

Devastating Consequences

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provision intended to “professionalize” early childhood educators by requiring these educators to have a BA degree.

Though no doubt well intended, this provision could have devastating consequences and will have an adverse impact on the African-American, Native American and Latino early childhood workforce. Pre-school children from these ethnic groups will experience fewer and fewer teachers from their respective communities. As in the K-12 system, this BA policy risks isolating some of the most vulnerable children and create the conditions in which implicit bias can prevail.

Once more, there is no compelling research demonstrating that a preschool or Head Start teacher with a BA has better child outcomes than a well-trained teacher without a BA. A teacher, particularly a teacher of color, that has deep cultural knowledge and has received years of excellent on the job training is just as, if not more powerful than the latter. We have several training examples -- such as apprenticeship programs that are found at community based organizations and community colleges -- designed to prepare individuals entering skilled crafts such as carpenters or electricians. How can we learn from them to build a strong early childhood workforce and preserve the talented teachers who now risk being deemed “unqualified”?

It’s worth mentioning that there is no funding to increase in wages to match the BA qualification leaving little incentive for people to go back to college and saddle themselves with debt. That is, if they could actually get accepted into college in the first place. The inequities on the higher education side related to access and completion are already well documented.

“Traditionally, we have viewed higher education as an antidote to inequality, but our higher education system, like so many of our institutions, is rife with racial and class disparities, from enrollment to completion,” reads the report, titled *Less Debt, More Equity: Lowering Student Debt While Closing the Black-White Wealth*

Gap.

A few years ago eight Portland area teachers and administrators met and discussed teaching training they received at a local four year college. All eight individuals obtained bachelor’s and master’s degrees, and combined they had over 70 years of teaching experience. The common theme all eight educators shared was how poorly prepared they were to teach children. They also commented there was no clear indication their college professors had in fact ever been successful public school teachers! The idea of master teachers training and teaching up and coming teachers has not been explored meaningfully in the current higher education system.

We now have an opportunity to do something different. An opportunity to retain diversity in the early childhood workforce while creating pathways and professional development that ensure we have high-quality early childhood educators teaching our youngest children well. We have an opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue about teacher prep and teacher training based on what currently works and what currently exists instead of creating a new system that could ultimately do more harm than good in serving children who already have so much in the world stacked against them. Failure to meaningfully do this erodes belief that true systemic change for under-served kids is in fact the goal. Instead of listening to what community says they need, an avuncular approach of “let us tell you what’s best” under-scores an entirely different intent.

Ultimately, preschool aged black children are harmed by policies that do not ensure they are taught by the absolutely best trained adults; adults trained by successful practitioners with excellent experience teaching black children. Early childhood programs must be administered and funded to ensure black children are prepared to do well during their entire academic careers. Every policy and practice impacting these children should be based on successful outcome-based practices.

In the K-12 system we have

seen time and again where evidenced-based practices founded by communities of color have been largely ignored despite the compelling evidence that these very programs -- founded and led by the communities being served -- have a higher likelihood of being successful. Self-Enhancement Inc. is a perfect example of this. Despite their middle school being recognized as out-performing schools with similar demographics, there is not concerted effort to replicate the elements that made these students successful.

It is exciting Oregon is embarking upon the promise of change. It is exciting there is intentionality around supporting our youngest children having access to the highest quality early learning environments. It is a lever for systemic change that cannot be underscored enough. Let us start this work on the right track. In the absence of this commitment to do so... to listen to community, assess what is working, adequately fund successful organizations, build pathways and engage master teachers, we again consign black children to the vagaries of public school systems that have fallen short in serving them well.

Ron Herndon is a longtime community activist and director of the Albina Head Start program. Kali Thorne Ladd co-founded KairosPDX, a non-profit focused on delivering excellent, equitable education to underserved children, their families and their communities.

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT



The 29th annual Oregon Brewers Festival will take place Thursday, July 27 through Sunday July 31 at Tom McCall Waterfront Park.

Toast to Beervana

Get ready to toast the 29th annual Oregon Brewers Festival, one of the nation’s longest-running and best-loved craft beer festivals.

This year’s event will feature 88 beers from craft breweries across the nation, including two gluten-free products. There’s also plenty of live music, food booths, craft vendors and homebrew demonstrations.

The Oregon Brewers Festival takes place Thursday, July 27 through Sunday July 31 at Tom McCall Waterfront Park in downtown Portland. Gates open at 11:30

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There will be no admission charge to enter the festival grounds. But in order to consume beer, the purchase of a 2016 12 ounce souvenir tasting mug is required and costs \$7.

The Oregon Brewers Festival was founded in 1988 as an opportunity to expose the public to microbrews at a time when the craft brewing industry was just getting off the ground.



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