

April 22, 2019

Chair Doherty, Vice Chairs Alonso Leon and Helt, and Members of the House Committee on Education: My name is Yesenia Delgado. I am a school board member of the Reynolds School district and a proud alumna of the Reynolds School District. I am writing to share my support for HB 3263.

When I entered kindergarten, I did not know any English and by the end of my second grade year, the school had graduated me from English Language Development. I know that the main reason I was able to develop another language was due to my love for reading that my school librarians had placed on my heart. In our schools, we had library class several times a week, I always waited anxiously to see my librarian so we could discuss the book that I was reading and what I should read next. In our library class, we learned about the different types of books, we would grow in community by reading together and created worlds in our minds of what the world could be. For me, reading books and learning about the way libraries worked stimulated my imagination and as a bicultural student allowed me to understand this new world in a different way. It allowed me to develop my language and listening skills that would help prepare me to be the high achieving student I became.

I would always stop and see my librarian before I left for the weekend so I could get some books. Experiencing income and housing insecurity, reading allowed me to forget about that and imagine a new reality for myself. This is how I got through my time in Elementary School, I always had a feeling my librarian knew this. Reading was the intervention I needed to be successful, I was not forced to read or go to the library, but rather, the library and more specifically, the librarians exposed me to possibilities that I otherwise would not have known about.

It breaks my heart to know that students do not have the access to libraries in the way that I did. We are not just closing library doors; we are closing doors on children's learning opportunities. Due to budget constraints, our libraries have suffered. Oregon has cut down our librarians significantly and placed the burden of teaching our students about libraries on our library assistants. In our districts, library assistants are asked to run a library, teach students about books and lead classes. Not only is our staff being negatively impacted by the lack of commitment to libraries but our students are disproportionately not having an equitable access to libraries.

In our district, we see our library assistants and librarians doing more and more with less. They are working extremely hard to fill all the needs of students. They work tirelessly to have culturally specific books, appropriate programming; all while serving students one-on-one with their questions. Our students and libraries deserve a higher commitment from the state. They need HB3263: which directs the State Board of Education to adopt standards for school library programs and require already-adopted academic content standards for library media studies.

I urge you to support HB 3263. Every child in our state needs access to a strong school library program staffed by a team of both a certified librarian and a classified library assistant on a school site in order to deliver state library media standards and support other school instruction

and programming, have strong funding to build a collection that meets the instructional and reading needs of all students and staff, as well as providing access to up-to-date technology.

In an age where adults and students alike are reading texts from their phones and laptops, it is more important than ever to support, encourage and provide the resources necessary for children to read books. Please support HB 3263.

Sincerely,

Yesenia Delgado  
Reynolds School Board Member