

Dear Representative

Victoria Chamberlain, Executive Director of the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, will be giving a "Teacher Standards Overview" at your 2/11/15 meeting of the House Education Committee. If appropriate, please ask her the following questions:

What can Oregon do to get more teachers of color?

For 2013-14, the Oregon Department of Education reported that 2.4% of Oregon students were Blacks and 22.0% were Hispanics, yet, the TSPC has reported that, of applicant teachers taking the Reading Essential Academic Skills Test from 2100 to the present, only 1.0% were Black and 5.2% Hispanic. Still worse, of those taking the test, 3.8% of Whites did not pass, 27.5% of Blacks did not pass, and 20.0% of Hispanics did not pass.

Are these tests essential and appropriate? Can the tests be made more appropriate for Black and Hispanic teacher candidates while still maintaining teacher quality?

What can Oregon do to get more dual language immersion teachers, especially in Mandarin, Japanese, and Spanish?

How do we get more prospective dual language immersion teachers to pass the required licensure tests? What are the obstacles to testing them in their native, non-English language when appropriate?

Oregon has a shortage of dual language immersion teachers. The shortage is holding up needed development of additional dual language immersion programs.

In my opinion, both the Teachers Standards and Practices Commission and the Board of Education need to rethink the credentialing and testing of dual language immersion teachers. Both should now recognize that there are different types of immersion teachers, and each type should have its own credentialing and testing requirements. One type of immersion teacher, usually found in Spanish two-way programs that begin with a 90%-10% model, teaches in both languages. They need good knowledge and skills in both languages, as well as teaching English as a second language skills. Another type of immersion teacher teaches only in a foreign language. They typically teach in one way, 50%-50% immersion programs. They are often paired with an English only teacher, often with English as a second language skills, who teaches full time in English. These foreign language only immersion teachers do not need to have the skills, nor be able to pass the tests, to teach in English.

Both need to recognize that Oregon needs significantly more immersion teachers now in a variety of languages and that Oregon is not in the near future going to be able to produce the first type of teachers, the bilingual type, in sufficient numbers. Nor can we import them. They will usually lack sufficient English skills. But Oregon could and should import more teachers (Mexico, China, for examples) who can teach only in a foreign language, and pair them with English only teachers in 50%-50% immersion models. We need a much easier and appropriate credentialing process for these imported teachers. We should not ask them to teach in English, nor to pass any credentialing tests in English. They should be restricted to teaching in the foreign language component of dual language immersion programs.

I previously emailed you asking for a hearing on the shortage of dual language immersion teachers. I have attached that letter.

I am sending this same email to each member of the House Education Committee.

Thanks - Dave Porter