

Good morning, Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber and members of the Senate Education Committee! My name is Liz Marlia-Stein, and I live in McMinnville and am an active member of the Oregon Public Education Network.

I'd like to thank you so very much for bringing this important bill up for discussion today, especially to Senator Frederick and his staff for sponsoring it. This testimony will surely reveal my passion for "play-based education."

I come to you as a member of OPEN, and formerly a member of Oregon Save Our Schools, two organizations that have worked tirelessly for nearly 15 years to bring back the comprehensive, more play-based learning that for over two decades now has been replaced by an over-testing and data-driven model.

I come to you as a dedicated substitute teacher and tutor with 25 years of experience, working with students from grades K-12, where I experienced first-hand the well-rounded education our children once had. With more than an emphasis on reading and math, we had a quality social studies & science curriculum, art, music, drama, and even library studies. Students were much more engaged in their education before standardized testing became the emphasis, as well as a curriculum that no longer followed the learning theories appropriate to their age level. I experienced too many of our students much less motivated, and, as a result, I noticed an increase in anxious, disruptive behavior. It broke my heart to have Kindergarten children come to me and say how much they hated school. Kindergarten...the age level in which our children learned to "love learning." And in middle school, students would tell me that they were not smart enough to accomplish the lesson. It became a challenge for me to make learning fun for them when the focus was for them to pass standardized tests. After a while, I decided to no longer renew my teaching credentials.

And so, I come to you today with hope and resolve that we finally put our children and our dedicated teachers above the need for data that is too often misrepresented and to return to a curriculum that engages and excites our children, and our teachers. After visiting Southern Oregon's Rogue Primary Elementary School in Central Point, where the district passed a bond and asked Principal Maggie Staley to develop a K-2 Play-based curriculum, I was convinced that students all over Oregon would benefit from an "Active Playful Learning" approach. Principal Staley is modeling her school after this, and there is a growing movement throughout our country doing the same.

I end my testimony with this quote from the "Active Playful Learning" website, which continues to inspire me, and I hope will awaken all of you: *"The time is now to build a new approach, to reinvigorate education on the ground, rekindle teachers' passion for their profession, and help students build a lifelong love of learning."*

Thank you!