



**Date:** May 1, 2013  
**To:** Ways & Means Subcommittee on Education, Co-Chairs Monroe and Komp  
And Committee Members  
**From:** Oregon Education Association  
**RE:** *HB 3232 [Strategic Investment Proposal]*

The Oregon Education Association, representing 42,000 educators at the K-12 and community college levels, agrees with the underlying goals of HB 3232. Strategic investments that support a strong foundation of reading as students enter K-12 schools and strong preparation for students to successfully exit and transition to post secondary education and the world of work is a worthy approach to building a strong education system.

We believe that there is merit in targeting specific areas for systemic strategic attention by school districts across Oregon. The areas of emphasis in this legislation – Early Reading, Post-secondary Aspirations, and Connecting to the World of Work – are important in addressing the issue of access and equity for each and every student.

- The Early Reading Program is supported by the state's literacy focus and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading goal and would provide a foundation for ongoing support for literacy across the K-12 curriculum.
- Post-Secondary Aspirations support the state's college- and career-ready goal and focus on students not likely to access post secondary education opportunities.
- Connecting to the World of Work is an initiative that we believe should cut across all content areas including STEM and the arts (STEAM). Applying learning to the realities of the work world help students learn and apply in context.

As amended, this bill now provides some needed specificity on the target goals and who is eligible to receive the funds. By increasing support for existing efforts (e.g., Early Learning Council, Title I, focus and priority schools, Oregon State Library Reading Program, ASPIRE, statewide STEM council, career and technical education), it diminishes constant program "reinvention" and begins to build sustainability.

While the programmatic goals of HB 3232 offer promise, we do have concerns about creating carve-outs for these projects given our current funding crisis. Every dollar matters in the educational career of our students. We wish that more time would be devoted to identifying other sources of funding initially, such as from foundations, if this is indeed a priority.

By our estimations, HB 3232 would require some \$38 to \$39 million for the 2013-15 biennium. Given the constraints of the current budget environment, we ask that consideration be given to all means of improving the educational outcomes of our students – including investing in the State School Fund and our community colleges.

Thank you.