

**Submitted by:** Dr. Christine Toribio Pitts, Interim President & CEO, Open School Inc.

**Date:** March 10, 2025

**Subject:** Support of HB 2009

Dear Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony in support of HB 2009 because Oregon cannot afford to continue business as usual. The state ranks 50th in the U.S. in fourth-grade reading and math on the Nation's Report Card when controlling for demographics—an urgent crisis that demands action. HB 2009 is a necessary first step toward greater accountability, ensuring that any increases in school funding lead to improved student outcomes. However, to drive real change, the bill must go further.

The success of HB 2009 depends on connecting school improvement efforts to instructional quality and leadership capacity. Other states have demonstrated that accountability, paired with strong policies and research-backed interventions, drives real improvement. Oregon must not only identify struggling schools but ensure they adopt evidence-based strategies to improve their student outcomes.

To strengthen HB 2009:

1. **Tie school district coaching to instructional improvement and support.** Oregon should explicitly link coaching and school improvement to research-backed instructional strategies aligned with high-quality instructional materials (HQIM), professional development, and evidence-based interventions. Massachusetts and Virginia require targeted strategies such as [high-dosage tutoring](#), [structured literacy](#), and [job-embedded teacher professional development](#)—Oregon should do the same.
2. **Ensure instructional leadership coaching for principals and district leaders.** Interim assessments alone won't improve instruction—leaders must be trained to act on student data. Virginia's [Honesty Gap initiative](#) connects transparency in student assessment data to principal and teacher professional development, ensuring educators use data effectively.
3. **Mandate, not suggest, evidence-based interventions.** The bill currently states that districts receiving intensive coaching “shall” take steps to improve instruction. Stronger language—such as “must”—ensures real accountability. Massachusetts [mandates turnaround plans](#) that include instructional reforms like targeted coaching and structured academic supports. Oregon should follow suit.

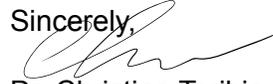
HB 2009 is a crucial first step in strengthening Oregon's accountability framework. However, without clear mechanisms linking intervention efforts to instructional quality and leadership

development, we risk another accountability system that identifies problems but fails to drive improvement.

I urge the committee to refine the bill to ensure struggling schools receive not just oversight, but targeted, evidence-based support to improve student learning.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome the opportunity to discuss these recommendations further.

Sincerely,



Dr. Christine Toribio Pitts  
Interim President, Open School Inc.  
Mom of four Portland children