

April 19, 2021

To: Oregon Senate Education Committee
From: ODE & COSA Emergent Bilingual Visioning Workgroup
Re: Letter of Support for House Bill 2056

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

On behalf of the Oregon Department of Education and Coalition of Oregon School Administrators' Emergent Bilingual Visioning Workgroup, we urge you to adopt the -1 amendment and pass House Bill 2056. HB 2056 is a bill that is designed to help promote multilingual education across Oregon.

Our ODE - COSA Emergent Bilingual Visioning Workgroup formed in 2019 and includes representatives from state agencies, school districts, education service districts, universities, and partner organizations from across the state. Together, we share the goal of meeting the needs, and honoring the assets, of Oregon's 102,786 linguistically diverse students.

We developed recommendations around policies and investments that would help support our emergent bilingual students across Oregon. One of the high-impact policies we decided to focus on this legislative session centers around equitable and inclusive language policies.

House Bill 2056-1 resulted from the collective efforts of our ODE - COSA Emergent Bilingual Visioning Workgroup.

This bill updates "English" (also referred to as, English Language Arts), with "Language Arts" (which includes reading, writing, and other communication in any language, including English). This change would impact laws related to: credits, standards, instruction, essential skills, accelerated college credits, and statewide assessment development and administration.

Embracing "Language Arts" rather than strictly "English" as a part of core instruction is an important, and long overdue, change.



HB 2056-1 will help Oregon recognize and support the unique gifts, talents, and interests of our 102,786 linguistically diverse students. The bill will also provide more meaningful flexibility in helping our emergent bilingual students meet high school graduation requirements.

The -1 amendment will also support the advancement of multilingual education by amending the “World Languages” definition to include: sign language, heritage languages and languages other than a student’s primary language.

With that, our hope is that this bill will continue to build on the work of the Emergent Bilingual Student Success Plan (also known as the Statewide English Learner Strategic Plan) and provide equitable learning opportunities for all students.

We look forward to continuing to support and invest in the success of our emergent bilingual students across Oregon.

We strongly urge you to support House Bill 2056-1.

Sincerely,

Members of the ODE & COASA Emergent Bilingual Visioning Workgroup

Colt Gill, Agency Director and Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction
Oregon Department of Education

Carmen Xiomara Urbina, Deputy Director
Oregon Department of Education

Craig Hawkins, Executive Director
Coalition of Oregon School Administrator

Kimberly Howard, Chair
State Board of Education

Guadalupe Zapata-Martinez, Vice-Chair
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Cynthia Richardson, Chair of the Education Recovery Committee
Governor’s Racial Justice Council

Toshiko Maurizio, Administrator for Multilingual Programs
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Danna Diaz, Superintendent
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Heidi Sipe, Superintendent
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