

SB 213: Early Learning Hubs

Senate Human Services and Early Childhood Committee

March 9, 2015

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

For the record, I am Lena Wheeling, First Grade Teacher in the La Grande School District #1. I am submitting a testimony in support of Senate Bill 213. SB 213 will make the Early Learning Hubs permanent and continues the work local communities have started to align early learning systems, support thriving families and work to confirm children are ready to succeed in school.

Research shows that a child's brain develops and creates most of its neural connections within the first five years of their life. In order for neural connections to continue the process of connecting in the brain children in this age range must be provided with a wide range of stimulus and experiences. At different points in their age and development the brain works to develop distinct parts of their neural connections. Therefore stimulus and experience must happen through the entire developmental process.

Students access to stimulus and experiences directly relates to their level of economic prosperity. One of the largest gaps seen in early childhood reading and school reading readiness is related to a gap in low income and poverty circumstances (Tivnan and Hemphill, 2005). Most often students performing at the lowest levels in school also qualify for free and reduced lunch (Allington, Mc-Gill Frazen et al., 2010). Access to materials, experiences and opportunity for stimulus and experience is negatively impacted by a lack of economic prosperity.

The HUB is creating a partnership across K-12 schools, early education, health, human services and business that will provide the needed support for children. Having a connection to the Early Learning Hub provides access to a field of professionals, all with distinct and extensive backgrounds in education and early childhood that can address and provide solutions to meeting children's growing and changing developmental needs.

The impact of the partnership in the educational community has been seen, heard and shared. Collaboration within the HUB has created a team of people that are defined by best practice in teaching and education and early childhood. The HUB benefits students and provides students with the opportunity for well informed, researched supporters for their growth, development, health, and well being and education.

I urge you to support SB 213 and this positive change for the future in early learning in Oregon.

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