



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KEY WOMEN EDUCATORS
DELTA KAPPA GAMMA™

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

My name is Katherine Martell, I am a retired Salem-Keizer educator of thirty years, Co-President of Alpha Epsilon Chapter of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, and chair of the steering committee for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library's local affiliate Marion and Polk Early Learning Hub, Inc.

I am writing in support of HB 3198 and the forthcoming amendments expanding literacy supports to our youngest learners.

HB 3198 proposes expanded investments in literacy supports for families with children ages 0-5. Science is clear that from ages zero to five, the brain is growing and developing at its fastest rate. By using evidence and researched approaches from the earliest ages, we can make a difference.

In our community, Delta Kappa Gamma has a very strong partnership with the Marion & Polk Early Learning Hub (MPELH) and work collaboratively to support children and families in being ready for school. Together we have provided many Ready for Kindergarten sessions with families. At the core of this program is early literacy offering parents tools on how to engage with their child. In addition, we work to put as many books as possible into the hands of children and their families through Little Free Libraries and at community events to encourage the love and joy of reading. Alpha Epsilon Chapter, with grants from the Delta Kappa Gamma International Educators Foundation (DKGIEF) has invested heavily in literacy projects in the Salem-Keizer Community over the past twenty years.

Our DKG chapter will continue working with MPELH to support early learners. We want more literacy opportunities in our community and the ability to reach more families. We want to make available more culturally specific and relevant programs and opportunities and do so in a way where families will see and understand the value of building early literacy skills. The proposed enhanced funding from the state, would expand our opportunities to support parents and other community-based organizations 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 can send children to school that are ready to support literacy through comprehensive data-informed strategies.

We will continue to collaborate with Marion & Polk Early Learning Hub's role to support the allocation of literacy-specific funds and to support community-based organizations in accessing and leveraging equity fund dollars to do culturally specific early learning work from the earliest ages.

Thank you and I urge your support of HB 3198 and the forthcoming amendments.

Sincerely,
Katherine Martell, M. Ed