



HB 2440: Latinx Student Success Plan

Letter of Support | February 28, 2019

To Chair Doherty, Vice-Chair Leon, Vice-Chair Helt, and members of the House Committee on Education:

My name is Karina Alcantara Guerrero and I am a senior at Benson Polytechnic High School in Portland, Oregon. I am member of [Oregon Student Voice \(OSV\)](#), a youth-led nonprofit that empowers students to be authentic partners with K-12 education decision makers. I am writing on behalf of OSV in support of House Bill 2440. This bill directs the Oregon Department of Education to create an advisory committee consisting of members of communities across Oregon and representatives from the Early Learning Division, the Oregon Department of Education, and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to develop a comprehensive plan for Latinx student success. In the following, I share my personal statement that highlights the importance of having a plan that will help Latinx students succeed.

When I came to America, my sister and I attended Cesar Chavez School in Portland, Oregon. My mother wanted us to attend Cesar Chavez School because she felt it would provide my sister and I with the resources we needed to succeed as we were joining the Spanish immersion program. We thought that in this program we would receive a support system that would allow us to adapt to a new life, but also help us stay connected to our roots. However, this was not our experience. We encountered times when we were being thought Spanish by teachers who did not know Spanish fluently. There were other times when we felt as though our culture was not represented correctly. This brought many mixed emotions to my sister and I because we felt as if learning our language, which was something important to our culture, was not important to our school. This issue grew throughout my time at Cesar Chavez School as I did not have a teacher to talk to or whom I could relate until fifth grade when I was a student of Ms. Recht, a teacher who changed my experience and I am grateful to have had. Ms. Recht, a proud Latina teacher, helped me feel more connected to my roots as a Latina student. She built a relationship with me and became a role model who helped me grow into the proud Latina I am today. I always knew that in her classroom my academic success was important. I wish more of my teachers were like Ms. Recht.

I, as well as the high school members of Oregon Student Voice, believe that House Bill 2440 is important to Latinx students because it helps ensure that Oregon's schools create welcoming environments for Latinx students, which many of us have not experienced. It also provides Latinx students with the aid and resources necessary to succeed academically as well as to be more connected to our background. I can not stress enough the importance of this bill for Latinx students across Oregon, and I hope that the House Committee on Education approves House Bill 2440.

Thank you for your consideration,

Karina Alcantara Guerrero
Oregon Student Voice