February 19, 2014

The Honorable Senator Rod Monroe, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Betty Komp, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways & Means Subcommittee on Education
900 Court Street NE H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301-4048

Dear Co-Chairpersons,

Chalkboard Project is an independent education reform organization dedicated to making Oregon's K-12 public schools among the best in the country. We are funded by a consortium of Oregon's leading philanthropic foundations that share a central belief that expert research is essential to identifying policies and practices that improve outcomes for students.

Chalkboard Project believes that information equals smart decisions. That's why we included a statewide data system as one of the elements on our original 15-point action plan that was developed to guide our work. That's also why we worked with a group of stakeholders ten years ago to create the Open Books Project website. Open Books began with a focus on school district spending and evolved to include student demographics, census data, and school performance measures. (It is now the online home for the newly redesigned school and district report cards based on a partnership between the Oregon Department of Education and Chalkboard.)

The state longitudinal database system (SLDS) before you today is based on the same basic tenet as Open Books: information equals smart decisions. We support the creation and funding of a system that will measure the impact of the strategic initiatives established by House Bills 3232 and 3233 to help ensure that funding is targeted to those efforts that have proven results for students in Oregon. The state needs to have the tools to achieve the goals outlined for the SLDS if we are to reach 40/40/20 and realize more equitable outcomes for students.

Sincerely,

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