



August 26, 2014

Oregon Department of Education
Attn: School Funding Task Force
255 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

To the Members of the School Funding Task Force:

We write in support of the English as a Second Language (ESL) subcommittee's recommendations to the full School Funding Task Force on changes to the funding formula for English Language Learners (ELL).

We applaud the ESL subcommittee for recognizing the need to change the funding formula to serve the needs of Oregon's ELL students. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, Oregon is one of eight states where at least 10 percent of public school students are classified as ELL. Yet, our state funding and policies grossly underserve this population.

Last year, school districts received an extra 0.5 weight per ELL, for a total of \$160 million in ELL funds statewide. **For that price, we graduated less than half of our ELL students.**

While the challenges facing ELLs are complex, there is ample opportunity to improve outcomes by more effectively allocating the State School Fund (SSF). In its current form, the SSF unintentionally incentivizes districts to keep students in ELL programs, when it should incentivize English proficiency instead. The Oregon Department of Education's (ODE) recently suggested updates to the current funding formula. Its recommendations address these perverse incentives, and increase accountability and transparency of spending.

Based on ODE's recommendations, the ESL subcommittee suggests the adoption of the following:

1. Increase the weight for ELL students to 0.6;
2. Give the additional ELL weight for seven years for students who test at 1 or a 2 on the ELPA and 4 years for students who test at three or above; and
3. Increase accountability for ELL spending.

We urge the committee to approve the recommendations of the ESL subcommittee, to ensure the continuation of this conversation during the 2015 legislative session.

Thank you for your consideration,

Adelante Mujeres
APANO
The Chalkboard Project
The Education Trust
Stand for Children, Oregon