



JAMES F. AND MARION L.  
**MILLER**  
FOUNDATION

February 9, 2021

Oregon House Committee on Education  
Representative Teresa Alonso Leon, Chair  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street, NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Representative Alonso Leon and members of the House Committee on Education,

I am writing as the Executive Director of the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation to support HB2001 which requires districts to maintain diversity ratios between teachers and students in the event of layoffs or workforce reductions.

Since 2008, the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation has supported teacher training and diversity through multiple investments in the Chalkboard Project, AVID, Children's Institute, and direct awards to new high school teachers at many of the state's K-12 schools districts totaling \$18,000,000. Our early investment in new high school teachers of nearly \$1.5M was largely wiped out during the workforce reductions in 2008-2010 caused by instability in the state school fund, as many of these promising teachers lost their positions due to the "last in, first out" seniority policies. This experience was frustrating and humbling, as it represented how little these honored teachers meant when push came to shove.

Today, we have far fewer linguistically and culturally diverse teachers than we need or is represented by our student population and their families. With the Student Success Act, school districts, community-based organizations, grow-your-own programs, state schools of education, and state agencies including, but not limited to, HECC, TSPC, ODE and the Early Learning Division have joined a concerted effort to increase the number of diverse teachers in our districts. As a member of the Educator Advancement Council, I am aware that each of the EAC's regional educator networks have also prioritized the need to recruit and retain a diverse teacher workforce. With such alignment among multiple state, regional, local and philanthropic stakeholders, we owe it to our students and communities to consider a range of factors before implementing an out-of-date seniority practice unsuited to the needs of students and our time.

We urge you to pass HB2001 to require school districts to broaden "merit" to include factors such as: years taught in schools where at least 25% of the population is diverse, or; whether the teacher received a scholarship or award for culturally or linguistically diverse teacher candidates. We realize this is a complicated issue – but that should not stand in our way of addressing this challenge. Thank you for your consideration.

Most sincerely,

Executive Director  
James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation