



March 2, 2015

Chair Margaret Doherty
House Committee on Education
State Capitol Building
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Doherty and Members of the Committee,

Chalkboard Project is pleased to offer our support for HB 2657. Moving toward an attendance-based funding formula, as opposed to enrollment based, was one of Chalkboard's original recommendations in our K-12 Action Plan released in 2006. As we stated then, and continue to believe now, kids can't learn if they aren't in school.

Unfortunately, too many kids in Oregon are missing more than 10 days of school, the threshold for being considered chronically absent. In 2012, Chalkboard partnered with the Children's Institute, ECONorthwest and Attendance Works, a national school attendance advocacy group, to analyze attendance data collected by the Oregon Department of Education. This analysis found that nearly a quarter of students were chronically absent in the 2009-10 school year, significantly impacting academic achievement particularly amongst students living in poverty. In 2013, Chalkboard partnered with Spirit Mountain Community Fund and ECONorthwest to analyze data from students enrolled in Oregon tribes. Amongst other findings, this study revealed that one-third of tribal enrolled students were chronically absent in the 2011-12 school year. In early 2014, the *Oregonian* highlighted this issue with a five part series, noting that Oregon had the worst absenteeism rate of the nine states that reported data with 18% of our kids missing almost a month of school in the 2012-13 school year.

A transition to the Average Daily Attendance (ADA) accounting method would encourage schools to emphasize attendance and prioritize strategies to engage parents and students in attendance efforts. These strategies should be supported by partnering efforts to this legislation to highlight and disseminate best practices, including support and guidance from ODE.

In light of these necessary pieces, Chalkboard believes that a pilot approach should be considered as a successful route forward. Knowing that there is work yet to be done, Chalkboard is encouraged to see this concept moving forward in HB 2657.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sue Hildick".

Sue Hildick
President

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