

June 3, 2023

Re: HB 3198

Dear Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain, and Subcommittee members,

As educators with many decades of experience in educational research and in teaching from pre-K through college, members of the Oregon Public Education Network (OPEN) are keenly aware of the importance of student literacy.

We applaud the overall goals of the Early Literacy Success Initiative and encourage you to seek a funding level that will maximize its chance of success.

Of the different elements of HB 3198, we are very supportive of the emphasis on small group and one-on-one tutoring; the emphasis on community and parent involvement; and the provision of coaching in the classroom. Additionally, we are firm advocates for professional development that is of sufficient duration and consistency to ensure effective skill development by educators.

We are also mindful that students develop skills at different times and in different ways. We do not believe that “one-size-fits-all” models of education have been proven successful. While we recognize the convenience of commercially-produced tests, their utility for literacy purposes has proved to be debatable. In addition to not taking the individual child into account, such assessments have tended to drown teachers in data.

Therefore, we believe HB 3198 should allow the use of locally-developed reading assessments.

Members of the Ways and Means Committee, we ask that HB 3198 be funded at levels that guarantee the best chance possible to succeed. We realize the issue of literacy is not new. It is an extremely challenging one that will not be solved quickly. That said, we commend the governor and legislators for their willingness to take this step.

Please fund HB 3198 to the level that will ensure initial success and that will garner continued public support for addressing childhood literacy.

Respectfully,

Members of the OPEN Steering Committee,

Margi Brown
Roscoe Caron

David Crandall
Gregg Heacock

Larry Lewin
Liz Marlia-Stein

Ross Swartzendruber
Mary Thamann