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April 3, 2015

Dear Chair Doherty and members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing to you today to express my strong support for HB 3380 which creates a mixed delivery preschool program in Oregon for the first time.

If passed, this bill would make preschool available for an additional 1,500 eligible children, adding to the 4,681 four-year-olds and 2,609 three-year-olds currently served in Oregon Prekindergarten. This legislation lays the groundwork for eventually serving all eligible Oregon children in high-quality preschool and expands eligibility for state funded preschool from 100% of the Federal Poverty Level to 200%.

Oregon's plans for expanding access to high quality preschool programs for eligible children builds off the transformative early learning infrastructure that has developed over the last four years and has the potential to create a more affordable, accessible and family-centric early learning system.

High-quality public preschool programs have been demonstrated to cut the achievement gap in half and put children on the trajectory to reading proficiently at third grade. Preschool programs also build the social-emotional and self-regulatory skills that help kids succeed in school and later in life. That is why long-term studies that have tracked underserved children who attended preschool have shown that they are more likely to graduate from high-school and avoid contact with the criminal justice system.

A mixed delivery preschool model would build upon existing community capacity and allow the state to fund high quality preschool for eligible children in early learning programs that are licensed child care facilities, Oregon Prekindergarten Head Start programs, school based preschools and community based organizations. Early Learning Hubs will play an important role in working with each of these types of providers to identify underserved populations and to identify specific catchment areas in which high quality preschool services will be developed.

Focusing on mixed delivery settings will create greater awareness of and collaboration across high quality settings. This model will also allow Oregon to create more mixed-income classrooms where

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Kate Brown, Governor



eligible children and children with high needs are learning side by side with children from more affluent backgrounds, which research shows can positively impact outcomes for all children.

Thank you so much for your consideration of this important piece of legislation. I hope you will join me in supporting this huge step forward for Oregon's youngest children.

Regards,



Megan Irwin

Acting Early Learning System Director

