



## PDX Reading Specialist

Educate. Advocate. Accommodate. Celebrate.

---

3/27/2023

Dear Representatives, Senators, and Governor Kotek:

My name is Barbara Steinberg. I am a constituent from West Linn and the founder & CEO of PDX Reading Specialist, also based in West Linn. I have trained more than 18,000 educators from 400+ school districts in all 50 states and 17 countries on the topic of reading assessment, instruction and dyslexia. I am writing to you on behalf of every student in Oregon.

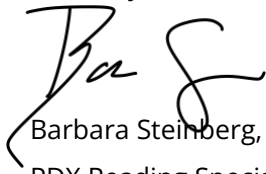
More than 60% of Oregon's 3rd graders are not reading at grade level. There's good news, however. 95% of students have the cognitive capacity to learn to read. Decades of neuroscience research provide insight on how our brains learn to read and what type of instruction is going to benefit the most number of students.

Translating research into practice requires policy that ensures equitable outcomes. I am 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. In 2015, SB 1003 passed, requiring one educator in every K-5 receive comprehensive dyslexia related training. I had the pleasure of training more than 70% of Oregon's school districts. District leaders across the state, including Grants Pass, Coos Bay, and Lake Oswego (among many others!) realized *all* their educators needed this knowledge to teach reading. Knowledge that, unfortunately, most teachers weren't taught in their teacher preparation programs. It's districts such as these who will continue to pursue opportunities that bills such as HB 3198 provide. What happens to the students who live in districts that choose not to apply?

I am 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 more significant problem than an infringement on local control.
- Oregon needs to pay attention to best practices from other states where the states have taken direct responsibility for literacy and have seen impressive, sustained gains in reading. HB3198 and HB3454 could be reasonable first steps toward addressing our crisis, but they should be amended to ensure our students get what they need. Therefore, 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.
  - Ensure the instruction and tools 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. Therefore, both should be prioritized in funding, vetted by the above task force, and coordinated by the Oregon Department of Education.

Sincerely,



Barbara Steinberg, CEO  
PDX Reading Specialist,