February 24, 2012

Dear Governor Kitzhaber,

The Healthy Kids Learn Better Coalition, a group consisting of over 35 organizations, **fully supports a meaningful transformation of Oregon's education system** and recognizes the high priority your office has placed on passage of SB 1581. However, **we are concerned about the fast pace** at which crucial decisions about implementation of education reform are being made.

We urge you to consider modifying the stakeholder input process so proposals are given adequate time and consideration.

We know that the goal has been to release the model compact to districts by April 1, but we believe it would be more effective to spend one more month deliberating and discussing what should be in those compacts. We propose:

- One additional month to develop meaningful model compacts, and
- Two months for districts to review and customize their compacts.

This would still allow districts to finalize their compacts by July 1 and implement them for the beginning of the 2012-13 school year.

Furthermore, we believe **it is imperative that there is a meaningful input process**, rather than simply allowing limited feedback on the existing proposal.

- Our Coalition was invited to participate in the advisory group working on indicators that would be included in the achievement compacts. We interpreted it as an offer for input, one that we appreciated and did not take lightly. Our delegate, whose expertise bridges both health and education, already began a series of meetings to gather input for the health-related indicators to include in the compacts.
- However, at the first *K-12 / ESD Achievement Compact Subcommittee* meeting on Friday, February 17th, we were disappointed to discover that the Subcommittee has very little time to discuss the short list of proposed key indicators*, which were not developed by them, and the advisory group is only invited to "provide feedback" on the draft list.
- In the current process, there does not appear to be a real opportunity to influence the final indicators.

This speedy process of developing such an important component of the education reform package does not facilitate broad community support. Nor do the proposed key indicators in the sample compact distributed on Feb 17th achieve the goal of transforming the education system in a way that advances the "whole child".

On behalf of the Healthy Kids Learn Better Coalition and our member organizations, we urge you to:

- Allow additional time for the OEIB *K-12 / ESD Achievement Compact Subcommittee* and its advisory group to discuss and decide on the most important and strategic indicators,

- Use a "whole child" approach to education reform and to the compacts and indicator selection, recognizing the value of more than test scores, including removing health-related barriers to learning.

There are a number of factors which could be used in the compacts as key health indicators and predictors of future academic success, which still fit within the various domains described by both Tim Nesbitt and Nancy Golden at the Informational Hearing at the House Higher Education Committee on Feb 20, 2012. **One example is attendance**, which gets at health-related and other barriers to learning that directly impact a student's ability to graduate and is **particularly relevant for already disadvantaged students**.

Please consider our request to allow additional time and the input of stakeholders when developing the Achievement Compacts. On behalf of all of our organizations and the Oregon students for whom we all wish success, the HKLB Coalition thanks you in advance for your consideration.

Maureen Hinman & Mary Lou Hennrich,
Co-Chairs,
Healthy Kids Learn Better Coalition

An ECONorthwest analysis of 2009-2010 ODE data shows that **there is a clear and consistent relationship between early attendance and later achievement**. Poor physical, emotional and social health is a leading contributor to absences. Measuring an indicator such as attendance would encourage districts to address health-related barriers to learning and support the whole child, and reward districts for improving on those indicators.

Cc: Oregon Education Investment Board Members

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*- Graduation rate (four and five year, and "other completers")
- 3rd grade proficiency in reading and math
- 9th grade on-track
- High school students earning 6+ college credits
- "Subgroup graduation"
- Ready for school entry
- Post-secondary enrollment