

March 1, 2023

To: House Committee on Education  
From: Bianca Espinosa, Lead Educator Mentor Facilitator/Coordinator  
RE: Support for HB 3177

Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Wright and Hudson and members of the committee–

My name is Bianca Espinosa and I am the new Educator Mentor Program Coordinator at Clackamas ESD & MCREN. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB 3177. I would like to share my perspective about the need for funding the Educator Advancement Council to continue the critical work of our statewide Regional Educator Networks. Specifically in our work to improve recruitment, and retention of the educator professional workforce–through Mentor Programs.

I am a former classroom teacher, a former New Educator Mentor, and am now a program coordinator for mentor learning in our region. I mentored 81 educators in their first 3 years of teaching. I led a team of mentors supporting 150 new educators a year, and am currently providing professional learning, program development, and peer-to-peer support for mentors in 18 school districts, while also designing a consortium for mentor program leads at the district level to work together as a network community. Most of my life is talking to mentors, teachers and students. I talk and practice mentoring ALL OF THE TIME.

As many of you, fellow educators and former educators know, relationships are the KEY in developing healthy and effective learning communities in the classroom with students and their families. And Relationships through mentoring are Key in retaining Educators. Still in communication with my former “mentees” I am often told our work together and our continued relationship have kept them from quitting mid-year–every year. As adults in our society, we have rare opportunities or training on how to work with other adults, to have (sometimes) difficult (yet constructive) conversations, or harder yet, to give feedback and receive feedback. Educator Mentor Programs, do this..and much more.

And to be honest: the work of mentors is confusing...often it gets misinterpreted, mislabeled, and misunderstood. Some believe it is merely a buddy-to-buddy system, where the mentor is a friend who therapizes their “mentee” (as we call them). Some believe mentoring is more directive: telling a new educator all of the things they need to improve on, and instructing them on the “real way to do it.” Mentoring is neither. Our work is the recruitment, orientation, induction, retention and advancement of Educators–and many people don’t know that. **Many people also don’t know that to lose a new educator it costs school districts \$9,000 per year to replace a new teacher–this was the number pre-pandemic. Post height of the pandemic it is \$20,000.**

The Mentoring work that we do is extensive: we are included as recruitment packages for school districts, we are charged with new educator and employee orientations, with induction training, support for experienced educators, and we provide support for educators as they develop as teacher leaders. We encourage those who participate in our programs, to serve as teacher leaders and to later become mentors themselves, for the next generation of new employees. Nancy Arteaga, who is speaking next, is one of those “full-circle” educator leaders.

Our model is data-driven, student-centered, and utilizes a research-based framework on adult learning theory, to establish a culture of high-knowledge and high-application of effective teaching practice, and to establishing the wonderful career of teaching!

I am advocating for the support of HB 3177 as a lifeline, through mentoring programming. We must focus our resources beyond “survival” as educators, but to thrive in a career that is essential in supporting our statewide communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Bianca Espinosa  
New Educator Mentor Program Facilitator & Coordinator  
Multnomah Clackamas Regional Educator Network