



**Oregon School Employees Association**

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March 15, 2017

Representative Barbara Smith Warner, Co-Chair  
Senator Rod Monroe, Co-Chair  
Joint Ways and Means Education Sub-Committee  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: House Bill 5516

Dear Co- Chairs Smith Warner and Monroe,

My name is Soren Metzger and I am writing today on behalf of the Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) representing Head Start employees working for the Clackamas County Children’s Commission (CCCC), Lane County Head Start (LCHS), Neighborhood Impact, and Mt. Hood Community College (MHCC) Head Start.

I would like to express OSEA’s support for the direction of the Governor’s proposed budget for the Early Learning Division and specifically for the allocations to Oregon Pre-Kindergarten (OPK) and the Office of Child Care. The Governor’s proposed Early Learning Division budget includes an investment of 2.7% over current service levels in early childhood education; an \$8 million investment in professional development; and assistance to cover the increased cost of background checks required for child care providers.

We’re optimistic the proposed increase of 2.7% over current service levels and investment in professional development will inspire retention of quality Head Start teachers and help to advance others. Currently retention is a problem, high quality Head Start teachers are being recruited for better paying teaching positions with Preschool Promise and full-day kindergarten. An investment in all Head Start positions is seriously needed but for your reference, below is a table of starting Head Start teacher’s salaries for OSEA’s represented units. It’s apparent why quality teachers are hardly left with a choice when presented with better options elsewhere.

<b>CCCC 2014-15 Starting Salaries</b> Teacher with a B.A. \$15.44/hour Teacher with an A.A. \$14.57/hour	<b>MHCC Head Start 2015-16 Starting Salaries</b> Teacher with a B.A. \$19.31/hour Teacher with an A.A. \$16.62/hour
<b>LCHS 2015-16 Starting Salaries</b> Teacher with a B.A. \$13.86/hour Teacher with an AA \$13.46/hour	<b>Neighborhood Impact 2016 Starting Salaries</b> Head Start Advocate \$14.77/hour Teacher Advocate II \$14.91/hour

The Governor's proposed budget will also help to alleviate some of the financial burden associated with the expected cost increases (expected July 1, 2017) for enrolling in Oregon's Central Background Registry (CBR) and fingerprinting. Head Start programs are handling this expense differently, for example currently the MHCC Head Start program is asking workers to absorb the full cost of applying for the CBR and fingerprinting, while the CCCC is covering the CBR costs and is only asking workers to cover the cost for fingerprinting. Depending on the severity of the increases, we expect Head Start programs to eventually shift costs to their employees.

Co-Chairs Barbara Smith Warner and Rod Monroe, the Governor's proposed budget is a step in the right direction but still does not do enough to address the current waitlist of eligible children and families wanting to access the proven successful Head Start program. According to information made available by the Oregon Head Start's Association, 12,266 children are enrolled in Oregon Pre-Kindergarten (OPK) programs, while only 59.3% of children eligible for Head Start are being served and 1,777 children are currently on program wait lists. OSEA supports funding levels sufficient to ensure that all eligible children may participate in Oregon Pre-Kindergarten – Head Start programs.

Thank you,  
Soren Metzger  
soren@osea.org

