

April 3, 2023

Members of the House Education Committee,

As educators with many decades of experience in educational research and in teaching from pre-K through college, members of the Oregon Public Education Committee are keenly aware of the importance of student literacy.

We certainly agree with the intended goals of the Early Literacy Success Initiative. However, we believe the bill's emphasis on rigid, commercially-produced standardized testing methods for grant applications and grant reports will produce regrettable unintended consequences.

While we recognize the convenience of commercially-produced tests, their utility for literacy purposes has proved to be highly questionable. Additionally, their inherent design routinely results in overloading teachers with extraneous data collection.

Therefore, we believe HB 3198 should allow the use of locally-developed reading assessments.

We are concerned that fixed test-scores for "grade level" literacy will place unhealthy pressure on students and teachers – in spite of the current testing-and-data model's lack of efficacy.

Since 2017, the advent of "progress monitoring" tests such as iReady, easyCBM and MAP has resulted in a great increase in formative standardized reading testing. There has been an accompanying increase in the time that teachers have to spend on data compiling and reporting.

We are concerned about the following unintended consequences of the "high-stakes testing" components of the Early Literacy Success Initiative :

- Increased pressure on children, teachers and administrators to achieve arbitrary scores in order to meet grant requirements;
- Additional decrease in developmentally-appropriate, emotionally-healthy early childhood teaching and learning that involves discovery learning, play and joy;
- Increased narrowing of the curriculum due to the mandating of 60-90 minutes per day of reading instruction and assessment. Which subjects will be eliminated?
- Lack of sufficient consideration for different styles and rates of learning due to rigid methods and timelines for achieving test scores.
- Increased time spent by teachers in data collecting, compiling and reporting at the expense of time for lesson planning, parent communication, and student contact.

Members of the House Education Committee, we believe in the capability of teachers and administrators to create locally-developed assessments that are of superior value to commercial tests and can provide the greatest positive impact on teacher practices – without a "one-size-fits-all" approach that drowns teachers in data.

We believe HB 3198 should explicitly allow for locally-developed reading assessments.

Members of the OPEN Steering Committee,

Margi Brown	David Crandall	Larry Lewin	Ross Swartzendruber
Roscoe Caron	Gregg Heacock	Liz Marlia-Stein	Mary Thamann