



**KairosPDX**

Testimony in Support of HB 3198  
to the House Committee on Education  
Marsha Williams, CEO, KairosPDX

April 4, 2023

Chairwoman Neron, Vice Chairs Hudson, Wright, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 3198. My name is Marsha Williams and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of KairosPDX, a Portland-based nonprofit organization dedicated to eliminating the prolific racial achievement and opportunity gaps for Black children and their families. We operate an Early Learning Academy, a K-5 Learning Academy, and an adult Training Academy.

We are writing to offer support for HB 3198 as the Legislature continues to make investments in early literacy that impact Black children in Oregon. In partnership with Preschool For All, KairosPDX's Early Learning Academy is a pilot site for Multnomah County's universal preschool initiative. It is offered at no cost to families. We are creating a new narrative around children and families of color placing strength and excellence at the fore.

- Reading is a foundational skill to enable success in school and life. We support HB 3198's focus on literacy coaching to support educators in aligning their classroom instructional practices with strategies that have proven to be effective.
- Culturally-specific early childhood programs are vital to addressing the specific needs of Black children who have been historically (and presently) underserved in Oregon.
- State investments in early learning are a win for every Oregonian. They support brain development of young children, and they strengthen the health and well-being of children, families, communities, and our economy.
- As we expand our reach to more children, we must expand our reach to recruit, retain, and train culturally-representative staff. At KairosPDX, our work is rooted in trusting relationships. We use a community-centered worldview to inform our initiatives and programs. Our culturally-representative staff have faced many of the same obstacles as those we serve, and offer our students and families a deep and shared understanding of how it feels to live in Black skin.

As the Legislature considers this important measure, we hope you will take into consideration the need for culturally-specific engagement during the rulemaking process and beyond, and training that ensures Black children, who have been historically underserved in Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marsha". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marsha Williams, CEO  
KairosPDX