

Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Hudson & Wright, members of the committee:

My name is Kathy Kuffin and I've taught for 25 years in Woodburn, Oregon, both as a bilingual classroom teacher and Title 1 Reading Specialist. I'm also a past president of Woodburn Education Association, and active in various roles in my local, including community outreach.

It's an honor and privilege for me to testify today in support of HB 4082.

As a veteran educator, I am heavily influenced by the impacts of poverty on our students. Woodburn is a Title 1 *district*, which means that poverty is widespread, cutting across all cultural and ethnic groups. We instruct students in English, Spanish, and Russian in 2-way Dual language immersion/heritage language programs. These programs are long-standing, our staff are dedicated, and yet, our students' learning since the pandemic is lagging behind that of many districts.

Books and magazines are a luxury, so you won't find them in most of our children's homes. In the 5th grade classroom where I teach Reading, none of my students has home internet. Thus, when school closes for summer, so does their access to books/articles, 2nd language development, and daily academic language and discussion. When this flow stops, the human brain does what it is naturally designed to do: it "prunes" or destroys neurons (brain cells) that contain information that appears no longer necessary for everyday living. This is the biology of learning loss. I'm using a reading example, but the same is true for math and science.

Dr. Richard Allington and his associates have called this phenomenon "summer slide." And they say it is based on "the faucet effect," when schools close for the summer and kids in poor neighborhoods no longer have access to the "steady flow of academic stimuli" that schools provide. Sadly, even before the problems and inequities of the pandemic struck, learning loss among low-income families has been well documented, beginning with a 1962 study in Baltimore, MD. In the years from 2013-2018, Allington and colleagues replicated the results of that study in communities across the country (See: Summer Reading: Closing the Rich/Poor Reading Achievement Gap).

To summarize generally, they found that middle class students gain 10 months of learning in a school year, and, because they have literacy materials in their homes and/or family enrichment activities that expose them to new experiences and vocabulary in the summer (trips, summer camp, etc.), they retain or even GAIN language skills such as vocabulary over the summer. However, in poor families, this is not the case, and for every 10 months' gain in learning during the school year, 2 of these months are lost over the summer for a net gain of only 8 months of learning each year. This is cumulative over the entire course of a child's 13-year school experience. Fortunately, Allington's research has shown that the right kind of summer reading programs can offset and reverse summer slide effects.

For decades, Woodburn has conducted a 1-month summer school program for migrant students. During the pandemic, many districts received federal ESSER monies targeting pandemic learning loss. Woodburn invested some of these funds in new summer reading and math materials and created an expanded 1-month summer program, as well as expanded credit recovery programs on Saturdays and in the summer at the high school. The point here is that districts are doing their part to identify needs and open up opportunities for learning recovery. But districts can't do all that is needed without stable funding.

HB 4082 is needed to extend the reach of summer learning and to implement more student choice, more community-embedded project-based learning, and, where needed, provide more individualized instruction from reading/math specialists or staff specifically trained by them.

It's encouraging to see bi-partisan support for HB 4082, and I'm eager to see how the bill's work group can provide students more quality learning time with trusted, caring, and well-trained adults in high-quality summer and after school learning programs.

*"Any child who fails to read during the summer break will lose some reading proficiency." - Dr. Richard Allington*

Please pass 4082.