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March 31, 2021

To: Oregon Senate Committee on Education
From: COSA and OSBA's Board and Superintendent Equity Committee
Re: Letter of Support for SB 334-1

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Thomsen, and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

This letter is in support of SB 334-1. For over a dozen years I have supported training for School Board Members and superintendents. I served as a member of the Portland Public Schools Board of Directors from 2009-2017 and was chair of the PPS Board for four terms. During that time, I championed a variety of trainings for the Board.

I also served on the Board of Directors for the Council of Great City Schools for 6 years, five of those years on the Executive Committee. During that time, I helped lead the development of training programs for Urban School Boards and helped facilitate a partnership with Harvard for Urban School Board Training.

After my Board service I worked with the Chalkboard Project to develop training for Oregon School Districts. Some of this work was in collaboration with the Oregon School Boards Association. Our program focused on smaller districts and there were districts who wanted to participate than we could serve – so I know the need and desire is there.

Finally, as a partner at Davis Wright Tremaine, I represented small school districts mostly in the tri-county area, but also as far away as Maupin. The need and desire for training for these Boards was clear. Often Boards want to learn and be better servants to their districts, but the training is last on the list of the needs of the District in tight budget times.

All these experiences showed me the difference in the effectiveness of a board that has had training together on the basic responsibilities of school board members and on the development of a professional learning plan. These Boards in collaboration with their superintendents know how to work together to set a vision, create and measure goals and be problem solvers. They know how to be student centered. All these traits are so important – especially in turbulent times.

For the sake of Oregon's children, I urge you to vote yes on SB334-1.

Best regards,

Pam Knowles