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5444 SW Dover Ct.
Portland, OR 97225

Members of the Oregon Education Investment Team,
I'm a retired physician and have advocated for and volunteered in public schools for 13 years—including serving on two Site Councils and a curriculum adoption committee in the Beaverton School District. I've been a Washington County Commissioner on Children and Families. I've also participated on an Early Care & Education Research Committee for Portland City Club. My son attends Riverdale High School and I can attest for the qualitative differences between wildly and mildly under-funded schools.

You have a very tough job. But I'll be frank. I'm not wild about the job description for the "chief education officer." Too C.E.O. to me—but consistent with my view of education reform in America. I read, "skillful collaboration with legislators, educators, parents and education stakeholders" as campaign rhetoric that will be undermined by behind-closed-doors-deal-making.

It's no longer a big secret that global corporations and conservative politicians collaborate to write "model" bills for state legislatures through the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). I imagine some of the bills that passed this legislative session (such as charter and virtual school expansion) were a trade-off for the "seamless" P-20 educational system and this appointed position. I worry "innovative use of resources" will "streamline" more teachers out of the classroom as "proven," "best practices" and further de-professionalize the career.

That's not the kind of "change agent" most parents want. Class sizes are already exploding while teachers are slaves to tests. There must be a commitment by this new state officer to keep the public in public schools. This job demands skillful communication *and* expertise and experience in public education—particularly with a strong interest in the social sciences. Since voters no longer have a say in this position, the Oregon Education Investment Board must appoint a chief education officer who sees eye to eye with the public rather than merely shares his vision. Otherwise this "visionary" leader will be prone to tunnel vision.

We can hardly call early education or higher education "public" when they are not universally affordable or accessible to all Oregonians. Outcome-based budgeting seems rather hollow when nearly 200,000 unemployed Oregonians are already "ready for careers." Even more hollow when half of recent college graduates are working in jobs that don't require college (pdf). Seamless will seem far, far less without investments in teachers, communities and living wage jobs.

The job qualifications seem so coldly disinterested in the best interests of the child and the human condition. I suggest this qualification:

Bridge Builder toward Sustainable and Equitable living: Understands that tax advantages for the wealthy and deregulation of industries results in gross income inequality that escalates poverty; and these factors negatively impact (sometimes irreversibly) a child's education. Ability to inspire courageous and humane responses to family and community insecurity resulting from economic and environmental catastrophes.

Kris Alman MD