



Testimony on House Bill 2016
House Committee on Education

Representative Tina Kotek
Speaker of the House
April 17, 2015

Thank you for the opportunity to present House Bill 2016 to you today.

According to Oregon's state report card, statewide data shows that African-American children have some of the lowest levels of academic success in the state and experience some of the highest levels of disciplinary incidents in schools. From early learning through higher education, African-American children experience disparities in education outcomes, leading to lower levels of graduation from high school and post-secondary institutions.

House Bill 2016, with the -2 amendment, seeks to build a process that will develop and implement strategies to improve the academic experience and success of African-American children in Oregon. The bill directs the Department of Education to work with the Early Learning Division, Youth Development Division, and Higher Education Coordinating Commission to develop a statewide plan to address:

- Disparities experienced by African-American students;
- Historical practices leading to disproportionate outcomes; and
- Educational needs of African-American student from early childhood through higher education.

The bill also calls for a report back to the legislature each even-numbered year regarding the progress of the plan. The first report will be due January 1, 2016.

The bill is an important first step in calling attention to the need to have culturally-specific strategies to improve outcomes for African-American students. This is a critical step that will provide information to the community, teachers, districts, the state, and future legislatures on the best strategies, some that may require investment, to improve outcomes for African-American students.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.