



Oregon Alliance for Education Equity (OAEE)

April 6, 2015

Dear members of the House Education Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Alliance for Education Equity (OAEE), we hope that you will vote to support HB 3499, which will reform and improve how districts serve English Language Learner (ELL) students in Oregon.

The OAEE is a statewide network of culturally specific, English Language Learners (ELLs), and advocacy organizations throughout Oregon. The mission of the OAEE is to ensure that schools promote equity, eliminate disparities, and value diversity so that all students are prepared to become successful adults.

Oregon's ELL student population has grown to 57,376, a 120% increase over the last decade. However, the data shows that our current education system is not serving our ELL students well: Only 49% of ELL students graduate high school on time, and, 71% of ELL students in 4th grade are below basic reading skills as compared to only 29% of non-ELL students. If we are to meet the 40-40-20 goals, we must put in place the necessary mechanisms to ensure our ELL students succeed. HB 3499 proposes these effective mechanisms.

We applaud and support the efforts of legislators, community partners, and representatives from OEA, OSBA, and COSA to collaborate on comprehensive legislation to improve outcomes for ELL students throughout Oregon. By voting "yes" on HB 3499, you will establish the needed framework in K-12 education to close the achievement gap amongst one of Oregon's fastest-growing, and diversifying, student populations. HB 3499 offers the following core components to ensuring success of ELL students in every school district in Oregon:

- **Increase Transparency and Consistency** – Require uniform budget coding and annual reporting so ELL spending and outcomes can be accurately compared from one district to another.
- **Increase Urgency** - Foster the prioritization of high quality, evidence based ELD programs by providing additional 0.5 funding weight with a flexible system that supports all kids. Districts will determine how best to leverage ELL funding for the unique needs of students in their schools. The Oregon Department of Education will work with consistently low-performing districts to determine how best to leverage ELL funding.
- **Support Schools & Districts** - Direct ODE to share best practices with programs around the state, and to provide targeted technical assistance to low performing school districts. Identify methods to support exited ELL students to transition out of ELD and on a path to academic success.

Thank you for your work on this important issue.

Signed,
The Oregon Alliance for Education Equity

Member organizations

Adelante Mujeres

American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon

Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO)

Centro Cultural of Washington County

Chalkboard Project

Coalition of Communities of Color

George Russell & Associates

Latino Network

NAACP Eugene-Springfield

Portland Teachers Program

Reaching and Empowering All People Inc. (REAP Inc.)

Salem-Keizer Coalition for Equality

Stand for Children, Oregon