

Testimony to the Senate Education Committee on SB 78  
March 24, 2015

Chair Roblan, Vice-chair Knopp, and members of the committee. For the record, I am Randy Hitz, Dean of the Graduate School of Education at Portland State University. I am pleased to support SB 78 and I thank you for the opportunity to explain my position.

My background related to SB 78 includes 24 years of experience as a dean of education, eleven years of experience on state licensure boards, and 15 years of experience on national accreditation boards and review teams. I am currently on the Board of Directors of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation and I Chair the Continuous Improvement Commission, the unit that makes final decisions about educator preparation program accreditation.

In the spirit of full disclosure, let me also say that Portland State University is among a small group of universities voluntarily piloting the new CAEP standards and process. We will undergo that review next fall instead of a review under the old NCATE standards.

I am also pleased to report that Oregon is among a group of states intensely involved with CAEP to improve the clinical experience for aspiring educators. I want to call out Vicki Chamberlain and Keith Menk of TSPC for their leadership on this work and also to Mary Cadez who is very actively involved with them.

The Oregon Legislature has made good progress in helping to advance the education profession through the creation of the Network for Quality Teaching and Learning and other efforts to support teachers and school administrators. The profession is advancing as we learn more about how people learn and what strategies are most effective in helping all people develop their knowledge and skills. The profession is advancing as we learn more about how to assess learning and how to assess teaching.

One of the recent developments in the profession that is most relevant to SB 78 is the creation of a single national accrediting agency. In 2013 two national accreditors, TEAC and NCATE, united to form the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). What that means is that the education profession speaks with one voice with regard to standards related to the preparation of professional educators. That, of course, is the way mature professions function.

Mature professions such as engineering, medicine, architecture, pharmacy and others also have 100% of their members graduating from nationally accredited programs. Can you imagine going to a physician who did not graduate from an accredited medical school? Unfortunately, in the education profession only around 65% of the educator preparation programs in the nation and fewer than that in Oregon, are nationally accredited.

National accreditation is needed to advance the profession and it is needed to assure the public that all programs meet the highest standards established by the profession. Just as importantly, the CAEP accreditation process focuses on outcomes rather than inputs and it emphasizes continuous improvement. Every program can benefit from the opportunity to assess and reflect on their work and to get feedback from state and national teams of experts in the field.

I understand why some universities have been reluctant to pursue national accreditation. It does take resources to meet higher standards and to get feedback from a national group. I am pleased, therefore, to see that SB 78 includes resources to assist educator preparation programs in their efforts to become nationally accredited.

I will be happy to talk with you more about the CAEP standards and processes if you wish.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to speak in support of SB 78.