

Lane Early Learning Alliance

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House Committee on Education
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street
Salem, OR 97301

GOVERNANCE CONSORTIUM

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Eugene School District 4J

NANCY BISCHOF

Early Learning Stakeholders

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PacificSource Health Plans

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United Way of Lane County

DEBI FARR

Trillium Community Health Plan

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Bethel School District

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ALICIA HAYS

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Early Childhood CARES

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Head Start of Lane County

LARRY SULLIVAN

Lane Education Service District

RENEE VAN NORMAN

Early Learning Stakeholders

JENNIFER WILKS

Parent Representative

Dear Chair Doherty and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Lane Early Learning Alliance (Hub), I am pleased to submit this letter of testimony in support of HB 3380, which makes high-quality preschool available to more children from low-income families and prevents the achievement gap before it begins.

Local partners agree that sufficient funding for the entire education continuum, from birth to adulthood, is essential to achieve our State's 40/40/20 goal. Reducing funding in any part of the Birth-20 educational continuum will decrease outcomes for Oregon's students.

High-quality preschool works. It closes the opportunity gap and gets children ready for kindergarten and on track for third grade success. However, Oregon is in the bottom quarter of all states nationally for access to preschool for 4-year-olds, enrolling only 10 percent. From our local work with parents and families, the Lane Early Learning Alliance cites access to high-quality preschool experiences for young children as a top concern for families with young children. Many families are not eligible for Head Start, yet cannot afford to send their children to private preschool.

The Lane Early Learning Alliance views HB 3380's proposed policy legislation as critical to achieving our goal of ensuring all children are ready for success in school. It would begin building a preschool system that aligns with Head Start but also allows for a mix of other providers; set quality standards, while ensuring preschool services are connected with Oregon's K-12 system; and serve an additional 1,500 Oregon children each year, including children from families who do not qualify for Head Start services but also can't afford private preschool.

Sincerely,

Holly Mar-Conte

Director of Education

United Way of Lane County and the Lane Early Learning Alliance