

Honorable Monroe, Co-chair
Honorable Smith-Warner, Co-chair
State Capitol Building
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

May 20, 2017

Senator Monroe and Representative Smith-Warner,

My name is Laura Scruggs and I am a middle school teacher in the Springfield Public Schools and member of the Governor's Council on Educator Advancement (CEA). The CEA came together around the Governor's Executive Order 16-08 and is a diverse, educator-driven, research-informed team focused on positively impacting the educational experience of Oregon students. The Council focused on five core themes: keeping an equity-focus, creating a seamless system of support, embedding teacher voice and leadership, providing time for professional learning, and making mentorship available. I fully support SB 182 as it moves this work into its next phase.

I would like to speak to the components I feel are key to the success of this work: professional learning and teacher voice and leadership. Professional Learning is the bridge that links the ten recommendations of the CEA together. It forms the foundation for change by defining and disseminating common understandings of culturally responsive practices and skillful teaching. It lifts the profession by providing continuous linked learning throughout the career of an educator from choice to licensure to induction through retirement.

Licensed teachers are our boots on the ground. They are face to face with our students every day and know the areas in which they (the teachers) and their peers need assistance. The recommendations of the CEA include specific requirements around inclusion of teachers in both the government structures and the creation and implementation of professional development. This plan provides two integral supports: information from our classrooms and schools to state leadership provided by key teacher leaders from around the state and front line and time specific data on the professional development needs of our staff.

If anything is missing in the CEA recommendation, it is an equal focus on our classified employees. They, though, were not included in the Governor's order. Still, our classified employees are the first faces our students see at school in the morning. They are the one-on-one and small group supports in the classroom, and they are the people who keep our schools up and running. Classified employees need to have a voice in our educational system. They need professional development opportunities and mentorship similar to that of our teachers and administrators.

The CEA focuses on the inclusion of education professionals in the decision-making process. This is essential. No one knows our students better than our educators. No one understands Oregon's educational needs more than those working in our classrooms and schools. Yet, our governance system is set up in a manner that excludes that voice. SB 182 takes steps to bring together educators and the governance system that oversees their work. This partnership will make Oregon stronger and will better provide for our students. Oregon students will thrive when supported by a community rather than just a system.

Sincerely,



Laura R. Scruggs
Briggs Middle School, Springfield Public Schools