



February 25, 2021

Representative Teresa Alonso Leon, Chair
House Education Committee
Oregon State Legislature

RE: Opposition to HB 2868

On behalf of the High Desert Education Service District (HDES), the Oregon Association of Education Service Districts (OAESD), and the school districts and higher education partners in central Oregon that have come together to create Cascades Commitment, I am writing in opposition to House Bill 2868.

About seven years ago, HDES received a Regional Promise Grant from the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) as part of the legislature's Network of Quality Teaching and Learning (NQTL) initiative. The purpose of the grant was to have ESDs and school districts work with community colleges and four year universities in their regions to make it easier for high school students to achieve college credits while still in the K-12 system. There were different models that came out of the NQTL initiative (by design), and in central Oregon, we named ours Cascades Commitment.

What we sought to solve through Cascades Commitment was a way for high school teachers to be able to teach specific core college courses (e.g. Writing 121, Math 111) without having to go back to college to get another 10-30 credits. We created a summer symposium where Central Oregon Community College (COCC) instructors worked with high school teachers from 12 regional high schools to align pedagogy and curriculum to ensure that high school students received the same level of instruction and rigor as they would have if they had taken the course at COCC. Additionally, we set up monthly professional learning communities (PLCs) to ensure alignment and fidelity, which were very popular with both COCC and high school staff. It worked beautifully and over 65 high school teachers became qualified to teach core community college 100-level courses through our partnership.

HB 2868 would dismantle Cascades Commitment and send a message that is the antithetical to partnerships such as Cascades Commitment.

What matters most with dual language programs is the outcomes for the students. We all know there are teachers with doctorates in content area whose students achieve poor outcomes and I can attest that there are over 60 high school teachers in Central Oregon who do not meet the requirements of HB 2868 but whose students are achieving as well or better than if they had taken the same classes at COCC. HB 2868 is a needless barrier to ensuring high school students have equitable access to college level courses.

The High Desert ESD and the OAESD strongly oppose HB 2868 and urge you not to move the bill forward. If we can share more details, testimony or stories about how Cascades Commitment and other Regional Promise programs have flourished without barriers such as HB 2868, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul Andrews", is written over a blue horizontal line.

Paul Andrews, Ed.D.
Superintendent, High Desert ESD
Chair, OAESD Legislative Committee