



Roseburg Public Schools

SB 213: Early Learning Hubs

Senate Human Services and Early Childhood Committee

March 3, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I am Kristin Miller, Child Development Specialist for Melrose Elementary School in Roseburg, Oregon. I am writing this letter in support of SB 213 and its contribution toward Early Learning Hubs, resources for our local community, and specifically, its help in ensuring our local children are prepared for kindergarten.

Being a Child Development Specialist allows me to have more information and insight into a child's life than the average teacher is able. This can be good and bad. What I have learned from this is that it is extremely important for our children to be set up for success from day one – birth. Funding provided for Early Learning Hubs can and does ensure this success for our children – more than we've ever had in the past.

Specifically in our Melrose community, the Early Learning grant provided funds for school readiness activities – both for parents and children. In February and March, Melrose Elementary hosted the first two of three "Ready for Kindergarten" sessions for families with 3 and 4 year olds. During the February session 10 parents attended and the March session included 12 parents. We hope to include even more families at the third session.

Because of the funding we were able to hire our kindergarten teacher to teach the above mentioned classes to our parents of preschoolers. We were also able to hire one of our instructional assistants to provide childcare and provided food to all participants. These evening activities connected our community in a way that has never occurred before. These parents and children were able to get to know their child's school, principal, personnel, and even their child's actual future kindergarten teacher.

During the school year, Melrose Elementary hosts numerous family engagement activities including a carnival, Science Fair and Curriculum Night, Father/Daughter Dance, Mother/Son Play Night, 7 Family Skate Nights, an Open House, 2 Book Fairs, Healthy Hearts Jump Roping, Kindergarten Information Night and an auction. Additionally, our month character trait assemblies bring in dozens of parents and community members. With the addition of Early Learning Hubs in our area and the funding associated with such, we are also able to add children ages birth to five years old to these existing elementary school activities. For example: Kindergarten Information Night now includes a preschool session where children and their parents learn to play reading and math games together (facilitated by our kindergarten teacher).

Melrose Elementary School is in a unique situation because Melrose is a non-Title I school. We don't receive a lot of the funding that our elementary counterparts receive every year. The Early Learning grant provided the first set of available funding (this year for three year olds) for our school to participate in kindergarten readiness activities. Thus, we don't have longitudinal data, at this point, to analyze the long-term impact of the parent training on future success of students in school. However, we have an early childhood program, the Reading Station, which runs one day a week and is now in it's seventeenth year. Several years ago, we did a study of third graders (those who attended the Reading Station Pre-K and those who didn't) and there was a significant difference in their reading and math scores. Those who attended the Reading Station scored significantly higher in all areas. We can deduce that early learning is highly beneficial for students and that this benefit carries with said students throughout their entire school career.

Finally, because of the implementation of the Early Learning Hub in Roseburg, I am a proud member of Melrose's Early Learning Advocacy team. Along with our school principal, kindergarten teacher, Clinical Care Coordinator from our local hospital, and various childcare providers in our area I am helping conduct a Community Needs Assessment specifically focused on the Melrose area. This is a first for our special rural community. It is an opportunity to get to know our community, take a deeper look into what resources we have and where the needs are for our families.

Please consider supporting SB 213 and the continuation/permanence of Early Learning Hubs in Oregon.

Thank you,

- Kristin Miller
Child Development Specialist
Melrose Elementary School, Roseburg, OR