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To: Senate Committee on Education  
From: Richard Donovan, Legislative Services Specialist  
Re: Senate Bill 854  
Date: March 9, 2023

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber, and members of the committee:

On behalf of the OSBA membership, including 197 school districts and 19 Education Service Districts, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to express opposition to Senate Bill 854.

Senate Bill 854 would create a number of new mandates on local school district instruction, including climate change instruction and board review every seven years. A potential penalty for noncompliance with this bill is the withholding of Student Investment Account payments.

School districts already may do the things the bill would require. If the local community wants to center climate change instruction, then the school district can embed curriculum and teach climate change under existing law. SB 854 would counter these local processes and impose a mandatory structure.

This mandate is especially concerning because the penalty for non-compliance is withholding of payments under the statues containing Oregon’s Student Investment Account. That account, created by the Student Success Act of 2019, has funded [hundreds of millions of dollars](#) in investment in local districts. That funding must be managed at the local level with an [ongoing community planning process](#) that generates a four-year plan. The process must include local community groups in every district. And the funding, [under law](#), must:

1. Meet students’ mental or behavioral health needs, and
2. Increase academic achievement for students, including reducing academic disparities for: economically disadvantaged students; students from racial or ethnic groups that have historically experienced academic disparities; students with disabilities; students who are English language learners; students who are foster children; students who are homeless; and any other group identified by the State Board of Education.

These funds deliver services to some of Oregon's most vulnerable populations of students. Withholding these funds from school districts would directly, and foreseeably, curtail school district ability to continue to deliver the services. That is not in the best interests of students.

Please oppose Senate Bill 854.