

Good day and hello to the honorable members of the Senate Committee on Education,

I am writing to you in support of SB 948.

I am a third grade teacher in the Springfield Public Schools in Springfield, Oregon, and this is my 31st year as an educator in both elementary and middle schools.

What we are currently doing in our schools is not working for too many of the kids. Districts like mine have abandoned the concepts of student-centered learning, student autonomy, and social-emotional learning as they created Back to Basics-type school environments (focused solely on the 3 R's) in an attempt to bolster scores on standardized tests in reading and math.

The best description for what goes on currently in schools like mine would be administrator-centered learning. Administrator-centered learning can be understood as a top-down approach in which what must be done by students and teachers are those things that align with the administrator's needs and goals using curriculum and teaching methods chosen by the administrator, as opposed to addressing a student's individual needs and goals using curriculum and teaching methods that are the best match for that student.

Specifically, in Springfield, administrator-centered learning means that students in grades K - 5 spend about 85% of their instructional time focusing on only two subjects: English Language Arts (reading and writing) and mathematics. About another 10% of instructional minutes are devoted to physical education and music. This only leaves about 5% of the instructional minutes for social-emotional learning, science, social studies and civics, health, art, etc.

SB 948 would be a much needed step in the direction of prioritizing kids and their educational needs and wants again. This bill would send a signal to district administrators that ODE and the state legislature believe there is more to a child's education than reading and math scores on standardized tests.

Most importantly, this bill would promote a pedagogical shift in our schools as a move toward returning the joy of learning to students. Play-based learning provides students with more autonomy and opportunities to use their imaginations and critical thinking skills. Kids would also develop their social-emotional skills as they work together and engage in collaborative learning activities. A side effect of this move would be improved student behavior and less disrupted learning. I have no doubt that most teachers would

agree that student behavior improves when kids feel that learning is fun and students have more choice in what and how they learn.

It is time to make the kids (and not their standardized test scores) our top priority once again in our schools. SB 948 and the play-based learning that it promotes is a good step in that direction.

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