



SB 13 – Native American Curriculum

Committee Name

February 9, 2017

Introduction:

Good morning Chair Roblan and members of the Senate Committee on Education. My name is April Campbell, I am a citizen of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and also the Oregon Department of Education's (ODE) Indian Education Advisor. My colleague, Ramona Halcomb, is a citizen of the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation, and is ODE's Indian Education Specialist.

I am honored to work for Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, Salam Noor and for an agency which recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians. We are here today to speak in favor of Senate Bill 13 (SB 13).

Background:

The 1972 Indian Education Act was landmark legislation establishing a comprehensive approach to meeting the unique needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students. It recognizes that American Indians have unique, educational and culturally-related academic needs. The Act covers pre-school to graduate-level education and reflects the diversity of government involvement in Indian education and focuses national attention on the educational needs of American Indian learners.

Yet Oregon continues to fail to meet the needs of its American Indian students as reflected by high dropout rates at 56%* and absenteeism rates at 70%** . The state is missing a critical opportunity to fully leverage the strengths, assets, and contributions these students bring to their communities. The lack of accurate and complete curricula may contribute to the persistent achievement and opportunity gaps between American Indian and other students.

Objective 7 of the plan "Every school district in Oregon implements (K-12) historically accurate, culturally embedded, place-based, contemporary, and developmentally appropriate American Indian / Alaska Native curriculum....". Similar law have been enacted by our neighboring states Washington, Montana, California, and Alaska.

American Indians lived in this great state long before it became Oregon. How can we teach youth about Oregon history without including the voice of Oregon's American Indian peoples? Over the course of a year, I have provided professional development to more than 1,500 educators around the state. One of the exercises offered during these trainings is asking participants to identify the 9 federally recognized tribes in Oregon. The exercise was revealing in that less than 1 percent were able to identify all nine, and more than 95percent could identify only 1-2 tribes. This general lack of knowledge about Oregon tribes extends to

* Chronic Absenteeism Rates Oregon Department of Education 2015-2016 Fall Membership Report

** 4 year Cohort Rates Oregon Department of Education 2015-2016 Fall Membership Report

curricula, I have on several occasions reviewed curriculum inaccurately representing American Indian peoples.

Legislation:

The Oregon Department of Education includes some required teaching about American Indians in ODE's Social Studies State Standards. SB 13, would create opportunities to expand the requirement to include other content areas.

Specifically, SB 13 directs ODE to:

1. Make available funds during the Academic year 2017-18 to each of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribal governments, for the creation of accurate place-based curriculum about each Oregon tribe. Oregon Department of Education will retain \$200,000 to hire a contractor to work with Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes and ODE's American Indian Alaska Native Advisory Panel to create Essential Understandings of Oregon Indians curriculum which will be aligned to state standards (Phase 1).
2. Offer professional development during the Academic year 2018-19 to districts on the Essential Understandings of Oregon Indians curriculum (Phase 2).
3. Require all districts during the Academic year 2019-20 to teach the Essential Understandings of Oregon Indians curriculum (Phase 3).

Fiscal:

If funded SB 13 would appropriate \$2 million to ODE to create American Indian curriculum. Of those funds, \$1.8 m (\$200,000 per each tribe) will be made available to each Oregon federally recognized tribe to create individual place-based curriculum. ODE would retain \$200,000 to create Essential Understandings of Oregon Indians curriculum and provide professional development and technical support to districts. SB 13 will be implemented in the three distinct phases outlined above.