

Dear Rep. Kropf and Governor Kotek,

My name is Sharyn Hoffert and I am a parent of a child with dyslexia as well as a 27 year Oregon public school educator.

I'm writing because over 60% of Oregon 3rd graders aren't reading at grade level - even though research shows that 95% of kids **can** learn to read, given clear, structured instruction. I'm concerned that as currently written, [HB3198](#) and [HB3454](#) leave it up to individual districts to choose whether to apply for literacy funding that addresses our reading crisis. What happens to kids who live in districts that choose not to apply?

I received my teacher education training from several Oregon colleges during the last 27 years including completing the coursework necessary to add a reading specialist endorsement to my license. It was not until my own son began struggling to learn how to read that I discovered the systematic and structured approach to teaching reading that is needed for so many of our students. We were fortunate enough to have the financial resources to get our son tested and tutored privately. My journey to understand this process has led me to spend thousands of my own dollars to learn as well as to become a passionate advocate to support our K-5 teachers who have not yet had the opportunity to receive training on this vitally important topic so that all students can be given the chance to develop strong foundational reading skills.

I am especially concerned that:

- The bills prioritize district choice over student needs. In 2022, our Secretary of State's office [warned](#) that the Oregon Department of Education's failure to intervene to help students and safeguard taxpayer investments is a larger problem than infringement on local control.
- Oregon is ignoring best practices from other states where the states have taken direct responsibility for literacy and have seen impressive, sustained

gains in reading. My own personal experience in the classroom since implementing these best practices has shown me that these are not just theories but actual realities for our students.

[HB3198](#) and [HB3454](#) could be good first steps toward addressing our crisis, but should be amended in order to ensure our students get what they need. I'm asking you to consider the following changes:

- **Center students who struggle the most with reading.** Instead of a voluntary grant application process for districts, funds and resources should be specifically and explicitly dedicated to schools with the highest numbers of struggling readers, administered and directed by the Oregon Department of Education. As a parent of privilege, I recognize that not all families have the same resources and options that we had and believe that this is an equity issue.
- **Ensure the instruction and tools that children need to succeed are grounded in scientifically based research about reading.** An example of guard rails could be a Governor-appointed task force that vets specific assessments, curricula, teacher training, and other resources.
- **Prioritize tutoring and teacher training.** Intensive, high-dosage tutoring helps struggling readers immediately, while teacher training is a long-term investment in our educators as professionals that pays dividends for generations. Both should be prioritized in funding, vetted by the above task force and coordinated by the Oregon Department of Education. Having had a chance to be part of Eastern Oregon University's Reading Clinic has helped me tremendously as an educator. The method of providing teachers not only with the needed training but also with a mentor has been life changing.

Sincerely,
Sharyn Hoffert
Concerned parent and Oregon educator