

Submitter: Crystal LeGallo  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure: HB3198

Dear Rep. Kroph and Govenor Kotek,  
I am a kindergarten teacher and a constituent form Portland Oregon.

I am writing because over 60% of Oregon 3rd graders aren't reading at grade level when research shows that 95% of kids CAN learn to read, given clear instruction with teachers that have the knowledge.

I am greatly concerned about HB3198 and HB3454 will leave this up to districts to choose whether to apply for literacy funding that addresses our reading crisis. Equity in education is ALL students learning how to read- not just the districts that choose to apply.

Since covid I have spent the last 3 summers tutoring students in my district for free in my driveway under an umbrella. I do this because I work in a high poverty school district where families cannot afford to do what our schools should have done- taught their kids how to read.

I did not learn how to teach reading from my Bachelors or Masters teaching degrees! I am learning through my own efforts and time. I am learning through books and lectures based on the Science of Reading. I am learning through optional LETRS training offered through my district, but taken on my own time- evenings and weekends at my families expense. I now have a new developing skill- teaching foundational reading skills. My peers need this knowledge that we did not receive as part of our teacher training. Students deserve to read. Teachers deserve to have the necessary training. Educators want to give students the best chance they have to succeed- and it starts with reading.

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.

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.

- 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.

Sincerely,

A frustrated, sad, but very hopeful primary teacher in SE Portland, Oregon