

Submitter: Katie Honeyman-Colvin
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure: HB3198

Dear Rep. Kropf and Governor Kotek,

My name is Katie Honeyman-Colvin and I am a parent and teacher. I am a constituent from NE Portland.

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?) and does not require the state to move forward with more direct responsibility.

My husband, Paul, and I took our older son to Library Hours, Music Together, and cuddled up to read dozens of books. We were quite self-congratulatory when he learned to read with ease. We did the same with our younger son. Boy were we perplexed when he struggled to "break the code" and learn to read. He was eventually diagnosed with dyslexia and dysgraphia. His school did not teach a structured-literacy curriculum grounded in the science of reading. I became his tutor and spent many hours tutoring him over the course of several years. He worked very hard. He responded well to structured-literacy. He now reads at grade-level. I am thankful that I had the means and professional background to support my son. I ask you to ask around among your constituents: "Has one of your kids, grandkids, nieces, neighbors had to seek reading tutoring?" My son would have needed a lot less intervention if his school had used a structured-literacy curriculum. Too much of our precious family time was wasted. Many families spend thousands of dollars on tutors and hours of family time because their children are not receiving structured-literacy during their k-3 education. A solid structured-literacy curriculum takes about 1.5 hours/day- leaving plenty of time for art, math, P.E. and all that "good stuff".

This journey affected my professional life. As I learned about structured-literacy through training in a tutoring program, by attending conferences, reading widely and participating in LETRS training Volumes 1-2, through Portland Public Schools, I understood the importance of screening my high school students, who were all English Learners, to determine if they had unfinished learning in reading. My colleagues and I onboarded structured-literacy reading instruction as needed. The last two years, I've had the pleasure of continuing literacy work, at the middle and high school levels, in PPS. I am extremely thankful that, three years ago, PPS

adopted a k-3 structured-literacy curricula from the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) vetted and published list. This wasn't a requirement. As pointed out in the recent Oregonian article, "Reading debate highlights broader battle over who controls what's taught in Oregon public schools", the district could have checked the "right" boxes on a form and proceeded with pursuing a poor adoption. With this as a starting point, the hope is that many fewer students will arrive to middle and high school with unfinished learning in reading. I am concerned that 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. The state has been absent or incremental long enough. We don't have another 5, 10, 15 years to get it done. An example of guard rails could be a Governor-appointed task force that vets specific assessments, curricula, teacher training, and other resources and a requirement that districts choose from an ODE list, no exceptions. It is a waste of precious time for every single district to undertake the vetting process in the name of local control. Kids in La Grande or Bend or Coos Bay will benefit from the same list of vetted curriculum and state requirements.

HB3198 and HB3454 could be good...if amended.