



Date: April 3, 2023

To: House Education Committee

From: Parasa Chanramy, Coalition of Oregon School Administrators
Ozzie Rose, Oregon Association of Education Service Districts
Richard Donovan, Oregon School Boards Association

Subject: Letter of Support for [House Bill 3198-3](#)

Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Hudson and Wright, and Members of the House Education Committee:

On behalf of the Coalition of Oregon School Administrators, Oregon Association of Education Service Districts, and Oregon School Boards Association, we submit this letter to express our support for House Bill 3198, with the -3 amendment, on the Early Literacy Success Initiative.

Collectively, our members lead 197 school districts and 19 education service districts (ESDs) that serve over half a million students in Oregon.

HB 3198 is designed to help:

1. Increase early literacy for children from birth to third grade;
2. Reduce academic disparities in early literacy progress and outcomes, especially among focal student groups that have historically experienced academic disparities;
3. Partner with families around the development of children's early literacy skills and knowledge; and
4. Improve, and expand access, to early literacy support that is research-aligned, culturally responsive, student-centered, and family-centered.

The bill builds on [Oregon's Early Literacy Framework](#) which anchors the following guiding principles:

- Early literacy begins at birth.
- Families and communities play an important role.
- Children are full of literacy promise.
- Every student must be taught to read and write.
- Foundational skills matter.
- Multilingualism benefits everyone.
- Educator knowledge and practice are critical.

We appreciate how HB 3198 centers these goals and principles in establishing a grant-in-aid program where districts would be able to access funding and technical assistance to support:

- Professional development and coaching in early literacy instruction for educators;
- Extended learning opportunities – inclusive of home-based summer reading programs and intensive summer reading programs;



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- High-dosage tutoring for students in early elementary grades that integrates reading and writing;
 - The implementation of research-aligned curricula and materials; and
 - Hiring literacy specialists, coaches or interventionists.

In addition to implementing strong systems of support and culturally responsive practices, we believe that these are important research-aligned strategies in helping more students learn how to read.

In reviewing this bill, we also hope that you:

1. Consider opportunities to include Education Service Districts (ESDs).

We believe the proposal would be strengthened by designating ESDs as eligible applicants for the Early Literacy Success Grants specified in Section 3(2) of the -3 amendment. The ESD grant application would be developed collaboratively by participating local districts and would align with the goals and requirements of the Early Literacy Success Initiative. Local school districts could choose to develop their own grant application, while others may choose to join the ESD effort. We believe our recommendation would provide an opportunity for small districts to acquire increased services and support they might not be able to develop in an individual application, even with the minimum grant allocation noted in Section 5(2) of the -3 amendment.

Additionally, we would like to see ESDs be considered as technical assistance partners, in collaboration with the Department of Education. Our ESDs provide critical regional services to their component districts – primarily in areas that the school districts alone would not be able to adequately and equitably provide, especially for our small, rural, and remote districts. In the context of early literacy – that could look like: i) district or team professional development, coaching and consultation, and ii) meetings for administrators, coaches and specialists to thought-partner and collaborate around shared problems of practice. ESDs also provide services and programs for Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education.

2. Ensure that funding for the Early Literacy Success Initiative is in addition to an adequately funded State School Fund.

This session, our districts and schools need \$10.3 billion to maintain our staffing, and continue core services and programs for students, from teaching, learning, and instruction to mental health and well-being. Stable and adequate funding for the State School Fund is a critical foundation, as well as a robust investment in the Early Literacy Success Initiative – which will help build on that foundation.

Thank you again for considering our letter of support. We look forward to collaborating with you to ensure that the bill, and an investment in early literacy, advances this legislative session.

Please vote YES in support of House Bill 3198.