



March 4, 2019

Honorable Margaret Doherty, Chair
Honorable Theresa Alonso-Leon, Vice Chair
Honorable Cheri Helt, Vice Chair
House Committee on Education

We write today in support of HB 2897. Chalkboard Project believes that expanding access to high-quality early learning environments that respond to each child's assets, needs, and culture will provide a pathway to improved education outcomes, reduced disparities and, ultimately, a more equitable Oregon.

Through 14 years of research and work on the ground, Chalkboard Project has learned of the critical importance of providing culturally specific instruction and deepening engagement with families in the K-12 system. These lessons are even more critical in the context of early learning. Oregon has existing community-based organizations that are skillfully and lovingly supporting families of color now with virtually no state funding. These programs are teaching communication, relationship building, and early reading and writing skills with an approach that is grounded in families' home language and unique cultural experiences. We strongly urge the legislature to recognize these proven culturally affirming initiatives by investing \$20 million in an early childhood equity fund and bringing these effective programs into our statewide system.

Please join us in supporting HB 2897. Improving the educational outcomes for all students by providing positive, affirming, and culturally-responsive practices can help us achieve Oregon's goal of graduating every child with a strong plan for the future.

Thank you for your consideration and work on this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Whitney Grubbs".

Whitney Grubbs
Executive Director, Chalkboard Project

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