



February 14, 2013

Chair Mark Hass
Senate Education & Workforce Committee
Oregon State Senate

RE: SB 228

Chair Hass and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Dan Jamison and I'm Vice-President of the Chalkboard Project.

I'm before you now to talk about the Oregon Beginning Teacher and Mentoring Program and how you can ensure greater access to the program by passing SB 228.

I know we are all concerned with the quality of education our students are receiving and we all want to ensure that every child has a high quality experience. Education funding is being stretched and it is essential that our limited dollars be spent in ways that have the biggest impact on student learning. Supporting great teaching in every classroom, every day will raise student achievement. The research is clear, teachers have the most significant impact on student learning in the classroom.

Educators are working extremely hard and their time is limited. They need supports that are tailored to their individual needs and tools that have a direct impact on their work with students.

Providing new teachers and administrators with support, instructional coaching, and guidance during their first two years is a small investment with a substantial return. Nearly 40% of new educators leave the profession within their first five years. Turnover among Oregon teachers costs taxpayers \$40 million per year. Mentoring supports new teachers as they transition into their new positions, easing some of the stress and the feeling of being isolated in classrooms on their own. Mentoring also helps to ensure that students assigned to new teachers have a better chance of receiving quality instruction from day one. Linda Darling-Hammond included high quality mentoring as one of her top ten recommendations on strategic investments to support educator quality in Oregon and it aligns with the four priorities of Oregon's Chief Education Officer, Rudy Crew.

ECONorthwest recently evaluated the student achievement results for new teachers in districts with mentoring programs. They found that students of mentored teachers in the four districts that had a full-release mentoring model showed greater math achievement

gains on average *than did all other students in the state*. In the first two years of the program, reading gains were similarly high for students of mentored new teachers. In addition, mentored teachers taught students that, on average, had lower prior achievement, and were more likely to be economically disadvantaged than other students in the mentoring districts. Mentoring is clearly benefiting these teachers and their students.

The legislation we have brought before you makes a small change to the law that will allow the Oregon Department of Education to have more flexibility in the administration of the mentoring program and stretch the limited dollars to serve more educators. Current statute caps the grant amount at \$5,000 per mentee and requires that this be adjusted based on the consumer price index. We are asking that the current language tying the grant amounts to the consumer price index be taken out of the law. The program will otherwise remain the same. School districts will continue to apply to receive funds for a mentoring program that they design and ODE will continue to award grant dollars based on those applications. The Department's ability to grant awards at less than the maximum amount allowed by law will enable them to reach more teachers and administrators.

All new educators deserve the type of quality mentoring that a select group of districts are currently able to offer. By 2020, 33% of the teacher workforce will be new. It is so important that those new teachers be set up for success from day one. Our students are depending on it. Please pass SB 228.

Thank you,

Dan Jamison
Vice President
Chalkboard Project