



Date: March 20, 2025  
To: House Education Committee  
From: Dan Goldman  
Subject: NWRESD Testimony on House Bill 3040

Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and Members of the House Education Committee:

Thank you for your service to Oregon's future leaders - our children. My name is Dan Goldman and I am honored and fortunate to lead the Northwest Regional ESD (NWRESD) supporting improvement efforts for thousands of children from birth through age five and over 100,000 students in twenty K-12 school districts.

In what now seems like a lifetime ago, I was the Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Elementary Programs for the Tigard-Tualatin School District. During that time, TTSD was nationally regarded for its early literacy program and outcomes, highlighted by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and by the [National Center on Education](#) as one of ten districts across the nation that was substantially closing achievement gaps and significantly increasing literacy outcomes for children with disabilities. In 2013, I took the core practices that distinguished TTSD's literacy program from nearly all other school systems *in the country* to the Hood River County School District as their superintendent. After years of very focused and hard work by the dedicated educators in that system to implement what we now call "the science of reading," Hood River was named a top ten school system in the state in the Portland Business Journal. Raising literacy outcomes for the kids in that system (50% of whom identified as BIPOC) was job number one, and quickly thereafter, children were able to access advanced placement and dual credit courses at very high rates, leading to the highest graduation rates ever recorded for the district and an explosion of dual credit attainment.

Now, at NWRESD, our highly trained, truly expert literacy leaders provide locally responsive technical assistance, training and coaching to our twenty component school districts. From some of the largest districts in our state (like Beaverton and Tigard-Tualatin) to very small rural school systems (such as Jewell and Nestucca Valley), we have connected hundreds of educators across the region to research-based early literacy instructional strategies and meaningful data-based decision making practices towards improving student outcomes. Our recent regional data demonstrates that our embedded literacy coaches, trainers and data analysts - all steeped in the science of reading and multi-tiered systems of support - have supported a wide range of school districts to make important literacy gains.

Education Service Districts are a fundamental, key part of Oregon's public education system. When supported and invested in, ESDs turnkey statewide initiatives and improvement efforts with

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our districts in a way that's systematic, comprehensive, equitable and responsive to local context. I urge Oregon lawmakers to *systematically* invest in all Education Service Districts as key providers of professional development and technical assistance for HB 3040, while also holding us accountable for this work.

## Success stories from our region

- In the 2023-24 school year, with assistance and coaching from NWRESD, Banks Elementary School started using Enhanced Core Reading Instruction (ECRI) to increase explicit phonological and phonics strategies in their every day practice. Early literacy experts from NWRESD have teamed with Banks to support curriculum adoption and implementation, standards prioritization, and vertical alignment. At the end of the 2023-24 school year, 85% of their kindergartners and 71% of first graders were meeting their reading proficiency and fluency benchmarks. It was the first time they reached such a high percentage. As a result, only 12% of students required intensive support in May compared to the nearly 55% who needed it in September.
- In the 2023-24 school year, Vernonia Elementary School third graders jumped more than 10 percentage points on the state assessment. Several Vernonia teachers participated in our science of reading four-part series that focused specifically on understanding the research, explicit instruction strategies to engage students, data-based decision-making, and another two-day seminar that helped teachers fine tune their literacy instruction via being observed and getting specific feedback from NWRESD literacy experts.

## Expanding on success

As a regional convener of literacy professionals, ESDs have the tools to analyze what works and expand on that success. As a localized entity, ESDs have existing trusting relationships with our region's educators and deep knowledge about schools' goals and improvement efforts. Districts need consistent and reliable professional development from partners they trust and are already working with. Currently (and unfortunately), at NWRESD we are using a patchwork of funding streams to support this critical work. Imagine the progress we could make and the scale we could achieve with dedicated, sustained funding to support districts' literacy goals.

We urge lawmakers to support the Oregon Association of Education Service District (OAESD) framework for literacy coaching and accountability:

- Establish a Statewide Early Literacy Coaching Support Program under the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), aligned with ODE's Literacy Frameworks and state approved curriculum materials based on the Science of Reading.

- Ensure equitable access to coaching and professional learning for educators in all districts, especially rural and underserved communities.
- Implement non-competitive, capacity-driven funding for all ESDs to scale professional learning opportunities, particularly for small and mid-sized districts that lack internal resources.
- Sustain early literacy investment without supplanting SSA Technical Assistance (TA) funds, ensuring that both accountability and literacy improvement efforts receive dedicated resources.

Thank you-



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### For more information contact

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