

Submitter: Gregg Heacock
On Behalf Of: Myself
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB1534

I urge you to pass SB 1534.

As a Reading Specialist, certified first in California and now in Oregon, I received training both in what is now called "the science of reading" and what might be called "the alchemy of inquiry, comprehension, appreciation, and creative expression of written language." Both are best taught to whole classrooms or in small groups but never online and certainly not by computer programs that undermine the personal agency of instructors and students to explore the mystery of text and discover the ambiguity and flexibility of language, revealing underlying subtextual meaning that mere decoding cannot achieve. Learning is not measured by right answers but by making mistakes that lead to reflection and understanding how one might do better. That is what assessment is about.

Given that Oregon's Early Literacy Success Initiative has often resulted in schools purchasing programs that present a top-down prescriptive approach to train classroom instructors how to teach phonics and decoding, I believe Oregon would benefit from a broader approach that would target family members (especially those where English is not the dominant language spoken in the home) and recruit retired professionals (often former-teachers) and engage students currently enrolled in high school, community college, or university to assist schools either by supporting teachers engaged in reading instruction or by providing small group instruction in the classroom, in pull-out programs, or after school. Rather than charge people for receiving such training, this program would invest in broadening Oregon's capacity to support early literacy and pay dividends by developing a cadre of instructors to bolster the number of people available to help participating districts improve literacy outcomes for early learners.

In a sense, this would be a community-based project:

- 1) Community college and Oregon University classrooms could be made available to OLLI-OU members and other seniors, along with enrolled students and tutors working on-site, who could receive instruction at no cost;
- 2) Classrooms at a school-site could be made available for family members, both predominantly non-English speaking and predominantly English-speaking who could receive instruction while their children are working in regular classrooms and where child-care services might be provided to permit and incentivize their attendance;
- 3), District classrooms after school or on weekends could be made available for teachers to attend classes they could experience first hand the instruction they can discuss and then replicate in their own classrooms, with possible observation and

support from peers, providing a professional development experience with stipends provided as they share this experience with others.

Because this bill expands the approaches available for training those who can work in schools during and outside the school day, it provides the least expensive way to alleviate problems resulting from our current teacher-shortage and low student-attendance by training people who are welcome on campus and could be available to offer help wherever it is needed.

In effect, SB1534 pays for itself, offering needed options for creating learning communities across the State of Oregon.

I urge its passage,

Gregg Heacock

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