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Dr. Charlene Williams

Director of the Department of Education

HB 2009 -1: Shared Accountability
House Education Committee
March 10, 2025

Chair Neron, Vice Chair Dobson, Vice-Chair McIntire, and members of the House Education Committee, Thank you for allowing me to testify today in support of the amendment to HB 2009. For the record my name is Dr. Charlene Williams and I serve as the Director of the Oregon Department of Education.

I'd like to begin by saying that ODE shares the Governor's, the Legislature's, and the public's concern about the state of education in Oregon. Our scholars deserve a world-class education. We can and we must do better. I'm here today to bring forward full-support for shared accountability – one where we drive change through a unified vision. One where school districts are accountable for state funding, progress is being monitored and a continuum of supports provided. At ODE, this means taking deliberate action to improve internal operations, efficiencies and support for school districts.

ODE will focus on three areas: grant consolidation and administration; data and public transparency; and internal operations and enhanced district supports.

Today, I want to provide some of the scope and immediate steps my agency will take beginning this month:

1. Grant Consolidation and Administration

ODE currently administers 140 state and federal grants. Immediate action will be taken to minimize duplication of effort (including the pieces of information ODE requests and collects from school districts as far as application and reporting processes). This work is all about getting intentional and laser-focused on how we organize our systems internally and:

- **Hired a Deputy Director of Operations (started today)** who will help lead the following agency efforts:
- **Launch plan to address contract administration and grant execution** based on recent audit findings.
 - Execute multi-year grants/contracts or grants/contracts for more than one program



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- Provide partial up-front funding, as allowed by statute (especially helpful to community partners)
- **Immediately engage with other states who have successfully aligned programming. Use lessons learned** to shift from individual grant reporting to holistic reporting around the five student success priorities, similar to our sister agency in Louisiana. So that we can,
 - **Reduce the number of reports collected by ODE** into **five** coherent narrative reports centered on student success priorities, the process launched this month and should conclude no later than August 2026.

2. Data and Public Transparency

Data are the catalyst for improving student outcomes. And, when we collect data at the state level, we want to ensure that:

- 1.) We are using it to better understand context and needs across our state and
- 2.) We are making data visual and shareable for public consumption.

ODE will modify and refine its data collections and improve its transparency to the public through the following activities:

- **Inventory current data collections** and determine what efficiencies are feasible by June 30, 2025.
- **Engage with school districts, partners, ESDs, CBOs** in order to identify what other information should be included on a transparency dashboard. By April 15, 2025.
- **Increase accountability by publicly posting school districts' data in user-friendly formats**, including related to graduation, 9th grade on-track, 3rd grade reading, regular attendance. Launched this spring and we will continue to update and iterate.
- **Leverage Oregon's new Online Report Card to help education and community partners answer questions about student outcomes**; ensure webpage links to important fiscal information, early literacy curriculum materials, and current and longitudinal state test results.

3. Internal Operations and Enhanced District Supports

ODE currently provides programmatic support to school districts. This focus area seeks



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to overhaul and align how ODE provides coaching and supports to districts through an aligned continuum of supports. ODE will:

- **Contract with a third party entity that specializes in assessment & accountability system design** to assure that our process for determining district eligibility for support meets rigorous standards for entry and exit.
- **Contract with a third party to inventory staff work and capacity**; restructure and reallocate staff time and capacity to create efficiencies and systematize processes. By June 2025.
- **Develop a plan to refine/renew staff work and responsibilities** that aligns with a comprehensive vision and strategy for accelerating student academic outcomes. (Ongoing) Happening now with a new Deputy Director and cross office prep for accountability.
- **Deploy cross-office “district support teams” to improve efficiency and efficacy of support** - including technical assistance, professional learning and development, and coaching. (Ongoing).
- **Host regional workshops** and technical assistance to support research-based instructional practices, the importance of implementing high-quality instructional materials, ongoing community engagement, needs assessment, and continuous improvement planning processes. Fall 2025. Based on National partnership. In 2025, Oregon joined CCSSO’s High-Quality Instructional Materials and Professional Development Network (IMPD Network), a national initiative that includes 15 states (such as Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mississippi). The network provides access to national best practices, professional coaching, and peer support, and member states have seen significant growth in the use of high-quality materials (HQIM) and student outcomes.

I’ll close today with recognizing that Oregon’s accountability system is incredibly complex, consisting of a mix of state and federal programs, requirements, and funding streams. The current system has many disparate parts and throughlines rather than a coherent set of systems and processes. The impact of separate programs and requirements result in inefficiencies, duplicative processes and further underscores the need for change by ODE.



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The work moving forward - and this bill - helps us move toward a cohesive accountability system, one that takes into account all levels of school governance (local, state, federal) as well as input from families and communities will enable us as a state, along with administrative action and change by ODE, to lead with transparency and empower leaders to continue to build capacity for student learning and school improvement.

Thank you,

Dr. Charlene Williams

Director