

MALHEUR EDUCATION SERVICE DISTRICT REGION 14

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Malheur
EDUCATION SERVICE DISTRICT

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Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Hudson and Wright, Members of the Committee,

My name is Kelly Poe, I am the director of Early Learning at Malheur Education Service District and the director of the Eastern Oregon Early Learning Hub. The Eastern Oregon Early Learning Hub serves Baker, Malheur, and Wallowa counties. This is the entire eastern border of the state from Washington to Nevada.

This letter is in support of HB 3198 and the forthcoming amendments. HB 3198 proposes expanded investments in literacy supports for families with children age 0-5. It proposes doing this in alignment with two current programs: Kindergarten Partnerships and Innovation (KPI) and the Equity Fund. The Early Learning Hub role is to allocate KPI funds, leverage local resources, and support local organizations that are successfully working with families and their children. The Eastern Oregon Early Learning Hub also collaborates with the Eastern Oregon Child Care Resources to promote and support equity throughout our entire region. We work with local organizations to access and leverage equity fund dollars to do culturally-specific early learning work.

KPI investments in Eastern Oregon have resulted in the following:

- Transitions Committees made up of preschool and kindergarten teachers and administrators in each county. They develop county-specific plans. Many of these school districts are also developing plans for onsite preschool classrooms.
- We support Parent/Child events in collaboration with Early Childhood and Kindergarten programs. The design of these events is unique to each community. Each county Transition Committee leads the planning of the events.
- Strong relationships and coordination with Blue Mountain and Treasure Valley Community Colleges to develop programs for high school students to enter the Early Childhood Education field.
- Joint Professional Development workshops for preschool and kindergarten teachers.
- EO Early Learning Hub coordinates ASQ Online data to determine gaps and opportunities.

In addition to the Equity Fund investments in the relatively larger communities in our Hub region, we work closely with Child Care Resource & Referral and Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education partners to reach and appropriately provide services in isolated and remote communities. The proposed enhanced funding would expand our ability to support parents and local partners as they construct the building blocks for literacy.

We are grateful this legislation addresses literacy comprehensively. Our work from birth through age 5 is only successful if we are able to send children to schools that are ready to support literacy through comprehensive data-informed strategies. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you wish additional information.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly Poe".

Kelly Poe
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