



College of Education

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May 10, 2013

The Honorable Betty Komp
900 Court St. NE, H-273
Salem, OR 97301
rep.bettykomp@state.or.us

Dear Representative Komp:

This letter is in support of HB 3233 as an initial instrument for strengthening and diversifying Oregon's professional teaching workforce from recruitment, to teacher education, to mentoring, to career development.

Criticism of teachers, teacher education and student achievement is coming from many sources. Serious critics recognize the increasing risk for not improving student achievement even as schools face budgetary shortfalls. Art Levine, president of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, in his monograph, *Educating School Teachers*, stated "...But their [teacher's] challenge is even larger because today's teachers need to know and be able to do things their predecessors did not. They have to be prepared to educate all of their students to achieve the highest learning outcomes in history. This is a fundamentally different job than that of past generations of teachers." To meet this challenge requires a broad partnership of educators across school districts, community colleges and universities. Further, community members and resources are integral in the PK-20 continuum, which means that a change in the way teaching and learning are promoted inside and outside of schools. Currently in the state, Governor Kitzhaber and Rudy Crew have challenged Oregon communities to build educational innovations with relentless focus on ambitious learning goals and, in response, ambitious teaching for all learners PK-20.

Strong and substantive partnerships between teacher education programs and school districts is an idea slow to take effect but critical for advancing the profession. The work in these partnerships is a prerequisite to raising student achievement across the state. The theory of change that will result in achieving 40-40-20 is in part: (a) Intense collaborative work between university faculty in teacher education with the most skilled teaching professionals working to develop the next generation of teachers, (b) Utilizing the same collaborative engine to drive significant change in teaching practices across all teaching professionals based on the best research evidence, and (c) supporting, revising, and developing this work based on a robust system of data upon which to base decisions on program and teacher development.

Outlined in HB 3233 are components for new career pathways to build leadership and diversity; mentoring programs for new teachers promoting their continued learning; professional development to promulgate effective research-based practices into the current professional workforce; and developing the currently wasted gift of student talent trapped in underperforming educational settings specifically from those whose first language is not English. All of these components collectively support the student-centered learning environments releasing new energies for driving student achievement.

Oregon State University and the regional school districts have found the above arguments profound and compelling to the extent that we are acting on them now. The two campuses of OSU have been developing collaborative arrangements with regional school districts over several years. At the Corvallis campus, for example, schools superintendents from Corvallis, Philomath, Albany, Lebanon, and Lincoln County Schools have been meeting monthly with OSU President Ed Ray, President Greg Hamann of LBCC, and the superintendent of Linn-Benton ESD. This group is known as the *Mid-Valley-Mid-Coast Partnership*. Their work has resulted in, among other things, a program that allows students to complete a high school diploma and an associate's degree at LBCC in five years. This is a step beyond "college now" programs that engage students in planning (and completing a portion of) a post-high school education pathway. Those who complete qualify for a scholarship to OSU.

This *Partnership*, catalyzed by the TeachOregon program of Chalkboard, is now making plans for the first summer teacher institute to fashion plans for scaling up professional development and collaborative teacher education across the five school districts. All of this work is proceeding ahead of outside funding. To bring this work to fruition, however, will require additional resources but the elements sustaining this new work must be in place before the work begins. In this way, new money generates practices that become imbedded in the partnership.

HB 3233 and the leadership of Governor Kitzhaber and Rudy Crew are foundational components of fundamental change in Oregon education. Their leadership has energized significant work already underway in regions such as the Mid-Valley-Mid-Coast and in Bend La Pine with the OSU Cascades campus. State resources will be necessary to reach a tipping point of change at the scale envisioned by the visionary goal of 40-40-20. I would be very willing to discuss these ideas further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry Flick". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Larry Flick, dean