

Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Education

Testimony in Support of HB 4031

February 21, 2022

Co-Chairs Frederick & McLain, Senators Dembrow & Thomsen, and Representatives Levy, Reschke, and Ruiz,

For the record, my name is Jackie Leung, Co-Chair of the Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs. I am writing to you in regards to HB 4031 - Relating to diversity goals in education.

1. OCAPIA's role is to work toward economic, social, political, and legal equity for Oregon's Asian and Pacific Islander population. We do this through advocacy, public policy research, leadership development, and partnerships.

2. In our statutory role of bringing equity focus and community voice into Oregon policy making, OCAPIA strongly supports HB 4031.

According to a report from the Oregon Department of Education on Student and Teacher Race/Ethnicity, a very low percentage of non-white students in the Oregon public school population have had teachers with the same race/ethnicity as their own within the past three years.¹ While every White student in Oregon has had a White teacher in the last three years,

Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs

Co-Chairs:

Susan Soonkeum Cox
Jacqueline Leung

Vice-Chair:

Toc Soneoulay-Gillespie

Commissioners:

Mohamed Alyajouri
John Iglesias
Neha Subramanyam

Legislative Members:

Senator Michael Dembrow
Representative Khanh Pham

Oregon Advocacy Commissions

Office Staff

Albert Lee, Executive Director
Nancy Kramer, Policy & Research
Dr. Kyl Myers, Public Affairs

¹ Office of Accountability, Research, & Information Services. [Student and Teacher Race/Ethnicity Data Brief](#). Oregon Department of Education. 2017.



only 6% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander high school students have had a teacher of the same racial/ethnic background; and only 15% of Black elementary school students have had a Black teacher.¹ As Oregon’s community diversity continues to grow, it is vital Oregon’s youth are educated and mentored by people who look like them.

Research has shown repeatedly that students benefit from having BIPOC teachers and administrators.² Non-white students often perform better on standardized tests, have improved attendance, and are suspended less frequently (which may suggest either different degrees of behavior or different treatment, or both) when they have at least one same-race teacher.²

We can develop an ever stronger and successful body of students who may be inspired to become teachers themselves! This is a cycle that would not only benefit the community of BIPOC students but benefit Oregon with a stronger, and more skilled, and diverse workforce.

In 2015, Oregon’s elected officials passed the Oregon Educators Equity Act³, which dictates that a “percentage of diverse educators employed by a school district, or an education service district reflects the percentage of diverse students in the public schools of this state or the percentage of diverse students in the district.”

We at OCAPIA believe that Oregon students benefit from seeing people similar to them: from elected leadership, to staff, to teachers, who are often a student’s first experience outside of the home. We must invest and ensure that Oregon’s teachers represent the growing multi-cultural student body.

We write to you to pass HB 4031 and establish a state goal that the percentage of diverse employees employed by the Department of Education reflects the percentage of diverse

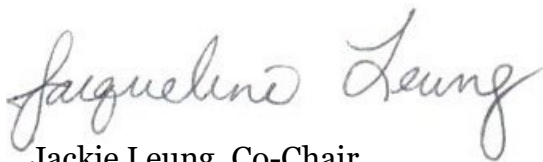
² Figlio, David. [The importance of a diverse teaching force](#). Brookings. November 16, 2017.

³ Teachers and Other School Personnel. [ORS 342.437](#). OregonLaws.



students in public schools. This ensures that the seven-year-old Oregon Educators Equity Act remains true to its promise: that Oregon’s teachers and administrators will reflect the diversity of Oregon’s students.

Sincerely,



Jackie Leung, Co-Chair

The Oregon Commission on Asian & Pacific Islander Affairs

