

Testimony Regarding Senate Bill 897  
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Although I like some of the provisions of the bill, I am still concerned about the fate of long-term English Language Learners, many who are disillusioned with school and are also special education students. Karen Thompson from Oregon State University has done some research on the long-term ELLs in California and is working on similar research in Oregon. I went to a presentation at the COSA ELL conference this month. I was looking for some kind of indication that cutting off the funding for such students is the way to go and is supported by research. I found none and am still looking.

What I do know is that organizations such as Stand even our Deputy Superintendent are using the research that says students that exit the ELL program before eighth grade have higher achievement to justify cutting off the funds. The inference here is that the program is harming the students. Parents are being told that they need to get their children out of the program even though there are no resources outside of the program to help them.

Who will help the long-term and SPED ELL students once the funding runs out? Districts will have to make even more additional cuts to the students that aren't part of the strategic initiatives. Money for students below seven years will be siphoned off to help them. Even though the money is cut off, districts are still required to provide services.

**I would like to see data about how long students in Oregon are actually taking to exit from ELL programs.**

I like the acknowledgement that in order to continue helping exited students, you provide support as they transition into being able to independently participate in content area classrooms. However, this should not be done at the expense of students who are still in the program. I am noticing that students that are already exited are sometimes being put back into ELL programs because they are struggling with content, when language proficiency is not the issue. That's because apart from special education, ELL programs are many times the only "extra" help available.

I'm concerned about using the funding for ELL students for immersion programs. Say for example, a high school offers a Spanish foreign language class. Should that be paid for out of the ELL money because there might be some current or former ELL students in the class in addition to never ELL students? Not all districts are able to scale up in order to provide a bilingual program. Would this take money away from those districts to provide money for those districts that could finance and staff such a program?

I also see in here a limit for expenditures. Being unsure as to what is currently spent on the ELL weighted formula statewide, it is hard to comment on this. My question would be if indeed the limit is a reduction as to what is currently spent, how will that affect the students that show up needing ELL services? Again, hardship would be caused to non-targeted students when their programs are cut and class sizes increased. Also, the minimum expenditure could cause more money to be spent out of the fund. If a district has one ELL student, they receive \$35,000?

I am hoping the specified purposes for an ELL expenditure are looked at closely and the codings that the districts use for reporting are tightened up and that these recommendations are made by educators, not reform organizations.

Thank you for the opportunity to give testimony on this bill and I would be glad to help move these issues forward from the perspective of a current ELL teacher.