

Submitter: Sandy Reno  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure: SB5506

My name is Sandy Reno and I am a third-grade teacher at McGovern Elementary in Winton. I was first introduced to Enhanced Core Reading Instruction (ECRI) while teaching first grade last year. The strong routine and explicit instruction, all based upon the science of reading, remove any mystery that surrounds phonics and the reading process. It is so crucial that we teach children using a phonics-based curriculum and explicitly teach the sounds and words that make up our complex language. It is also crucial that we explicitly teach concepts like contractions and affixes so students can begin to break apart words to understand their meaning. This year, I am in third grade and I can easily see the fruits of ECRI and phonics that were implemented by the teachers who came before me. While early literacy is largely considered a kindergarten through second grade concept, I find it incredibly relevant in the third grade, as well. Due to the pandemic, our students have more gaps than we have previously seen. Even in the third grade, I continue to teach phonics, affixes, and sight words using the ECRI methods, but am now able to build on the earlier instruction and dive deeper into our language and reading comprehension. I use the science of reading both for helping students learn and sound out new words, as well as reading and breaking down their spelling words. It is so exciting to see my students feeling so successful and to see the progress that happens, even within one week. We track student progress through DIBELS and I am excited to share that every child in my class has made progress this year! I firmly believe that is due to ECRI and explicit phonics teaching, both in their k-2 years, and this year in third. I firmly believe in the science of reading and going “back to the basics” with a phonics-based program. I am incredibly grateful to work for a district who follows the research and provides us with training and a program like ECRI so our students can do their best learning. In order to continue the progress we are making and help other Oregon schools make progress, we need funding for further training and job imbedded coaching for our teachers and instructional assistants, as this process is complex and professional development will be needed again and again. We also need access to literacy coaches, curricular supports, and assessment alignment and analysis. All of this will help drive teacher instruction and continue to help move our students forward.