

TO: House Committee on Education – February 18, 2019

FR: Dr. Koreen Barreras-Brown, Superintendent - Colton School District

RE: Support for House Bill 2742

Chair Doherty and members of the House Committee on Education

I am Dr. Koreen Barreras-Brown and I have the privilege of serving as the Superintendent of the Colton School District. I was also a member of COSA Workgroup on growing and diversifying the education workforce and am pleased to offer my support for our recommendations included in House Bill 2742.

Growing our own educators supports all districts across Oregon no matter their size. We all want our own grassroots efforts to encourage our students and classified staff to pick the path to an education career. Typically, people from the community will stay in the community and helps our efforts to recruit and retain staff. This is very true for communities of color with regards to family networks of support.

Students benefit from having teachers and administrators that look like them and share a similar cultural and linguistic experience. There is a large body of new research supporting a diversification in our educator workforce. For example, black students that have black teachers between third and fifth grade are less likely to drop out of high school and more likely to attend college.

Teachers' biases can often become a self-fulfilling prophecy and too often this has had a detrimental effect on our African American and Latino males. Teachers of the same racial, ethnic, and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds as their students are less likely to judge students' behavior too harshly and hold students to a higher standard.

Culturally responsive and relevant mentor programs are critical to the success of educators and administrators of color. Teaching and leading in schools are complex and difficult jobs and adding the complexity of being "the only one" can add undue stress to the mix. Teachers and leaders of color need to have the support of someone who shares a similar experience, shares similar culture and language, and has overcome similar obstacles.

House Bill 2742 will help grow and diversify the K-12 licensed and Pre-K educator workforce by expanding "Grow Your Own" educator pipeline programs that remove financial barriers for the next generation of educators and emphasize recruiting staff of color and bilingual staff.

Please join organizations like the Oregon PTA, COSA, Stand for Children, the Healthy Kids Learn Better Coalition, Latino Network, OEA, OSBA, the Oregon School Psychologists Association, the Children's Institute and the Oregon Association of Education Service Districts in supporting House Bill 2742.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.