

# MALHEUR EDUCATION SERVICE DISTRICT REGION 14

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**Mark Redmond**  
Superintendent

**Angie Arriola**  
Director of Curriculum

**Teresa Jones**  
Director of Special Education



**Malheur**  
EDUCATION SERVICE DISTRICT

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**Kelly Poe**  
Director of Early Learning

**Nickie Shira**  
STEM and Innovation Coordinator

**Jerry Peacock**  
CTE Regional Coordinator

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March 1, 2023

Chair Reynolds and members of the Committee,

My name is Kelly Poe. I'm from Vale, the Malheur County seat. I will be testifying in support of HB 2872.

I am the Early Learning Hub director that serves Baker, Malheur, and Wallowa counties. I'm also a board member of Four Rivers Healthy Community, the local Dolly Parton Imagination Library affiliate that serves Malheur County. When Imagination Library started in Malheur County in 2017, I helped our local library find children who reside in the Ontario Library District. Since then we've expanded throughout all of Malheur County and today we have over 750 children enrolled which is 37% of the total eligible population. This doesn't count the hundreds of children who graduated out of the program.

The basic premise of this program is simple! We need to get books into the hands of young children and into their homes. I believe this is a vital tool for families to engage with their children to build vocabulary, to bond, and be kindergarten ready. There is magic that happens when a child gets a book in the mail with their own name on it.

I'm asking for your support of HB 2872 to ensure this program is available to all Oregon children for generations to come. State funding will stabilize our funding locally, but more importantly it will expand throughout the state, and allow existing programs to expand their enrollment.

I have so many stories from the three counties I serve but I want to be sure to give plenty of time for others to speak. If any of you have questions about my experience with Imagination Library, please do not hesitate to contact me! This is one of my favorite subjects!

Thank you for caring for young children, their families and their communities. I urge you to pass HB 2872.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Kelly Poe".

Kelly Poe  
Director of Early Learning