



Oregon Alliance for Education Equity (OAEE)

March 10, 2015

On behalf of the Oregon Alliance for Education Equity, we are pleased to submit this letter in support of Senate Bills 553 and 554.

The OAEE is a statewide network representing over 20 culturally specific, English Language Learners (ELLs), and advocacy organizations throughout Oregon. The mission of the OAEE is to ensure that schools promote equity, eliminate disparities, and value diversity so that all students are prepared to become successful adults.

In 2011, the state adopted SB 253, or the 40-40-20 goals, which set the vision direction for school districts throughout Oregon. As districts began work to align investments and strategies to meet those goals, one primary barrier for districts meeting these goals was student discipline – specifically, the recognition that students of color are disciplined far more than other students. That trend starts as early as Kindergarten, and the trend worsens as students age.

In the 2012-2013 school year, 1 of every 28 African-American students was either suspended out of school or expelled. The rate worsens by 5th grade to 1 of every 12 African-American students. As more students have, and continue to be pushed out of classrooms, they lose valuable instruction time, and their chances of reaching graduation and success diminish.

In 2013, the OAEE applauded the Governor and the Legislature for passing HB 2192, which was a significant first step to improving the opportunity for students of color to succeed in school. SB 553 and 554 provide the necessary infrastructure to support school districts meeting the 40-40-20 goals, and offers the appropriate balance to both ensure safe learning environments for all students and teachers, and, that students of color will receive equitable learning time and treatment in schools.

Thank you for your work on this issue.

Signed,
The Oregon Alliance for Education Equity

Oregon Alliance for Education Equity (OAEE) Steering Committee: *Mark Jackson, Reaching and Empowering All People (REAP Inc.); Kim Melton, Iris Chavez, Stand for Children; Julia Meier, Coalition of Communities of Color; Jason Trombley, Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon; American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Oregon; Deborah Cochrane, Portland Teachers Program; George Russell, NAACP of Eugene-Springfield.*

OAEE Student Discipline Work Group: *Mark Jackson, Reaching and Empowering All People (REAP Inc.); Coalition of Communities of Color; Frank Caropelo, Chalkboard Project; Kim Melton, Stand for Children.*