

Dear Members of the House Committee on Education,

My name is J. Schuberth. I am dyslexic, my teenage son is dyslexic, and I am a literacy advocate with Oregon Kids Read. I also had the resources to address my son's reading issues and he is now a strong reader. No child should have to hope they are lucky enough to have a parent who can afford to pay for private tutoring so that they can learn to read.

I have also studied literacy legislation from several states and spoken with those who have written and implemented it. With that in mind, I want to offer my comments on HB 2009 as I do not believe it will help Oregon achieve better outcomes for most of our students, and especially not for those whose families are not as well-resourced as mine.

- Accountability should be a guiding principle, not a punishment
 - This bill defines accountability as a punishment that comes only after things aren't working.
 - Accountability in other states that are improving outcomes doesn't look like this. Instead, it means providing ALL districts with clear guidance on evidence-based practices. This means requiring guardrails on money districts are already spending on PD, curriculum, and intervention programs and intervening to help when a district is struggling to implement those practices.
 - Having state guidance on PD, curriculum, and interventions., saves districts resource. By not having them spend precious time vetting programs, they can spend more time with students.
 - For example, states such as Colorado have taken a portion of school funding to train all their teachers in the Science of Reading. They contracted with one provider and provided the PD at a lower cost to all districts. By having one training, educators across the state were also able to support one another as they implement new teaching practices.
 - Oregon already has this: The same base modules Colorado used to train over 28,000 teachers is the foundation of Eastern Oregon University's online teacher training that almost 1,000 Oregon teachers have already completed. Requiring this PD for all K-3 teachers, paid for by the state, would be a step toward accountability that would address our crisis proactively.
- "Intensive coaching" is referenced throughout without specifying its scope or the standards by which it will be guided.
 - Ontario middle school was put on the intervention list, as was Huntington. In an article about these schools, it said \$10,000 was given to the district for planning, and there were 5 visits/year. If this is what intensive coaching means, anyone who

has researched school change knows it is not enough to change a school that's been failing for years.

- Addressing a Crisis Means being Specific and Developing Expertise
 - The schools that may be required to accept intervention will have been chosen to address problems ranging from graduation rates to literacy proficiency rates. The expertise to address those problems are vastly different.
 - We know we have a literacy crisis. From other states, we know what steps all schools should be taking to address literacy, including teacher training and evidence based curriculum. States like Mississippi have developed inhouse teams that specifically address reading. The proposed Oregon model of hiring contractors to fit each individual school's situation means that the ODE has much less oversight over what is done, and that it is not building and sharing on knowledge within its own ranks.
 - In other states, bills are much more specific about how their departments of education would build out the capacity required to do coaching, not in general, but with respect to literacy. The lack of specificity in this bill around improvement teams opens them up to a lack of oversight and uneven results.
- Interim Assessments:
 - Assessments are extremely important, and I welcome the introduction of interim ones. I urge Oregon to go further and require all schools use the same assessments. In states that are addressing their literacy crisis, most have one company/brand that all schools use for interim and summative assessments. This has many advantages:
 - allows the state to compare across schools and year to year so they can make data informed decisions.
 - Ensures that all districts are using evidence-based assessments.
 - Saves districts money and time they would have spent on independently choosing assessments
 - Saves ODE money and resources because they do not have to vet vendors for an approved list, nor follow up w/ district to ensure any independent adoption of assessments are evidence-based.
- Section 31: Literacy Act Amendment
 - The Act reads: "The department shall intervene when a school district or public charter school does not meet the goals established in the early literacy success plan."
 - If a district isn't meeting its literacy goals, ODE can withhold or direct the district's literacy fund allocation. However, the language is "may require" with regards to adopting curriculum or trainings from state list.

- In other states that are improving reading outcomes, they do not wait until a school fails. They instead trained all of their teachers (see comment about Colorado above) and made sure all schools were using evidence-based curricula. Accountability would mean requiring districts to follow evidence-based practices and then support those who struggle with implementing them.

Instead of this current bill, Oregon could improve student outcomes by the legislature taking these immediate steps (all sub-headed under umbrella recommendations from the [2022 Secretary of State Report on Systemic Risk in K-12 Education](#)):

1) Performance Monitoring and Support

- Establish single statewide K-3 reading assessments (interim and summative)
- Require that districts use the state ELA assessment to identify prioritizing funds to their lowest-proficiency students

2) Transparency on Results and Challenges

- Establish a dashboard similar to [Colorado](#) that allows all stakeholders, including students and families, to easily identify how students are faring and what the state is doing to support students struggling with reading

3) Spending Scrutiny and Guidance

- Prioritize funding and support for schools with the lowest ELA proficiency over the past five years
- Require ODE to track literacy funds to the school level

4) Clear, Enforceable District Standards and Timelines

- Require districts to adopt a core K-5 ELA curriculum from the ODE approved list by January 2026 and implement by September 2026.
- Require all K-3 Oregon teachers are trained in science of reading/evidenced-based practices by January 2027.
- Professional development literacy training for teachers must be defined to include a minimum number of hours, rigorous evaluations of learning throughout the course, rigorous end-of-course assessment, and documentation of successful completion of the course. Examples: [Colorado PD rubric](#) and Eastern Oregon University's teacher training *Building a Strong Foundation in Literacy*.

5) Governance and Funding Stability

- Establish an implementation study to provide accountability for the Early Literacy Success Initiative, ensuring that Oregon's literacy investments are well-spent, well-coordinated, and improving student proficiency, especially with underserved groups that struggle with reading.

Sincerely,
J. Schuberth, Ph.D.