



**EARLY LITERACY
SUCCESS ALLIANCE**

Date: June 5, 2023
To: Joint Committee on Ways & Means Subcommittee On Education
From: Early Literacy Success Alliance (ELSA)
Subject: Concerns with the -A7 Amendments to HB 3198

Dear Co-Chairs McLain & Frederick, and Members of the Committee,

As a coalition of statewide and community-based organizations with proven impact, the Early Literacy Success Alliance (ELSA) shares your commitment to improving literacy outcomes for our state's youngest students. We have previously expressed our support and continue to strongly support HB 3198, including the attention paid to science-backed instructional strategies and culturally-specific and culturally-responsive pedagogy and programs. However, we feel compelled to share our concerns with the -A7 amendments.

These amendments would force school districts to choose which crisis they focus on: student social-emotional health and wellness or early literacy. ELSA's work as an alliance and as individual organizations has always been about centering the multifaceted needs of children and families as they develop literacy skills. The supports children need now are not either/or propositions; they're holistic and interdependent. We can't expect to move the needle on academics if we're neglecting children's social and emotional health.

Unfortunately, the -A7 amendments could lead to just that outcome by funding the HB 3918 early literacy programs at the expense of the Student Success Grants in the SIA. This amendment is counter to the spirit of HB 3198, and its intent to *ADD* supports for our struggling students, rather than forcing districts to choose between supports to which all children should have access. We encourage the committee to utilize the General Fund or the Statewide Education Initiatives Account of the SSA. Oregon's children deserve the opportunity to develop the skills they need to be strong, confident readers while also receiving the social and emotional health supports they need.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony and our concerns with the -A7 amendments.

Sincerely,

Members, Early Literacy Success Alliance

Submitted Electronically