



March 29, 2023

Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Hudson and Wright, and Members of the House Education Committee:

I'm Guadalupe Guerrero and it's my honor to serve as the Superintendent of Oregon's largest school district, Portland Public Schools. I'm also the incoming chair of the Council of the Great City Schools which, as the consortium representing the nation's 77 largest urban school districts, serves as an effective advocate for PreK-12 public education at the federal level.

In these roles, I get to visit and hear firsthand from my counterparts, both across Oregon and in other major cities. Not surprisingly, school districts everywhere are observing – and attempting to now address – the impacts of the pandemic on early literacy. I'm sure you are hearing about it from the districts in your home areas too. This is a shared instructional emergency.

You have the opportunity to prioritize additive funding for a statewide, multi-pronged emphasis on early literacy through HB 3198/HB 3454.

Mountains of research confirm that you would be making a smart investment. We know the school experience, beginning in preschool, should be language-rich and developmentally-appropriate. Early education should include systematic instruction in reading curriculum. Students should have access to targeted interventions, varied instructional approaches, and high-quality instructional materials. Educators should have the opportunity to receive instructional coaching and engage in professional learning opportunities related to effective literacy instruction. We need all of these in the primary grades, and most critically by third grade, so that every child is able to meet grade level expectations and key reading proficiency benchmarks.

This is what we are trying to do in Portland Public Schools. We've been strategic about investing our pandemic relief funds to not only enhance direct services to our students, but also to train our educators and school leaders to implement new curriculum and instructional practices. Our

early educators, from PreK to Grade 2, now have high-quality, research aligned instructional resources. We are training our educators so that they have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge base about explicit and systematic reading instruction. As a school district, we have facilitated the participation of hundreds of our educators in a two-year professional course on the science of reading, and we're supporting our educators with instructional coaching.

This is what we need to be doing across the state. HB 3198/HB 3454 would help districts align:

- professional development on evidence-based practices
- high-quality core curriculum, instructional materials, and professional coaches
- formative and diagnostic assessments to screen for, and precisely identify, students' reading skills as early as possible – this includes screening for dyslexia
- keeping this investment additive, targeted toward our youngest learners, and grounded in research

Doing this requires full – additive – funding: at least \$225 million this biennium, and \$300 million each biennium after that.

There is no more fundamental responsibility we have as educators than making sure every child can read. At PPS, we are committed to accelerating achievement and closing gaps in reading for our Black, Native and students of color. We will continue doing that – but we need you, our state education policy makers, to meaningfully support that work. Please give us the funding to ensure every child has the tools to successfully navigate an increasingly complex world. Please support HB 3198/HB 3454.

Sincerely,



Guadalupe Guerrero

Superintendent, Portland Public Schools