

**Chair Hudson, Vice-Chair Dobson, Vice-Chair McIntire, and Members of the House Education Committee,**

My name is **Soobin Oh**, Co-Director of **Teaching Preschool Partners**, and I'm here in support of SB 1596.

Teaching Preschool Partners is a nonprofit that partners directly with public school districts across Oregon to advance research-based, playful, inquiry-driven learning in classrooms.

You've heard from many folks already. Rather than repeat those points, I want to briefly summarize and address some finer points.

Guided play is not abstract. It is already happening. In more than 30 districts across 13 counties where we work, hundreds of teachers are integrating guided play into elementary classrooms — not just in preschool or kindergarten, but across all elementary grades.

You heard from many teachers in the testimony that playful learning is increasing engagement, bringing joy to learning, and in some cases helping address emotional dysregulation by giving students structured ways to collaborate and solve problems. What I heard in their testimony is that they are practicing in a way with real promise and they need support from our legislature to fully realize on what they are trying to do.

At its core, SB 1596 is about something practical: instructional time clarity.

Even in supportive districts, principals and teachers often ask, *If I design an intentional, academically aligned guided play experience, am I in compliance with required instructional minutes?* When that question is unclear, educators default to what feels safest.

This bill does not mandate play. It does not reduce instructional time. It does not introduce new spending. It is permissive. It simply clarifies that intentional, academically grounded play-based learning counts as instruction.

I also want to address a concern raised in testimony — that playful learning is a departure from “real” learning or could negatively impact academic outcomes.

That concern makes sense if we imagine play as unstructured or disconnected from standards. But guided play is intentional and academically aligned. Literacy, math, and content knowledge are integrated — not replaced. Research in the science of learning shows that students retain and apply knowledge more effectively when learning is active, meaningful, and socially engaged.

Playful learning is not a choice between rigor and joy. It brings them together.

States including New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Oklahoma have enacted similar legislation. Oregon now has the opportunity to align policy with research while maintaining accountability.

You heard earlier from Senator Weber that playful learning is an international movement, with some of our world's highest performing countries aligning with the science of learning.

For these reasons, Teaching Preschool Partners strongly supports SB 1596.

Thank you.