

DPO Education Caucus Minutes
Zoom Meeting
Saturday, July 18, 2020

1. Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 by Kathleen Jeskey

Present: Kathleen Jeskey, Scott Hays, Liz Marlia-Stein, Louise Currin, Mary Nikas, Bill Bordeaux, Ross Schwarzendruber, Sami Al-Abdrabbuh, Blythe Nordbye, Peter Nordbye, Deb Barnes, Peter Hall

2. Old Business

- **Update on Task Force for High School Graduation Requirements (SB 1572)**
Trying to find out where we are on the task force moving forward. Kathleen has reached out to Sen. Wagner but has not heard back. Since there is only one high school teacher designated to be on the task force, we would like to urge that the legislators who will be on the task force be teachers or former teachers to the extent possible.
- **Update on Sen. Fredericks' work group on K-12 Assessment System:** Sen. Fredericks' work group is currently in the process of notifying participants who have been selected. Work group to start within the next month or two and will be composed almost exclusively of currently practicing educators.

3. New Business

SCHOOL START UP CONCERNS

- **Distance Learning vs. Online Learning:** One member mentioned that schools are not equipped to do even childcare and would need more teachers and space to do so safely. Folks concerned with the "masks optional" for students, even middle and high school students, coming out of ODE. Most if not all believe that masks should be mandatory for all students able to wear them. Equity issues continue to be a concern with either an in-person or online model: many parents with economic privilege have the option to do home school while that option is not available to those who may be essential workers and unable to manage that and they and their children could be further exposed to the virus in an in-person school setting; parents with economic and educational privilege will also have an easier time navigating the need for multiple devices and helping children with their work in a distance model. Our Caucus made the decision to release a statement that supports a return to school only when it is safe.
- **Funding:** Full funding for the needs of our classrooms is mostly in the federal ball court via the CARES Act, which Sen. Merkley is strongly advocating for but the Majority Leader (McConnell) must support it for it to have a chance to pass. However, there should be some resources available through the Student Success Act, which addresses not only normal times but times of disaster such as this as well. We know that revenue from this act will be diminished due to lower income that many

businesses are experiencing. Schools have been underfunded for years, making this even more difficult at this time.

4. Other

- **Tri-County Education Coalition:** The three metro county's Democratic Party Education groups have been meeting to try and discuss some of the issues around education in the state. An invitation to other counties to meet with us was put out and interest was expressed by Mary to participate from Marion County and by Liz from Yamhill. An invitation to the next meeting will be sent to them accordingly. Last meeting was postponed due to a death in the family of the convener.
- **Salem-Keizer School Board:** Some concern was expressed about the nature of the Salem School Board, its composition and the manner of electing members. While there are nominations put forward from different areas of the District, when it comes to voting the entire district votes which has resulted in an under representation of communities of color and an over representation of largely White conservatives.

**Next meeting
Location and date TBD**