



## Oregon School Employees Association

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March 14, 2017

Representative John Lively, Chair  
House Committee on Early Childhood and Family Supports  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for HB 2013

Good afternoon Chair Lively and members of the committee,

My name is Soren Metzger and I am writing in support of HB 2013 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.

As I understand it, the Preschool Promise program was established by HB 3380 (2015) and serves 1,300 preschool age children in families with incomes up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Line. The program's intent is to leverage high-quality, local and culturally relevant child care and education programs. Being this is a program in infancy; I think fixes early on are important and necessary. HB 2013 addresses the feedback I've received on this program thus far.

Specifically, HB 2013 allows all high quality candidates to apply and work as lead teachers in the Preschool Promise program. This bill recognizes that quality is not synonymous with a bachelor's degree, but that experience, training and certifications with an associate's degree can also qualify educators as highly trained and qualified for lead teacher positions in the Preschool Promise program.

An unintended consequence of the Preschool Promise program is that high quality Head Start teachers are shifting over to the Preschool Promise program for better paid positions. This issue coupled with the fall off of high quality Head Start teachers to full day kindergarten, exacerbates the issue of retention. Fortunately, HB 2013 requires an evaluation of early learning educator salaries as it relates to retention, by the Early Learning Division and will hopefully lead to a much needed investment.

The evaluation will also identify methods for financing early learning programs to ensure all eligible families are able to participate in a high quality preschool 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 and Head Start programs.

All around, HB 2013 is a great bill and we urge your support.

Thank you,  
Soren Metzger  
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