

May 8, 2013

Re: Support for funding an Indian Education Specialist in ODE

Dear Members of the Joint Subcommittee on Education,

I support the proposal to fund a position in the Oregon Department of Education for an Indian Education Specialist.

I have learned a great deal in the past year about the difficulties Oregon's Native American students face in public schools. In Oregon, Native American students have low graduation rates, high dropout rates and face more disciplinary actions than the average student.

Native Americans, our smallest minority, deserve better support from public education. An Indian Education Specialist would help foster better cultural understanding about the unique needs of Native American students. The Indian Education Specialist would be a vital conduit to unite students, Tribes, school districts, teachers and families to push for greater inclusion and higher success rates for Native American students.

Rudy Crew was hired to ensure that all of our students, regardless of race, achieve higher success rates. I believe funding the Indian Education Specialist position is essential to that mission, to ensure that Native American students have the support they need to stay in school and overcome current cultural barriers.

I have read the proposal from the Department of Education that outlines the need for and the potential activities of the proposed Indian Education Specialist and believe it is well planned and on target to fill educational gaps for our struggling Native American students. Please fund the Indian Education Specialist position.

Sincerely,
Susan Hansen
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