



Oregon Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

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TO: House Education Committee
FROM: Oregon's Educator Preparation Programs
DATE: February 23, 2021
RE: HB 2166

Representative Alonso Leon and members of the House Education Committee,

Oregon Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (OACTE), the state organization representing all 14 public and private educator preparation programs in Oregon, appreciate the opportunity to share our thoughts about HB 2166.

We want to emphasize our commitment to diversifying the Oregon educator workforce. Diversity in the classroom, recruiting and retaining teaching candidates from diverse social, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds and working with school districts to promote equity focused future educators is a core component of our shared mission. These factors make a difference for Oregon students from all backgrounds, and especially for our underrepresented students. We share the goals of the Governor's Education Recovery Committee, Racial Justice Council and the legislature's commitment to diversity and educator equity through HB 2166.

When reviewing HB 2166, specifically Section 9 of the -1 amendments, which provides for a new alternative teacher licensure pathway, we wanted to flag areas of serious concern that, from our perspective, could severely impact the quality of educators across the state and the students they serve.

Our largest area of concern is that a new, nontraditional pathway to licensure under Sect. 9 (4) would not require the same national accreditation as other state educator preparation programs (EPPs). We believe new EPPs should be held to the same standards as existing EPPs. Accreditation standards and stipulations are designed to produce effective teachers prepared to face the demands of today's classrooms. Any meaningful reduction of these requirements will likely result in lower-quality programs that produce ill-prepared teachers who prematurely leave the educator workforce.

Additionally, complying with licensure and accreditation stipulations are significant expenses in our programs. Thus, any non-accredited EPPs would have a huge cost advantage over existing EPPS that must be accredited. Existing EPPs would be at a disadvantage and could suffer enrollment declines and budget cuts, ultimately resulting in a reduction in teacher production in Oregon. We also worry that because of budget pressures, existing EPPs would move away from accreditation, jeopardizing quality teacher preparation in our existing programs.

We also believe that allowing for any “other entity” in the state to act as an alternative licensure provider is too broad and could result in poor quality and inexperienced training programs, or even predatory behavior by for-profit actors. We suggest that there needs to be some restrictions on who can offer these programs.

We would also like to understand how this new licensure system interacts with existing state laws on educator preparation programs and educator equity and look forward to discussing the questions below.

- How will this policy support [HB 3375 \(2015\)](#), the Educators Equity Act?
- How will this policy support [SB 78 \(2015\)](#), which requires EPP accreditation?
- How will this policy support the work of the Educator Advancement Council (EAC)?
- Are there anticipated loopholes in the alternative licensure model?
- Will non-traditional educator preparation programs be required to develop Educator Equity Plans the way that traditional EPPs are required to complete through HECC?
- What is the anticipated role and new workload of the Council for Accreditation of Educator Programs (CAEP) and the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP)?
- Will new non-traditional licensure programs have to pay the new fees proposed in [SB 129 \(2021\)](#)?

Finally, alternative licensure pathways have been used in many other states and especially in large, urban areas where qualified teacher shortages are greatest. Alternative licensure is not a panacea and can inadvertently leave our most vulnerable schools with educators prepared primarily through alternative routes. In other areas of the U.S., this has contributed to excessive teacher turnover and poorer student outcomes. OACTE strongly believes in maintaining rigor for teacher preparation and believes children and families in our state deserve well-prepared educators in all classrooms. Investment in Oregon educator preparation programs with a focus on expanding opportunity for diverse teachers and non-traditional EPP partnerships is what our state needs, not the development of an entirely new system of alternative licensure.

Thank you for your consideration. We believe many of our concerns can be addressed through stakeholder input.

Sincerely,
Oregon Association of Colleges of Teacher Education