charged specifically with creating a statewide system of support for educators throughout the learning continuum. It also supports alignment and cooperation across all relevant education agencies, including the Oregon Department of Education, Early Learning Division, Higher Education Coordinating Commission, 19 education service districts, and 197 school districts.

We believe the changes that were proposed in the -1 amendment to SB 275 would have rolled back significant progress that the EAC has already made toward aligning and improving how Oregon supports educators across the learning continuum. Furthermore, the -1 amendment would have diminished the voice and leadership of Oregon educators who are guiding system improvements, and hinder the EAC's ability to continue developing critical infrastructure to assess and address workforce needs statewide.

Our state cannot afford to create new silos and barriers. We believe the EAC provides the educator-led and system-wide approach required to help every educator meet the diverse learning needs of Oregon students. We appreciate the -4 amendment to SB 275 to examine how the EAC, Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, and Oregon Department of Education work in tandem to further support Oregon educators.

Sincerely,

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