

March 16, 2017

Senator Rod Monroe, Co-Chair
Representative Barbara Smith Warner, Co-Chair
Members of the Joint Ways and Means Education Subcommittee
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Co-Chairs and Members,

Not so very long ago, I was seated where you are today, listening to hours of impassioned testimony from education advocates, teachers and students. I understand the difficulty in grappling with making decisions that will change the lives and educational experience of our students, especially in such a challenging budgetary environment as the one the state now faces.

That is why it is so important to make early, smart investments that pay off in the long run. Reading with children early is the beginning of their educational success in kindergarten, third grade, and even their high-school graduation. Children who have been read to come to school ready and eager to learn. *Reach Out and Read* was started by pediatricians, who understand that health and education go hand-in-hand. It is evidence-based and has been proven to increase the number of words a child possesses before entering school. This is especially important to children who are being raised in poverty or in a home where English is not the first language. It is a small cost for a very large return and one Oregon should be investing in with confidence.

I know you care about children the way I do. I know you want to see graduation rates rise and for our kids to become smart, productive members of the Oregon community. *Reach Out and Read* gives you an opportunity to make those aspirations a reality. Thank you for your support and all your dedication.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betty Komp". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the "Sincerely," text.

Betty Komp