

Thank you Chair Roblan and members of the Senate Committee on Education:

My name is Dana Buhl. I live in Portland, Oregon. I'm a public school parent in support of Senate Bill 280.

I am White. I've lived my life with unearned, largely unexamined and unconscious advantages because I'm White. My education supported racial hierarchy. It centered the culture and history of my European-American predecessors. It reduced ethnicities to broad racial categories. It minimized or omitted the perspectives of non-White people. And all the while said that everyone should be treated the same.

Like it or not, I've absorbed deep racial bias for the ways and history of "my people" as the "right" ways. Non-white cultures and histories are "other;" not integral to the fabric of our nation's history.

As an adult committed to racial equity, I see how my schooling damaged me. It ill-prepared me to examine issues of power and privilege connected to race -- issues vital to civic engagement. It stunted my ability to engage with, learn from and collaborate with people outside of my racial group. It hindered my ability to talk with other white people about race, power and privilege.

My White 5th grade daughter attends a school committed to racial equity. Even so, her schooling has reinforced a view of "White is right". Most of her teachers are white like her. The 3rd grade Portland history musical told the story of White explorers, leaders, business men, builders, innovators. Non-white populations were side-stories; tales of the weak and dominated. Their contributions seen as exceptional, not part of the fabric of history. These are damaging messages of white supremacy.

I hear voices from the 38% of Oregon school students who are not White. I hear pain, internalized negative messages about themselves and their cultures. I hear frustration and sense of loss. I hear how our school system excludes and marginalizes their histories and their voices.

All students should learn that their racial and ethnic histories are vital to the Oregon we are today. It's our responsibility to develop competent, confident and collaborative students. I want this for my daughter.

Please support SB 280 to fund educators to write and teach curricula that reflect the diverse Oregon that makes us who we are.