



CONFEDERATION OF OREGON SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

707 13TH STREET SE, SUITE 100, SALEM, OREGON 97301
TELEPHONE (503) 581-3141
FAX (503) 581 9840

TO: Joint Committee on Student Success – February 9, 2018

FR: Darin Drill, Cascade School District Superintendent, representing Confederation of Oregon School Administrators (COSA)

RE: Comments on Oregon's K-12 System

Co-Chair Warner, Co-Chair Roblan and members of the Student Success Committee,

My name is Darin Drill and I am the Superintendent of the Cascade School District. I also serve as the President of the Oregon Association of School Executives (OASE), which is our professional association for school district superintendents.

Less than two years ago, the Oregon Rising project – a partnership of COSA, OEA and OSBA held more than 100 community meetings across Oregon. These gatherings brought together nearly 3,000 people and thousands more participated online. As part of the effort, we asked people to dream about what they wanted from Oregon's K-12 schools. We left the questions open-ended so that we could hear from people in their own words – not leading them to any specific conclusion.

In total, 10,894 Oregonians – people from every county and from all walks of life – used the survey to speak their minds and hearts about education. And despite their differences, they were – and remain – in remarkable agreement: They believe deeply in the importance of high-quality public schools – not just for the benefit of each child, but for our state and collective future.

And here's the other thing: they believe that the gap between what Oregon students need and what we are giving them is far too large. They asked that we close the gap, suggesting that we start by:

1. Adding teachers and other staff, not only to make classes smaller, but most importantly, to provide the individual supports students need to be successful, and
2. Offering a broader, more well-rounded education that better engages students. They offered examples: Restoring art and music, offering not just science, but technology and engineering (STEM/STEAM). They asked that we provide career technical education (CTE) and other hands-on and vocational opportunities. They suggested adding civics and culture. And the list goes on.

Over the next six months, COSA and our superintendents' organization (OASE) will be conducting three work groups aimed at developing policy proposals for the 2019 legislative session.

The three work groups and their initial charges are:

- Early Learning Work Group – Develop policy proposal(s) to: 1) create and deepen partnerships between K-12 and early learning, and 2) expand school-based early learning programs in Oregon, potentially

centering on children who are not currently served by Head Start, EI/ECSE or private preschool programs, but who otherwise enter kindergarten without needed academic and social-emotional preparation.

- Social-Emotional Well-Being Work Group – Develop policy proposal(s) to encourage healthcare organizations, CCOs, county health programs and health-focused nonprofits to partner with school districts to meet the social, emotional, mental and physical health needs of Oregon students and families.
- Education Workforce Development Work Group – Develop policy proposal(s) to: 1) expand and diversify the current K-12 workforce through incentives, licensure opportunities and universal mentoring, and 2) create incentive strategies for new and second-career employees, potentially including grow-your-own programs, and scholarship or debt-forgiveness programs.

Each of the work groups will be student and equity centered, and while we have created their starting places, we will be trusting work group members to together decide what proposals we develop and take forward.

The work groups will include superintendents and other school administrators, but they will also include a number of partners from education, government, nonprofit and other sectors. Our hope is that the proposals we develop together will be proposals we can all support.

As you go through this Joint Committee on Student Success process, we hope you will keep the Oregon Rising Project in mind. There has never been a time when Oregonians have spoken up for education so loudly, or been so ready to champion the need for a quality education as they are now. We have sent the information to your able administrator and are willing to share the results in more detail.

We stand ready to support you as you develop plans for a meaningful investment in our students, our schools and our future.