

Dear House Committee on Education:

I'm grateful to have the opportunity to submit testimony about HB3040, which amends the 2023 Oregon Literacy Success Act. As written, I cannot support these amendments.

In 2023, when promoting the Literacy Success Act, the governor acknowledged that research shows that certain evidence-based practices work and others do not, and yet, the 2023 Literacy bill, as well as this amended bill, allow districts to continue to engage in practices that will not increase literacy outcomes and in many cases, are harming students.

The [2022 Secretary of State Report on Systemic Risk in K-12 Education](#) identified Risk #4 as: Oregon's Division 22 standards for K-12 schools lack clarity and enforceability, allowing low performance to persist. To increase accountability for state funds and student success, leaders and policymakers must balance local control of school districts with reasonable, enforceable standards.

HB3040 continues to privilege local control over mandating that districts use literacy funds (and other funds) in ways that have been shown to improve literacy outcomes in other states.

Worse, Section 7 of HB3040 would create yet another program within ODE "to support school districts, schools and educators in selecting, adopting and effectively using evidence-based, research-aligned textbooks and instructional materials for early literacy instruction." I encourage legislators to reject this proposal for the following reasons:

- Redundancy: The state already funds Educational Service Districts (ESDs) and Oregon RTI(Response to Intervention) which are available to all districts to do this type of work. Many districts do not avail themselves of these existing resources.
- Timeline: The ODE does not have the capacity to do this work. Districts would not see these supports until the ODE developed them, which would take years.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following amendments to HB3040 that would have immediate impacts on Oregon students:

- **TEACHER TRAINING TIMELINE AND DEFINITION OF TRAINING**
 - Timeline: Require all K-3 Oregon teachers to be trained in evidenced-based practices **by January 2027.**
 - Currently, districts don't have to use their literacy funds to train teachers.
 - Define Trainings: Professional development for teachers must be defined to include a minimum number of hours, rigorous evaluations of learning throughout the course, rigorous end-of-course assessment, and documentation of successful completion of the course. Examples: [Colorado PD rubric](#) and Eastern Oregon University's teacher training *Building a Strong Foundation in Literacy*.
 - Why this change is necessary:

- Districts can use literacy funds to offer trainings of any length, including 2-hour, one-time workshops. In states such as MS, TN, CO, LA, and NC that are making progress, teacher training means comprehensive training (usually 30- 45 hours) coupled with ongoing coaching in the classroom.
- ODE's [list of approved professional development providers](#) includes some comprehensive trainings, such as EOU's. However, it also lists university Education Departments that have no cohesive or comprehensive training for K-3 teachers. In other words, the districts could be hiring a professor as a consultant to do trainings, none of which have been vetted. Also, four of the universities listed received Fs for their Educator Prep Programs with regards to teaching the science of reading. It is unclear how they will provide appropriate training to teachers when they aren't doing so for students in their EPP programs.
- **ONE SOLUTION:** Follow the lead of Colorado and other states, where state departments of education offer one course that all teachers can take for free (EOU's program is based on Colorado's, which has trained over 28,000 teachers). If a district would like to pay for a different training, they can, but they would be using funds that they could have spent on something else. This ensures teachers receive high-quality, vetted professional development and saves districts the time and money of vetting programs.
- **PRIORITIZATION:** Teacher training and tutoring in Oregon's 42 Most Neglected Schools
 - There are 42 schools across Oregon - rural and urban - whose 3rd-5th graders have scored in the lowest-proficiency in English Language Arts (ELA) since at least 2018. The ODE has been aware of these schools and their struggles with reading for years and yet failed to take action to support them.
 - You can click [here](#) to see a list of the 42 state-neglected schools and who their legislators are.
 - The document also includes a specific remedy for these schools that could begin next year: **high-dosage tutoring for struggling students and training for their teachers.**
 - Why tutoring? A [John Hopkins study](#) concluded that tutoring by Ignite Reading “offers a scalable solution to improving early literacy outcomes in diverse educational settings, with significant implications for addressing equity and literacy gaps.” In a matter of only a few months, students being tutored made significant gains, including students experiencing poverty, those who are multilingual learners, and those on IEPs.

I know all of you are committed to seeing Oregon's students thrive and share my sense of urgency. Ten years ago, states like Colorado tried Oregon's current approach of offering districts voluntary resources. After watching their literacy crisis worsen over those ten years, Colorado has now mandated teacher training and other evidence-based practices. Please don't let another ten years go by before we take action that can help children right now.

Sincerely,
Dr. J. Schubert