



February 22, 2021

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

Dear Chair Leon and Members of the House Committee on Education:

We are writing on behalf of Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) to urge your support for HB 2001, which requires school districts to maintain diversity ratios when making reductions in force.

OCF's education-related work – from grants and scholarships to community partnerships to engagement in the policy realm – is informed by our concern for children and youth most impacted by the opportunity gap and disparities in our education system. Knowing from research that outcomes are better when educators reflect the student population, OCF has supported several targeted strategies to recruit, train and support a more diverse cadre of educators across the education spectrum. Our investments in educator diversity have included years of support, at the early childhood level, for the Growing Master Trainers project; at the K-12 level we provided funding for the Chalkboard Project's Teach Oregon initiative as well as regional efforts to recruit and support diverse candidates for careers in education.

Oregon has made progress in diversifying its K-12 workforce, but teacher diversity still lags significantly behind trends in our K-12 student population. According to the 2020 Oregon Educator Diversity Report 38.5% of Oregon's students identify as linguistically, racially or ethnically diverse, compared to 10.7% of educators. With 62 percent of Oregon teachers of color hired in just the last 5 years, workforce diversity suffers when reductions in force are made based only on merit and seniority.

HB 2001 offers a reasonable solution to this challenge in requiring school districts, when implementing reductions in force, to retain an educator with less seniority if the educator has more merit and their retention is necessary to maintain the district's diversity ratio.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Max Williams".

Max Williams
President & CEO

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Marcy Bradley".

Marcy Bradley
Program Officer for Black Student
Success