

April 24, 2019

Testimony in support of the HB3263-Standards for School Library Programs, April 24, 2019.

Dear Chair Doherty and Members of the Committee:

For the record, I am Kate Grandusky, Forest Grove School Board Member and a life long educator. I am here to support HB3263 to adopt standards for school library programs and academic content standards for library media specialists.

As a school board, our mission is to provide an educational program that prepares students for future success, promote academic rigor, and to be life long learners. A key component in developing these skills for our students requires each school to have a strong certified library staff along with academic content standards correlated with the curriculum standards.

I believe it is essential that we adopt content standards and that we require districts to meet these standards. Without these requirements we will continue to under serve our students as has been the experience in our District.

Why School Library Programs and Content Standards are needed: Forest Grove School District had both a certified librarian and aide in each of our schools during the formative years of my children's education through the 90's. By 2003 we had one certified librarian for our District of 6000 students who then resigned by the incredible challenges of trying to serve a high school, two middle schools, and seven elementary schools. This decline of library services ended up with volunteers running the libraries. As you can image, the deterioration of library skills, resources, access to books and materials for our children hit an all time crisis. Volunteers had the best of intentions, but were not trained and were not available on a regular basis.

On top of these challenges, we were losing a value of over \$100,000 a year in books with no book replacement budget. A curriculum director was to oversee the libraries in the District, but she had no experience nor time to focus on the literacy, technology, and information skills along with no paid staff in the libraries. Since the early 2000's, as a District, we have watched as our libraries significantly deteriorated. By 2014, all of our elementary libraries circulation fell to 25%.

Through strong community support and my advocacy, we now have a budget of \$30,000 which we alternate between elementary schools one year and then middle/high school the following year. Last year we hired three aides at 40 hrs. a week at our six elementary libraries with only library duties. How does an untrained staff person provide library skill training for the students, decide what books to purchase for the collection, how to enhance and enrich student research with the materials in the library, etc., to then obtain the outcomes for our students in a dynamic, evolving world that we live in plus maintain checking books out and re-shelving?

Our District has a lower social economic base with more than 50% Hispanic students. Four of our six elementary schools meet the 80% free and reduce criteria for Title dollars. Our test

scores at some of our schools in reading are below 50%. As you know, children are impacted by poverty, behavior, large class sizes, and lack of resources. Access to books is a huge issue for our children as the majority of our students are bused to school. Parents work long hours and in many homes are overwhelmed by meeting their daily needs.

We know through research that a strong school library program increases student achievement and graduation rates. We also know that a strong school library program has an even greater positive impact on traditionally underserved students (students of color, those with disabilities, and those living in poverty). It is critical that our students receive consistent K-12 instruction in library skills and the State Board of Education-adopt the Oregon School Library Standards to create greater educational equity. The recommendations of the Joint Commission on Student Success which include administering literacy programs, preparing students for college and career, maximizing learning time, and creating high quality classrooms would tremendous increase the success for our students and our graduation rate.

Thank you for your service, time, and consideration to amend the Continuous Improvement Plan statue to clearly define “strong school library programs” and add library and media studies to statues that identify the characteristics of schools.

Sincerely,

Kate Grandusky
School Board Member