

Submitter: Rocky McNeff
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1596

My name is Rocky McNeff and I am currently a Student Behavior Specialist in Beaverton School District who previously worked as an elementary classroom teacher for 5 years. The reason I support SB 1596 is so that educators have clear and direct permission to embed playful learning into their content times. Without state level guidance, classroom teachers are left to look at the instructional minutes provided by their district for math, reading, writing, science, social studies, and health. None of these instruction minutes give educators the permission to count playful inquiry or playful learning as a part of they content blocks.

If this bill had been passed while I was in the classroom, I would have felt the freedom and permission to transform my lessons into ones of inquiry, play, storytelling, and exploration as students forged their own path to understanding content standards. My experience as a classroom educator was only in the upper grades of elementary school and much of our lesson planning was through the lens of "teaching to the state test". Rigor does not exist only in worksheets, direct instruction, and clearly defined strategies. Rigor exists in cooperation, exploration, critical thinking, and play. It is not just our students in Pre-K who show us the genius that can come from playful learning, rather, it is our students in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade who can show us their understanding of important social history, deepen their knowledge of algebraic thinking, and explore the science of the world around them. SB 1596 provides clarity and much needed permission for educators to start thinking about how they can embed play into their instruction. When this happens, we will see all of our students being able to access higher level thinking in the classroom.