



March 29, 2023

To: House Committee on Education

From: Oregon Education Association

RE: Support for HB 3198 with -3 amendments

Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Wright, Hudson and members of the committee,

The Oregon Education Association represents over 41,000 educators and education service professionals across the state, from pre-K to community colleges. Our members are classroom teachers, bus drivers, custodians, teacher assistants, school counselors, community college professionals and more.

All Oregon's children deserve a world class education and in order for us to ensure they have that access, we have to both invest resources in our public education system and in particular for students who are learning to read, we must develop the capacity of our public education system in the state to provide science-based instruction and appropriate interactive curriculum for those pre-K to 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

On behalf of our members, we would like to express support for the goals inside the early literacy discussion and, in fact, our union membership has passed a resolution that supports reading instruction based on the science of reading with the appropriate interventions. We do want to highlight some key components that we believe both serve in the best interest of students and educators.

1. **We need a strong base of support, teacher coaching and resourcing for the educators who are teaching students in Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes.** Professional development for teachers on core components that are science-based for the instruction and the support from their districts to pursue the professional development, such as adequate time and reimbursements for attending trainings, and utilizing the science-based methods is paramount. This will take significant resourcing and long-term continued support.
2. **The resulting policy cannot and should not be overly prescriptive.** We want to ensure that any statewide legislative approach to curriculum does not inhibit the ability of educators to be creative in their classrooms and use such measures as formative assessment, which allows for measurable impact along the way as students learn.
3. **For early intervention and support (birth to age 6) we must approach education and support as a community-wide effort.** Community-based programs and culturally and linguistically responsive early literacy programs are certainly part of the long-term solution. Strategic thinking and program design with the Early Learning Division will be important so as to not undermine the goals and to not undermine the professional standard and training we hold our educators to. Parents and communities have a role to play, school staff and administration have a role to play.



4. **Ensure our education preparation programs are also incorporating and using these proven methods.** Including, the science of reading, evidence-based, and culturally-responsive practices that are the practical tools Educators need to help our students learn and love to read. Without this important component of implementation, we will miss the mark with our future workforce and risk being in a similar place years from today.
5. **The monitoring of early literacy success plans must ensure that we do not over-emphasize standardized testing or rigid academic scores at the sacrifice of students' learning and love of reading.** There is no silver bullet here, however, if our state takes a direction toward more investment and resourcing in our public education system, we know better outcomes will follow.
6. **We cannot grant fund our way to a better public school system long term.** The idea that grants are the best way to create access to literacy programs is not without its shortcomings. Grants themselves do not change a system that is missing the mark to prepare educators for the classroom. The best schools, with the most supported staff are usually best positioned to not only apply for these grants but administer them as well. A school in crisis does not have the time, or systems in place, to apply for and administer grant funding in an effective and ongoing way. Funds should be used to put people on the ground, creating a system of support for our educators and students alike. Literacy will require dedicated and sustainable funding, a consistent system of progress monitoring as well as an expectation that our Educator Preparation Programs take responsibility for the training they do to put educators in our classrooms.
7. **Early Literacy Success Initiative funding should be in addition to an adequately funded State School Fund, which we advocate is \$10.3 billion.** Given the points above, we want to see that our public school systems and classrooms are as fully resourced as we can get them, which we believe will address important long-term outcomes we seek as a state. We also know that funding mechanism and investment levels can of course be decided in the Ways & Means process, though we want to share that we advocate that these investments come from the Student Investment Account, or SEIA.

Thank you for your time to highlight these points and we appreciate the partnership on these important issues for our schools, our educators and students.

We urge your support for HB 3198 with the -3 amendments.

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