

March 5, 2015



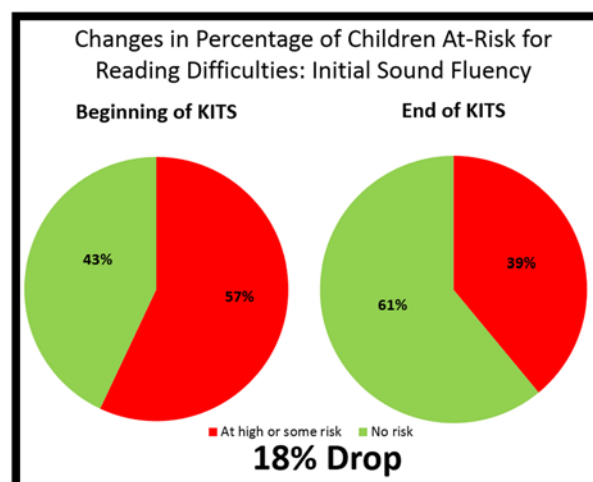
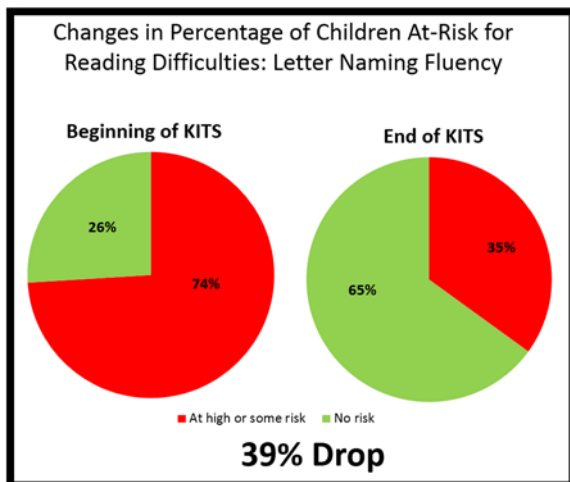
Chair Sara Gelser  
**Oregon Senate Human Services and Early Childhood Committee**  
900 Court St NE, S-405  
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Sara Gelser, Vice Chair Olsen and Members of the Committee,

For the record, I am Colt Gill, Superintendent for Bethel School District in Eugene. I am submitting testimony in support of SB 213. SB 213 makes the Early Learning Hubs permanent and continues the work local communities have undertaken to align early learning systems, support thriving families and ensure children are ready to succeed in kindergarten.

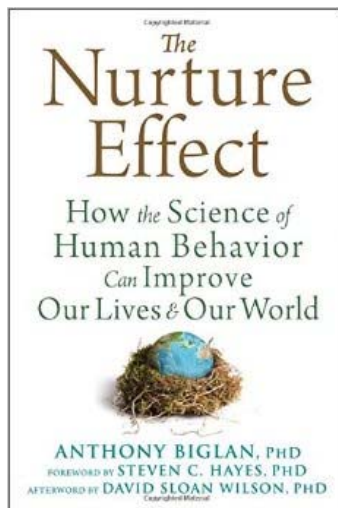
We value the work of the Lane County Early Learning Alliance. It is making a difference in preparing children for kindergarten. Our hub is a standout in the state. It has formed solid partnerships across the county that support young children and their families. We focus on evidence-based programs that deliver outcomes for the most underserved populations in our community. We have many programs in place, but one I'm most proud of is KITS: Kids in Transition to School.

KITS is a program developed in partnership with the Oregon Social Learning Center, the United Way of Lane County, and local school districts. This program has grown to serve both urban and rural communities and it is showing great outcomes in terms of preparedness for kindergarten. Take a look at these results:



These are results from a 16-week program before and during the beginning of kindergarten. Think about what could be accomplished with the continuation of the hubs and more funding for early interventions. Programs with success like this could be replicated across the state.

We all know that a child's brain develops more in the first five years than at any other time. This is the time to invest in our kids and their support systems: families, child care, health care, and education. Doing this will help to ensure future economic prosperity for our citizens and our state. Early intervention is without a doubt the best return on investment. We work closely with a local researcher at the Oregon Research Institute who has developed a path to improving the lives of individuals and the success of our communities. It all starts with early intervention and support, which is exactly what the hubs are designed to do. He has recently written a book that is highly accessible and provides the recipe that starts with projects like those the early learning hubs make possible. Take a look:



You can watch a book trailer at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhV5Ag4bCul>

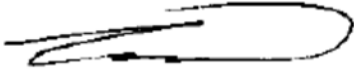
Getting to 40-40-20 will require investing in children before they enter the school doors and continuing that investment through their K-12 experience to ensure they are college, career, and *citizenship* ready!

Hubs help ensure this happens. They give our local community the responsibility *and* some incentive and outcome-based resources to ensure that the experiences a child has during those early years creates a strong foundation for future success. The hub and our regional achievement collaborative ([Connected Lane County](#)) are strengthening partnerships across K-12 schools, early education, health, human services and businesses in Lane County. This is changing the way we support young children and families in our region and is leading to more effective and efficient services. As a result of these partnership we are not only offering more focused and evidence-based supports, we are tracking outcomes for our students from early childhood through college. This is a first for Oregon and Lane County is a stellar example of the progress that can be made. However, this is only possible because of opportunities created by the hubs and the RACs.

It is clear, the Lane County Early Learning Alliance Hub is changing the way we meet the needs of children and families in our community. The hub work is based on solid and proven practices. And, we have results to prove its effectiveness.

I urge you to support SB 213 and this transformation of early learning in Oregon. Oregon legislators will not authorize another dollar this session that has a better return on investment for our children or the future of our state. When Oregon's children thrive, Oregon's future flourishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colt Gill". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal stroke that loops back to the right.

Colt Gill  
Superintendent