



Chair Neron, Vice Chairs McIntire and Dobson, and members of the House Education Committee.

My name is Cynthia Branger Muñoz, and I am here on behalf of the Oregon Education Association (OEA), which represents more than 41,000 educators and education support professionals across the state. Our members include teachers, school nurses, occupational therapists, counselors, and classified staff who work every day to support Oregon's students from pre-K through community colleges. OEA is committed to ensuring that every student in Oregon has access to a high-quality education and that educators have the resources they need to support student success.

Chronic absenteeism is one of the most pressing challenges facing Oregon's schools today. When students miss school frequently, they fall behind academically, struggle to stay engaged, and face a greater risk of dropping out. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2021), about 7% of public-school students nationwide are chronically absent, but in Oregon, absenteeism rates are as high as 15% to 20% in many districts, particularly those serving historically underserved communities (Oregon Department of Education, 2022).

House Bill 3199 takes a much-needed, research-based approach to tackling this issue by implementing statewide policies that improve attendance tracking, strengthen interventions, and expand support systems for students and families. This bill aligns with best practices for addressing chronic absenteeism in several keyways:

- **Early Identification & Intervention:** HB 3199 creates an **Early Warning System** to notify parents when students show patterns of absenteeism and requires **quarterly attendance data reporting**, ensuring that schools can act before students fall too far behind.
- **Family & Community Engagement:** The expansion of the **Everyday Matters Initiative** will provide more outreach and support to families, helping them overcome barriers to school attendance.
- **School Climate & Policy Support:** HB 3199 establishes an **Attendance Advisory Committee**, bringing together educators, community leaders, and policymakers to develop sustainable, long-term solutions for improving attendance.
- **Better Data for Smarter Policies:** A **common attendance code system** across all school districts will provide consistent, accurate data to better inform policy decisions and future efforts to reduce absenteeism.

HB 3199 was developed through a dedicated workgroup under the leadership of Representative Hoa Nguyen and Senator Webber. Their commitment to collaboration has resulted in a bill that reflects the real needs of Oregon's students and educators.

OEA believes that addressing chronic absenteeism is fundamental to closing opportunity gaps, improving student outcomes, and ensuring that Oregon's public schools remain strong. We urge you to support HB 3199 and take this important step toward building a more engaged, successful, and equitable future for all students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.