



February 13, 2017

Oregon Senate Education Committee
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

To the Senate Education Committee:

I am writing to support the statewide culturally responsive educator certification program as outlined in SB 204. Culturally responsive practices and pedagogy are backed by years of research as the vehicle to promote equitable outcomes for our students.

A concerted, state-wide effort to promote such practices through a certification process is an innovative practice that will serve as model for other states.

As a former teacher, school and district leader in Portland, OR, often working with culturally and linguistically diverse students, I am acutely aware of the significance of providing culturally responsive practices through instruction and leadership to promote academic excellence. The gains educators are making to eliminate opportunity and achievement disparity is often incremental and plagued with barriers to providing every student with the high quality education and outcomes they deserve. This certification process will accelerate the likelihood of every child being taught by culturally responsive educators in schools and systems designed for their success.

We are at a period in this country where we need to take a definitive stand for public education. The focus and intention presented in this bill communicates that the success of every Oregon student matters and we will do what it takes to eliminate barriers and predictable disparity. I am heartened by the opportunity to elevate these powerful practices to the level of certification. No longer will such language be a buzz word in professional development circles but ideally a daily practice and experience for students, families and educators.

Sincerely,

Dr. Charlene Williams
Assistant Superintendent