

## Testimony to Oregon House Education Committee re; HB 3232 and HB 3233

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HB 3232 and HB 3233 are a compilation of the Governor's and OEIB's education strategic investment plan. But the k-12 initiatives outlined in the plan are neither strategic nor good investments. In essence they are a retread of failed national corporate reform models, originally pushed to make money off our school children, and the education part of the Oregon Business Plan, drafted without any serious input from educators.

These plans were copied by two of the Governor's early committees, Learnworks and the Oregon Education Investment Funding Team (which incidentally met in secret). The OEIB held a series of public forums throughout the state to review the plans. Hundreds of educators and interested citizens who reviewed the plans gave them almost no support. In the last eight forums maybe five people supported the Governor's plan.

So what is the problem?

Basically, the plan fails to put forth initiatives which directly impact children in our schools. Much of it concerns community agencies, adults and data. What does concern schools is centered on the new testing mania, which has created a culture in our schools which says it is more important for a student to pass a generalized standardized test than to receive a solid, well-rounded education. And also, importantly, it fails to address the major poverty problems which have been so destructive to Oregon's schools.

In essence, what this plan does is create a diversion which siphons nearly \$200 million dollars from programs which would truly help children (decreased class sizes, librarians, music programs, reading teachers, counselors and a whole host of other important programs). But it is not just money; it incorrectly focuses the time and talents of Oregon educators on things which detract from what we should be doing. Furthermore, the plan takes the time and energy of the Oregon Department of Education as well as our entire educational establishment and forces it to engage in initiatives which are of little or no benefit.

And maybe worse yet, it injects a form of chaos into our already underfunded and struggling school districts. Instead of spending time working on district, school and classroom learning problems educators work on top down mandates which suck up the time that would otherwise be spent on solving these problems which affect Oregon's children every day. In reality these supposed "investments" supplant what will work. And they make it much harder to truly improve things for our children.

I had a legislator tell me that this train has already left the station. And it certainly has. But it is on the wrong track, going in the wrong direction, and it has our state system of education in tow and all of our children on board. Maybe we can't stop the train, but the legislature can redirect the train so that our children end up where we want them – as well-educated, productive, and responsible citizens.