

Chair Doherty and Members of the House Education Committee,

Our organizations are writing in opposition to House Bill 2318 as currently drafted. House Bill 2318 would prohibit the state or districts from adopting a common assessment in preschool through second grade. We believe a ban is extreme, unnecessary, and would result in unintended consequences.

Talent is universally distributed. Opportunity to develop that talent, sadly, is not. There are no achievement gaps at birth, yet disparities in early life experiences create achievement gaps at kindergarten entry. Until the Oregon Kindergarten Assessment (OKA), our state had no data before 3rd grade to help inform how to address achievement gaps effectively.

Reliable and valid assessments are one important piece of information to inform early childhood providers, state agencies, and elected officials about whether young children are getting the rich, stimulating early childhood experiences all kids need before entering kindergarten. This information also helps us to effectively advocate for investments in young children and families before kindergarten and ensure these investments are distributed to promote equity. We know there are barriers to opportunity for children due to poverty, race, disability, and geographic location. The OKA is our first best chance in K-12 to acknowledge that those barriers start before kindergarten and address them early. When we know what the barriers and disparities are, we can make sure kids get access to the high-quality early childhood experiences that nurture their curiosity and natural love of learning and support their development before they enter kindergarten.

Many communities across Oregon utilize early assessments as one indicator to help prioritize services to have the greatest impact. Some Early Learning Hubs use Oregon Kindergarten Assessment scores, alongside other indicators, to prioritize Kindergarten Partnership Fund investments in school communities. Some school districts implemented assessments to determine eligibility for Talented and Gifted students in response to equity concerns that relying only on teacher referral was resulting in under-representation in communities of color. Many school districts use common progress monitoring tools to inform instruction.

[Civil Rights groups](#) recently joined together to oppose anti-testing efforts saying:

*“For the civil rights community, data provide the power to advocate for greater equality under the law... These data are critical for understanding whether and where there is equal opportunity... We cannot fix what we cannot measure.”*

We propose another path forward. Oregon can and should make improvements to assessments used with young children. Those improvements should be made with the involvement of early childhood and kindergarten educators, community-based organizations, civil and disability rights groups, and those with knowledge of developmentally appropriate assessment tools. Our organizations would gladly be partners in a thoughtful approach forward.



Sincerely,

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Tigard-Tualatin School District educators:

Dr. Sue Rieke Smith - Superintendent

Karen Twain - Assistant Superintendent

Jill Zurschmeide - School Board Chair

Todd Robson - Director of Teaching and Learning

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