

To: Joint Ways and Means Education Subcommittee  
From: Linda Samek, Interim Provost, Former Dean of the School of Education, George Fox University  
Date: May 11, 2013  
Re: HB3233

As a long time Oregon educator, former Dean of a School of Education, current chair of the Oregon Alliance of Independent Colleges and Universities Deans and Directors of Teacher Education, and member of a number of advocacy groups for PK-12 education in Oregon, I want to convey to you that I am very pleased with many of the initiatives proposed in HB3233. It contains clearly identified targets for improving Oregon education. I believe it opens opportunities for many voices through many lenses to come around a table, discuss, dig, wrestle, and implement initiatives that will benefit our children, their teachers and administrators, and our schools.

At this time in Oregon, we need to expand programs and initiatives that have already proven successful, scale them up, and model for the state what can be done. School districts, ESDs, professional organizations, and education preparation programs from higher education have spent time, energy, and money over the years to improve Oregon education in small initiatives and isolated pockets. We know how to enhance what we do, but we have not found ways to make excellent projects scalable across the state.

I would like to specifically address the portions of the bill related to educator preparation. There are a number of initiatives already underway in Oregon that include partnerships between higher education and PK-12 school districts. We have the knowledge and expertise in Oregon to build a world-class education system. I would point you to just a few of the ongoing collaborative projects:

- Eight institutions accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education are working together on improving clinical practice.
- Eleven universities and eleven school districts work together in the Portland Metro Educational Partnership to increase the quality of teacher candidates and clinical practice.
- The Chalkboard Project has provided planning grants for multiple collaborations between school districts and universities to improve recruitment, preparation, hiring, induction, and mentoring of excellent classroom teachers.
- Most university preparation programs have adopted versions of co-teaching experiences in which “student teachers” are co-teachers with the classroom teacher of record. This provides opportunity for PK-12 students to have two well-prepared professionals in the classroom. Classroom teachers are also full partners in choosing candidates and participating in ongoing professional development with those candidates.

I could provide examples of many more initiatives in individual institutions. We no longer prepare teachers in the manner I was prepared 40 years ago at Oregon State University in math education. Candidates are chosen, prepared, and supported by active professionals throughout their time in programs. Clinical practice time has been

expanded and has become a much more intentional part of preparation programs. Most candidates have extended experiences at multiple grade levels. However, we could still use more investment in this process from our PK-12 partners. This requires proven models and additional funding and personnel.

As budgets at all levels have been reduced, available resources for professional development for educators have decreased to unprecedentedly low levels. We no longer have the ability legally to compensate classroom teachers for their work with candidates, and neither universities nor school districts have resources to include preservice educators in ongoing, extensive collaborative initiatives with inservice educators. Our best work occurs in partnership with PK-12, higher education, ODE, and TSPC together. HB3233 supports this work with funding and opportunity to explore and build systems that can be spread statewide.

I believe that one of the most important initiatives in the bill is working with students in middle school and high school to begin building a cadre of diverse teachers. This is so important, and it may be one of the best opportunities we have for cross-institutional collaboration. Money is always an issue, and as George Fox University and others work at recruiting under-represented candidates, we are finding that scholarship availability is critical. We also need to be intentional about including community colleges, as that is where many of these students will begin their post-secondary education. We cannot do this without significant state funding and attention.

As educator preparation programs, we have learned how to collaborate, and we know a lot about best practices in our field, but we do not have the funding or personnel to build what we know we need. HB3233 would provide critical support for these initiatives. We do not have the capacity to scale these initiatives across the state in a timely manner, and our children need this work to accelerate now.

Thank you for your time and attention to this bill. Please support its passage and provide the kids of Oregon an opportunity to excel with the best prepared teachers and administrators possible.