

Dear Members of the Oregon Senate Committee on Education:

The purpose of this email and testimony is to request your support and approval of HB4033, which provides continued support and funding for the purposes of advancing and expanding culturally responsive pedagogy and practices (CRPP) in all educational systems across the state of Oregon under the Network of Quality Teaching and Learning.

As the educational landscape changes and our students become more diverse, our educational systems must change in order to meet their academic, linguistic and cultural needs. This work cannot be done within the silos of school districts; rather the work must be done collaboratively in order to create educational climates and cultures conducive to the necessary change and growth. The work involves collaborative efforts with school districts, state agencies, higher education programs and the community.

In 2013, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 3232 and House Bill 3233, which provided targeted investments to support Oregon's students and educators. The strategic investments were designed to leverage funds to community partnerships to help turn around under-performing schools, and improve student outcomes in our state. Unfortunately, these funds were not renewed and the specific focus CRPP was disappeared from current initiatives.

Culturally responsive pedagogy and practices are grounded in the belief that everyone has the ability to learn and achieve and has the right to be provided optimal learning environments that are responsive to their cultural and linguistic needs. However, these environments cannot be fostered without specific professional development and training for educators. This is the kind of training fosters strong partnerships with the goal of creating continuity between home and school and increase student success in the classroom. This work reinforces the power that equitable education can have in changing the educational climate that oppresses culturally and linguistically diverse students and fails to recognize the contributions that all students are capable of making in order to foster a future that elevates the value of all members of society.

The work in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Practices is far from complete in this state. If anything, it is at the early stages of producing genuine systematic change. Without continued support and funding the work that has been done cannot continue at the level that is needed and the impact will not be fully present. The passage of HB4033 is a means to transform our education system into one that is more equitable and generates genuine change.

I kindly urge you to vote in favor of HB4033 refocusing on culturally responsive pedagogy in practices and reinforcing the equity work that has already been initiated in Oregon.

Respectfully,

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