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Date: March 19, 2025  
To: House Education Committee  
From: Parasa Chanramy, COSA  
Subject: COSA Testimony on [House Bill 3040](#)

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Good Afternoon, Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and Members of the House Education Committee:

For the record, Parasa Chanramy with COSA. We appreciate the Oregon Department of Education's and Governor Office's work on House Bill 3040; and thank Rep. Kropf for carrying the bill.

**Since the passage of House Bill 3198 (2023), it's important to take a moment to celebrate our collective wins that occurred thanks to the Legislature, the Governor's Office, Oregon Department of Education, education system partners, and advocates, in partnership with our school districts:**

- All school districts which were eligible to apply for early literacy grants applied and were united in their commitment to research-aligned, consistent literacy instruction.
  - 248 districts & charter schools received funds, representing 236,750 students.
  - Grants were distributed by formula, based on K-5 ADMw.
  - Grantees with less than 290 ADMw received a minimum grant award of \$85,082 per biennium.
- The vast majority of districts have already been using research-aligned curricula, and the grant combined with [ODE's Early Literacy Framework](#) provided the needed vision and direction to apply consistent literacy instruction across our state.
- Stories of teachers sharing that they see the "light bulb" moments when students are able to connect their knowledge to be able to sound out words abound.
- Professional development, coaching, and specialized staff have been huge aspects of our success.
- Districts are leveraging partnerships with Education Service Districts, libraries, and literacy experts to strengthen literacy instruction.

**In a short order, the funds have been invested across various early literacy activities ([ODE](#)):**

- 13,221 K-5 students participated in high-dosage tutoring
- 5,719 K-5 students participated in extended learning
- 3,938 educators received professional development & coaching in early literacy research-aligned strategies
- 200 FTE funded to support literacy (coaches, interventionists, specialists, & tutors)

We support the majority of the technical fixes outlined in House Bill 3040 and believe that these fixes are important to support the implementation of the Early Literacy Success Initiative and enhancing research-aligned literacy support for our youngest learners across Oregon.

**There are two important changes we would like to propose to House Bill 3040.**

**1. Allow up to 10% of the Early Literacy Success School District Grants to be spent in 4th and 5th grade in alignment with the allowable uses.**

At the end of the biennium, districts will no longer be able to spend a portion of their Early Literacy Success School District Grant dollars in 4th and 5th grade. We believe that sunseting this provision will impact i) the continuity of services for students in 4th and 5th grade, and ii) a district's ability to fully implement [ODE's Early Literacy Framework](#) which spans from Kindergarten through 5th grade. See Appendix A (starting on page 4) for district examples.

Research supports that literacy development is not complete by third grade. Studies also indicate that students who are not proficient in reading by 3rd grade struggle to catch up without targeted support. Our teachers and staff in upper elementary need professional development and coaching in order to implement interventions and differentiated instruction outside of what traditional curriculum provides. Building a robust literacy program requires vertical alignment (K through 5) in order to build and sustain schoolwide systems.

The language in the -1 amendment would permit spending in 4th and 5th grade for curriculum and instructional materials, but it would not permit spending for high-dosage tutoring, extended learning, or professional development and coaching. Given that the Early Literacy Success Initiative is intended to build school-wide systems so all educators are rowing in the same direction, it is critical that we allow a small portion of the funds to help support 4th and 5th graders and educators who also need professional development and coaching. If the goal is sustained literacy growth and closing persistent achievement gaps, it's critical to extend coaching and professional development, high-dosage tutoring, and extended learning beyond the early grades.

**2. Ensure that there's a pathway for Education Service Districts to apply for funding to be able to provide regional technical assistance and support around early literacy.**

Education Service Districts serve as critical education partners and provide important technical assistance services for districts, especially our small, rural, and remote districts. In House Bill 3198 (2023), there was not a direct path for ESDs to apply for funding to be able to support their component districts with their early literacy efforts across a region. As a result, many

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ESDs tried their best to braid together a patchwork of funding streams to provide technical assistance to their component districts around early literacy. To bolster regional coordination and efforts, we support allowing ESDs to directly apply for funding from the Early Literacy Success Initiative. In Appendix B (starting on page 7), we've highlighted a few examples from ESDs and how they are well-positioned to help provide state-directed, regional support around early literacy.

Thank you again for your time today. We urge you to consider our proposed changes before advancing House Bill 3040 forward.

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## Appendix A: School District - Allowable Spending in 4th and 5th Grade - Examples

### Key Questions:

- How did you utilize early literacy funds to support 4th and 5th grade students during the 23-25 biennium, and what impact did you see?
- What are your priorities and plans for using early literacy funds to support 4th and 5th grade students in the upcoming biennium if you were allowed to spend up to 10%?

**Canby School District:** Early Literacy funds have been used to support 4th-5th grade teachers attending professional learning, grounded in the early literacy framework. As we are moving forward with our process for new instructional materials, we have used early literacy funds to include our K-5 teachers in the learning process. Also, we have wanted to support developing readers in the 4th and 5th grade during our extended learning summer program by being able to allocate funds for staffing.

If we are able to use early literacy funds to support 4th and 5th grade students, we would want to continue K-5 professional learning opportunities to support the implementation of new instructional materials. In order to align instructional practices across our elementary schools, being able to include K-5 staff is important, not just K-3. In addition, we have students who would benefit from high-dosage tutoring support in the upper grades and would prioritize additional learning time in the next biennium.

**David Douglas School District:** Early Literacy Funds were used, in part, to provide instructional coaching and training to 4th and 5th grade educators on the Science of Reading. This provides educators with tools to build a solid phonemic foundation for decoding that makes us more consistent in our district-wide literacy instruction. However, this was not enough. Our district has over 600 newcomer students at the elementary level this year alone, and the language diversity requires extra support for multilingual learners particularly in 4th and 5th grade. We have more than 60 home languages represented in our district, and literacy instruction for multilingual students can build on their strengths with additional time and resources. We have seen a lot of growth in our student data and now have more students reading at grade level. However, we still have 49% of our 5th graders and 48% of our 4th graders at Well Below Benchmark in reading.

With a continued investment to support our 4th and 5th grade students and particularly our multilingual students, we would continue to invest in [Enhanced Core Reading Instruction](#). ECRI coaching for 4th and 5th grade is a daily occurrence at my school, and teachers are eager to learn more about implementing with fidelity. I worry without the continued support, we will lose out on some of the huge gains our students have been making. With continued support of our 4th and 5th grade teachers in ECRI, we can ensure our teachers are able to deliver highly effective curriculum and instruction to help close achievement gaps and raise achievement in our most striving students.

**North Bend School District:** North Bend embedded Science of Reading age appropriate fundamental skills into the 4th and 5th grade level teaching. We also targeted Response-to-Intervention practices and implemented a multi-tiered system of support for our students. Our district also worked to align and

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embed writing practices across grade and curriculum levels.

For our 4th and 5th graders, we would support students whose skills are deficient in basic reading and writing, and be able to continue aligning and integrating writing across the curriculum and grade levels.

**North Clackamas School District:** North Clackamas allocated a small portion of its early literacy funds to provide supplemental support for 4th and 5th grade students not yet reading at grade level. This allocation facilitated the provision of: specialized reading intervention materials for students demonstrating reading proficiency below grade level, the procurement and implementation of effective use of culturally relevant texts for classroom libraries, access to online phonics and supplementary reading intervention programs, and professional development through literacy specialist coaching for 4th and 5th grade educators. This coaching emphasized evidence-based instructional practices aligned with the Science of Reading, effective implementation of intervention curricula, and the analysis of student literacy data to inform targeted instructional goals and differentiated strategies.

The implementation of these supports yielded a 16% improvement in 4th and 5th grade students' access to grade-level literacy content within the initial six months. This positive outcome can be attributed to enhancements in: educator proficiency in the utilization of literacy screening data and writing sample analysis, the application of Science of Reading-aligned intervention materials and curricula to address student deficits, and expanded access to engaging, culturally relevant literacy resources.

If NCSD were granted up to 10% of early literacy funds to support 4th and 5th grade students in the upcoming biennium, our priorities and plans would center on building upon and expanding the promising work already initiated. We will continue the following work:

- Sustained Intervention Support
- Professional Development and Coaching
- Data-Driven Improvement

While the initial six months of implementation demonstrated a 16% increase in 4th and 5th grade students accessing grade-level literacy content, indicating positive momentum, we recognize that significant challenges remain.

Specifically, we acknowledge that:

- Nearly 30% of our students are still reading below grade level, highlighting the need for intensified and more comprehensive support.
- We have pockets of success, but need to continue our work so students across all schools and classrooms experience the same success.
- We must prioritize aligning goals and supports across the school day for students receiving special education services, ensuring consistency and coherence in their literacy development.

Therefore, in addition to continuing the existing initiatives, we will:



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- Implement a system-wide approach to ensure consistent implementation of effective literacy practices across all schools and classrooms.
  - Work to align special education goals and literacy supports to ensure that our students that have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are receiving consistent support throughout the school day.
  - Deepen our analysis of student data to identify specific areas of need and tailor interventions accordingly.
  - Increase collaboration between general education teachers, special education teachers, and literacy specialists to ensure seamless support for all students.

**Prospect School District:** In Prospect, we utilized our grant funds for a literacy coach that could support students in kindergarten through 5th grade.

Being able to offer high dosage tutoring to students that are a grade level or more behind would be extremely helpful. The current impact this is having on our K-2 students is remarkable and we are exiting students from tutoring almost each week with even more student conversations about meeting growth targets beyond what we have experienced. The use of our Literacy coach creating vertically aligned lessons for tutors from grade level to grade level would be paramount moving forward as a school district.

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**Appendix B: Education Service District as Regional Partners - Examples**

**Clackamas ESD:** Schools in Clackamas County rely on regional professional learning opportunities to support quality instruction, with the ESD ensuring both rural and suburban districts have access to high-quality early literacy training and support. Through a Literacy Coaching Network, Clackamas ESD provides collaborative support for literacy leaders while delivering professional development grounded in the science of reading. Leveraging ESD networks statewide would ensure an efficient and equitable use of resources, bringing essential literacy support to every region. A state-directed role for ESDs, paired with dedicated funding, would strengthen regional collaboration, improve implementation consistency, and maximize the impact of professional learning and instructional support.

**Linn Benton Lincoln ESD:** Following a regional needs assessment with district superintendents, early literacy emerged as the top priority. A root cause analysis identified the need for professional learning and coaching for elementary principals to strengthen their capacity in classroom observations and instructional feedback. A state-directed role in literacy support for ESDs would maximize leadership training opportunities, ensuring principals across the region are equipped to support educators in delivering strong literacy instruction. Dedicated funding would enable ESDs to provide this critical coaching at scale, improving instructional quality across districts.

**Multnomah ESD:** To strengthen early literacy instruction, schools need greater professional learning and coaching for elementary principals, particularly in classroom observations and teacher feedback. While many districts invest in these areas, the lack of a state-directed role for ESDs and dedicated funding prevents cross-district collaboration that would maximize resources. Establishing a clear state-supported role for ESDs in literacy would create a stronger, more coordinated approach to supporting school leadership in improving literacy outcomes.

**North Central ESD:** Small and rural school districts frequently face considerable challenges in implementing comprehensive reading programs due to limited staffing, professional development, and instructional support. Allocating targeted funding to ESDs would strengthen early literacy efforts by filling gaps in K-3 literacy programs, providing coaching and mentoring, and organizing regional professional learning. With established relationships with district leadership, ESDs are well-positioned to support the evaluation and continuous improvement of early literacy programs. Direct ESD funding would create a cohesive, coordinated approach to literacy, ensuring all students, regardless of location, benefit from high-quality instruction.

**Willamette ESD:** WESD is uniquely positioned to deliver high-quality professional development tailored to the needs of small and rural districts, which often struggle to provide comprehensive early literacy programs due to staffing shortages and resource constraints. A centralized approach ensures all educators have access to ongoing learning opportunities, regardless of district size or location. With dedicated funding, WESD could expand on-site coaching, develop regional instructional resources, and implement targeted interventions for struggling readers. Additional support would also scale extended learning opportunities—such as literacy-focused after-school and summer programs—ensuring equitable access to high-quality literacy instruction across the region.