

Submitter: Debra Bridges
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure: HB3198

My daughter Chloe, was a struggling reader in K-3. We had her in the specialized reading program at her elementary school and employed teachers after school and summer to help tutor her. Chloe was a high achieving student in other areas and she loved to read and be read to. But the books Chloe would independently reach for, were always picture books, and well below her interest level. At the end of third grade, I was tucking Chloe into to bed. I asked her if there was something in third grade she wish she had gotten to do. Like be principal for the day or line leader. 'Mom, I wish I had learned to read.' Imagine a child you love saying that to you. I met with her reading specialist the next day and was told two things: 1. She had no more resources to help Chloe. 2. As Chloe moved to 4th grade they read to learn, not learn to read. So as it stood, the plan was to put a child into 4th grade who could not read at 4th grade level and expect them to graduate. That was a bitter pill to swallow. The next day my husband and I met with our superintendent. She immediately had Chloe tested by the district reading specialist. Scores were confusing because she was a high comprehension but low frequency. It was decided that we should move Chloe to another elementary school in the district that had a program called Read 180. We talked with Chloe and she agreed that she wanted to learn to read and that she understood that by moving to another school, it was possible she would lose her friend group. She wanted to learn to read more. And sadly, she did lose her friend group. Read 180 was just what Chloe needed, and as a result she was able to enter middle school at reading level and then go on to graduate and get accepted to the University of Oregon. She studies political science, which is a reading intensive program. She is on the Dean's list. In the fall, she will move to Indonesia to teach English with the Peace Corps. Chloe is a success story. But I wonder about all the other Chloe's in our state. Whose parents couldn't afford to pay teachers in the summer for tutoring, parents who didn't feel they could go right to their superintendent, or whose school districts didn't have intensive reading programs. Chloe's experience opened our eyes to reading challenges in kids. That is why I was a volunteer for the SMART reading program, why we always donated books during the Scholastic Book Fairs to both teachers and kids who couldn't afford to purchase a book, and to contribute to the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library so I could support 4 kids in Newberg to have books to read. This is why I am running for school board in Newberg, because our reading levels match that of the state, an unacceptable level. This is why I am supporting STAND for children as they try to make HB 3198 a reality for all the school districts in Oregon. Please pass HB 3198 for the children of Oregon. Our future depends upon it. Thank you for your consideration.