

Senate Committee on Education

SJR 203 – State Board of Education

TO: Committee Members

When Oregonians voted for the Governor to be Superintendent of Public Instruction, they were dissatisfied with not having a good public forum for their voices to be heard. When people get frustrated, they vote for change, regardless. That disconnect that parents felt has not changed. The state's adoption of common core standards without a "best practices" standard and no proven testing has further exasperated the situation. Such dramatic changes in the curriculum has left parents unable to help with homework and to deal with stressed out children. Homeschooling increased from 20,188 in 2012 to 22,648 in 2015, an indication of a dysfunctional system.

Moving the superintendent position to the Governor's office, in reality, was in name only where responsibilities are delegated to people that are further disconnected from parents. We were sold the idea that the restructuring would create a more coordinated education system, but that hasn't happened. We were looking for a system that would listen to parents and support local school boards to do the best for their districts. Instead, we got a one-size-fits all top heavy structure waving a heavy stick threatening school boards and teachers to get in line or lose funding or their job.

SJR 203 will give the state another opportunity to structure a system that better serves students and parents. The proposed structure will give parents and the public a feeling of ownership in the process and a structure making it more accountable for delivering better results for students.

Florida State, in 2003, realized that their state would be better served and changed the Governor/Cabinet as Superintendent of Public Instruction to a similar appointed board structure.

It's time to step back and admit that our education system is sinking and our students are being used as lab rats in a system that is flailing. This bill also unifies levels of education so high school students can take college level courses and community college students can transition to a university without losing credits.

SJR 203 gives parents and voters an opportunity to a represented board that makes critical decisions on their behalf.

Please vote YES for this bill.

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