

Submitter: Barbara Gunn
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure: HB3198

I have been doing reading research at Oregon Research Institute (ORI) in Eugene for 25 years. Before that I was an elementary school teacher. Learning to read in early elementary school is essential. It lays the foundation for all success in school. BUT Oregon is currently 47th of fifty states in third grade reading achievement nationwide, with only 39% of 3rd grade children at a proficient level on the Oregon 2021-2022 English Language Arts statewide assessments. In my career at ORI, I have conducted research on the effectiveness of reading interventions and followed the work of other researchers in the field. What I have learned is that there is a science to reading that is supported by years of research evidence. Teaching quality matters. We know that how children are taught to read makes a difference in the development of the neural systems that enable fluent reading. Curriculum quality matters too. We know that using an evidence based early literacy curriculum ensures that children learn the knowledge and skills they need to decode and comprehend text. Unfortunately, teachers are often not taught how to teach reading in their teacher education programs. They are struggling and want help. Publishers have begun to incorporate more evidence-based content in their beginning reading curricula, but they still vary widely in content quality and lack explicit guidance on how to teach. These problems are serious, and they are state-wide, but we can solve them with knowledge of the science of reading, and funding support to make sure that all children are reading by third grade. I offer my strong support for House Bill 3198 to help all children become successful readers.