

**Testimony Before House Education Committee  
Hearing on English Language Learners (ELLs)  
May 14, 2013**

Chairperson Representative Gelser and Vice-Chairs Representatives Sprenger and Reardon and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify. For the record, my name is Eduardo Angulo, chairman and executive director of the Salem/Keizer Coalition for Equality. Our member organizations are PCUN, Oregon Farmworkers Union, CAUSA, the largest pro-immigrants' right coalition in the Northwest, Mano a Mano Family Center, Latinos Unidos Siempre (LUS), Willamette University Latino Students and our Oregon Parent Organizing Project.

Our Coalition is also a member of the Oregon Alliance for Education Equity (OEAA). The Alliance is an umbrella organization of over 25 African American, Latino, the 9 Tribes of Oregon Governments and Pacific, Micronesian and Asian Communities part of the APANO network.

The Alliance is a non-partisan coalition of community organizations that represent communities of color, English Language Learners (ELLs), education advocates, families/parents, allies and other stakeholders from around Oregon.

Our Coalition's organizations leaders and members and allies are all in full support of our request for this House Education Committee Hearing on Oregon's ELLs challenges. And to educate you on the incredible sense of urgency that our families have to see their children and youth become successful students who can contribute to our communities' wellbeing.

We also wanted to request that you consider becoming the champions of our children who are some of the most needy and farthest behind in their academic progress, and we have a specific request today regarding increasing staff available to support English Language Learning children.

Our current 50% graduation rate for English Language Learners is unacceptable to our communities and families and it should be unacceptable to all our Oregon legislators, education, civic, and business leaders.

We have all come together to be part of the solution in response to the vision and aspirations represented in the Governor's call to an effective and inclusive education reform from birth to college graduation.

**Through the passage of the Oregon Senate Bill 253, the 2011 Legislature affirmed a clear and ambitious educational goal for the state that is known as Oregon's North Star 40-40-20 aspirational vision.**

Now that we are in the process of implementing this ambitious and inclusive education reform effort we MUST examine what does it currently means for our English Language Learners.

Let's take it from the top; the Oregon Department of Education just hired the most respected ELL students' education expert in the Northwest: Mr. David Bautista.

For over 12 years now David has demonstrated to Oregonians what needs to be done to close the persistent achievement gap for our 56,000 ELLs. We are extremely excited that ODE has brought the leadership he showed in Woodburn Public Schools to the state of Oregon, as the director of Title III.

Now, the problem is that while David is a powerful leader, he is one FTE out of a team of only 1.25 FTE that must effectively help and support 132 school districts that have ELL students whose average achievement gap in reading alone is between 40% and 70%.

The **Governor's 40-40-20 aspirational vision** demands a robust investment of technical personnel who could effectively support the school districts with the effective strategies to help close the achievement gap for English Language Learners.

If, you, the Legislators really meant to invest in the implementation of the **Oregon Senate Bill 253, then you must set David Bautista and the 56,000 ELL students in the right path by supporting the personnel needed for him to effectively lead the transformation of the education for ELLs in Oregon.**

**Otherwise you are going to continue perpetuating a great injustice to these 56,000 ELL students.**

- Compare the **1.25** federally funded FTE dedicated to support 56,000 ELL children to the **45** federally funded FTE at the Department dedicated to improving outcomes for the state's approximately 75,000 Special Education students. Having only 1.25 FTE does not support best practice work across the state, instead only ensures federally required compliance for Title III (ELL) funds.

**ODE's current resources and well-intentioned efforts cannot produce the level of improvement necessary to help schools keep ELL students in trajectory to fulfill the Governor's 40-40-20 Vision by 2025.**

Now it's the right time to invest in what is right for the professionals who want to do the right thing for these 56,000 children but who lack the training and orientation on how to pursue a solid program for English language learners.

**The Governor's aspirational goal of the 40-40-20 by 2025 and the Oregon Education Investment Board's recent approval of the Oregon English Learners Plan and the Equity Lens strategies to "overcome challenges associated with race, ethnicity, poverty and language" give our ELL's families a renewed hope for their future and that their children will have a chance to reach their full potential.**

But if we really mean to not leave any child behind in their education in Oregon, we must include our 56,000 ELLs at the center of our current Oregon education reform and fund the ODE's Title III necessary personnel positions so they can help school districts effectively implement the new Oregon English Learners Plan.

**Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.**