



**Date:** March 10, 2021  
**To:** Senate Education Committee, Chair Dembrow and Members  
**From:** Jared Mason-Gere, Oregon Education Association Government Relations  
**RE:** *SB 683*

The social, organizational, and individual culture in our country, state, and our schools has long been centered and framed around racist practices and systems. These racist practices and systems institutionalize exclusive rights and disparities and will continue to perpetuate themselves unless interrupted by persistent transformative work around racial justice.

To that end, OEA is in the midst of an intentional journey to address equity and racial justice – particularly within our public education system - with an eye toward transformative reflection, systems change, culturally responsive growth and inclusion, authentic community partner coalition-building and social activism.

OEA's goal is to be an authentic part of the transformative change needed in our professions, state and society.

That transformative change in our state and our society cannot take place without an honest reckoning with the history of western society, our nation, and the state of Oregon. That reckoning requires a full understanding of and contemplation of the racist belief systems and actions that have existed and continue to exist and have been upheld through institutions like our public education system.

It is important that the Legislature act thoughtfully to continue to update and modernize curriculum and instructional practices at all levels of our education system to accurately reflect our state's history and to challenge the systems that have perpetuated institutional racism. That work should very purposefully involve and center voices from historically marginalized communities, and in particular education professionals who come from these communities.

We encourage the Legislature to look at existing standards, such as the recently adopted and implemented Ethnic Studies Standards, to determine any gaps that might exist, and to work in concert with communities of color to fill in those gaps and ensure that students in Oregon learn a complete and accurate version of our history.