



LatinoNetwork

**Testimony of Anthony Castaneda, Education Policy Coordinator
Regarding HB 4304, Education Section 66 - 67
2nd Special Legislative Session
August 10, 2020**

Senate President Peter Courtney
House Speaker Tina Kotek

Dear Co-Chairs Courtney and Kotek and Members of the Joint Committee On The Second Special Session of 2020,

Latino Network is a culturally specific nonprofit serving Latino youth and families in Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties. Our organization provides services to over 8,000 Latino youth, families and community members in the areas of education and mentorship, leadership development, and family stability.

We join the Early Childhood Coalition, over 40 organizations and advocates across the state serving our youngest children, in urging you to invest in our early learning system. Prior to the devastating health and economic impact of the pandemic, Oregon ranked among the least accessible and affordable states for early childhood care and preschool. Lack of public investment in our early learning system puts Oregon families between a rock and a hard place, forcing sacrifices that adversely affect a family's wealth and well-being in the future. A business-as-usual approach to balancing the budget will continue to exacerbate the well-documented inequities in our state.

Latino Network urges you to rebalance the state budget by [leading with children as our north star](#).

We specifically ask you to:

- Hold ourselves accountable to the spirit of the Student Success Act by honoring the co-chairs' full \$170 million allocated to early childhood and protecting the dedicated 20 percent of the Student Success Act flowing into the Early Learning Account.

- Commitment to investments that advance racial equity by maintaining the Early Childhood Equity Fund, Student Success Plans for our young BIPOC learners.
- Reevaluate the proposed cuts to Early Learning Hubs (\$1.3 million), Healthy Families Oregon (\$1 million), and Child Care Focus Networks (\$0.9 million) that assist and coordinate an early learning system.

We will get through this devastating pandemic. However, the rebound and rebuilding from the Covid-19 impact requires an intentional, thoughtful response from our state's leaders. A vaccine will not address the inequities in our public education system.

Thank you for your time and consideration.