



CONFEDERATION OF OREGON SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

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May 13, 2013

TO: Co-Chairs Komp and Monroe
Members of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education

FROM: Craig Hawkins, Executive Director

RE: COSA's support for HB 3233

COSA and the superintendents of our Vision and Policy Coalition believe that a focused investment in educator effectiveness is a very high priority for Oregon. We believe that there should be four area of focus for this work in the next biennium:

- Training and support for implementation of Common Core State Standards;
- Training and support for implementation of Senate Bill 290's teacher and principal evaluation system;
- Training and support for implementation of the statewide ELL plan as an important step toward closing the achievement gap; and
- Implementation of high-quality and cost-effective mentor programs for all new teachers and administrators.

It is important that our investment in educator effectiveness be fair and equitable, engaging and supporting teachers and administrators throughout Oregon, and ultimately benefitting students in every school and district in Oregon, regardless of size, geography or grant-writing capability. Much of HB 3233 represents the kind of educator effectiveness investment we seek, and that's why we are committed to this bill, and why we have been talking with legislators and others about our support for this investment.

We know that you have very difficult decisions ahead about education funding for the next biennium. At this point, most school districts are budgeting for 2013-14 based on an anticipated biennial State School Fund allocation of \$6.55 billion and are counting on that funding to enable them to make headway (or at least minimize loss of ground) with class sizes and the length of the school year, among other critical needs. We encourage you to invest in the SSF at that level and to invest in HB 3233.

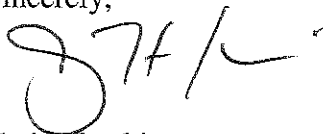
COSA looks forward to being engaged as a partner in the work of the Oregon Network of Quality Teaching and Learning. As you may know, COSA has a strong history of providing professional development and support to school leaders – both administrators and teacher leaders. For example, two years ago, after the State Board adopted the Common Core State Standards, there was a tremendous demand from school districts

throughout Oregon for awareness and training related to the Common Core. COSA – in partnership with the Oregon Department of Education, Oregon ASCD, ESDs and others – stepped up, and over the past two years we have provided ongoing regional Common Core training for administrators and teachers in all parts of Oregon. In all, we have offered 30 full-day trainings serving some 5,000 participants, representing all but a handful of Oregon’s school districts and ESDs, not to mention many university students and teacher education faculty. Trainings have been cost-effective and of very high quality – which is essential, because the needs of our schools and districts are huge, and their desire to learn and improve is enormous, but their resources are hard to come by. At COSA, we are committed to providing the professional development school leaders need at a price they can afford. In the case of the Common Core trainings, that commitment has allowed staff from virtually all Oregon districts to benefit.

Similarly, more than seven years ago, when the research became clear that student-and-data-centered collaboration among teams of teachers and administrators is critical to significantly improving student achievement, we launched an annual Professional Learning Communities training, for administrator-and-teacher teams. Each year, we bring the national leaders in this work together with Oregon educators for two days, at a cost that is about one-third of what it would be for the same training almost anywhere else. Over the past six years, we have trained more than 900 school and district teams, from every part of Oregon. This effort emphasizes job-embedded, collaborative teamwork resulting in improvement of formative assessments, higher student achievement, and improved attendance and graduation rates.

All told, in partnership with ODE and other leading education organizations, COSA provides more than 30 standards-based professional learning opportunities each year, serving several thousand administrators and teacher leaders, in the areas of school law and finance, ELL, special education, assessment, proficiency and much more. Despite their strained budgets, districts find ways to take advantage of our professional development program because it offers high value, and it delivers the training and information they desire. But COSA, with its partners, has the capacity to provide just a fraction of the support and training districts require, and districts have just a fraction of the resources they need to deliver on the promise of the Common Core, SB 290, the statewide ELL plan and other improvement initiatives. That’s why we support HB 3233 and the Oregon Network of Quality Teaching and Learning. Our districts need support for training, for development of curriculum and assessments, for student-and-data-centered collaboration, and much more. They need the additional, focused resources provided by HB 3233 so that they can accomplish the very meaningful and challenging educational objectives to which we aspire.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CH", with a large, stylized flourish underneath.

Craig Hawkins
Executive Director