

CREADE/Literacy Testimonials from Oregon Schools

<i>County</i>	<i>Comments from School Principal</i>
Jackson	<p>At [elementary school] 87% of our students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Over 30% qualify for the homeless program. 35% of our students receive ESL services. We have the highest mobility rate in the district, e.g. two years ago we had 120 students enrolled in kindergarten, but only 60 present at any given time. Reading is essential to success in school, and life. It has been our primary focus for years, Despite that, last year, we qualified for a Reading First grant. We have received new materials and extensive training. I am very supportive of this grant and am impressed that our field is finally recognizing that we need to use high quality research to make decisions, rather than responding to savvy marketing or grassroots strategies that feel good, but lack supportive data. Our local instruction, provided through CREADE, supports the Five Big Ideas in Beginning Reading, which identifies a convergence of high quality research. We have already seen significant gains in reading measures, following these strategies. When teachers participate in a Reading Endorsement course of study, in this new research-based environment, it boosts them up to a higher teaching level. Instead of being a competent reading teacher, they can become an outstanding reading teacher. They learn additional skills to more carefully hone their skills. They can be sensitive to individual student needs. At [our school], being a competent reading teacher is not enough. We have so many unusual challenges, we need outstanding reading teachers. The CREADE program can assist greatly with that.</p>
Linn	<p>Thank you for supporting professional development and literacy within [our school district.] With the support of CREADE, two of my Title I reading teachers have benefited. One received her reading endorsement and the other participated in high quality literacy courses, helping her work toward moving out of a transitional license. With our difficult economic times and the new licensing requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act, CREADE's tuition assistance has made it possible for us to provide high quality instruction while also being compliant with the law.</p>
Wheeler	<p>I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the support you have made available to Oregon teachers. I am a strong believer in high quality teachers. In a time of record financial challenge, you have made improvement possible. My schools have benefited from teacher development opportunities we could not have afforded without your support. In the end, the children are the winners.</p>
Jackson	<p>I am sending my support for teachers to get their reading endorsements. I, too, am reading endorsed, in fact my master's degree is in remedial reading. I personally believe that <u>every</u> elementary teacher should have a reading endorsement. Reading is the core to all future student achievement. An elementary teacher who cannot effectively teach reading provides a disservice to his/her students. I am a principal in [my district] and this is my 34th year in education. [My district] has established principal interview teams, of which I am a team leader. I can assure everyone that in this district, reading is our top priority. No candidate for an elementary position in [our district] is hired unless the interviewers perceive that teacher can effectively teach reading. As a follow-up after employment, we continue to train teachers about reading on a quarterly basis. Our District has also encouraged teachers to seek reading endorsements. I highly support your efforts to procure a grant that will enable teachers, such as [name] to receive this vital endorsement. It is critical for the success of students and schools.</p>
Hood River	<p>I am very pleased to write in support of CREADE's efforts to bring literacy courses, general classroom teacher literacy certificates, and reading endorsements to teachers statewide. Two of my teachers have taken advantage of this opportunity. Due to budget cuts, staff development funds have been drastically reduced in the last two years. The future looks even worse. In addition, many districts have negotiated salary reductions and have cut school days to balance their budgets. Teachers are less able to fund their own professional development. I applaud CREADE's assistance in this area and whole-heartedly support their continued efforts to gain funding.</p>

Josephine	This letter is submitted to support CREADe efforts to bring literacy courses, a general classroom teacher literacy certificate, and the reading endorsement to teachers statewide in Oregon. In these difficult financial times for schools and teachers, tuition support for teachers to take literacy courses is critically important to their participation. At [our school] and throughout [our district], we encourage our Title I teachers to earn their reading endorsement. Thank you, CREADe, for your past and future efforts in this regard.
Union	One of my teachers has recently been working on her reading endorsement and the CREADe program has been the reason why she has been able to pursue further education. Thank you for the support that you have given her and the many other teachers who have taken advantage of the financial assistance that you have offered. Further, as a middle level administrator and the recent NCLB requirements for my teaching staff to be "Highly Qualified" - or content area endorsed for the middle level - the funding opportunities that you offer I think will take on more importance than ever before. Again, thank you for your support you have shown my staff.
Jefferson	Our [school district] supports CREADe efforts to bring literacy courses, a general classroom teacher literacy certificate, and the reading endorsement to teachers in our community. As you know, [our area] is a very rural community, and access for teachers to professional development is both limited, and when available, costly. Recently, with dramatic reductions in state support to our schools, our capacity to provide professional development has been even more severely impacted. The tuition support for teachers to take literacy courses has proven to be critically important for our teachers' participation. We are encouraging all of our staff to seek a reading endorsement or to gain more expertise in literacy education. Finding qualified and licensed staff to address literacy needs in low SES districts is very difficult. I hope you will be able to continue to provide the support via CREADe as you have in the past.
Washington	This letter is to add support for the CREADe Program that assists Oregon teachers to take reading/literacy courses and/or earn a reading endorsement. I have two teachers enrolled in this program. Both are excellent teachers who are further refining their skills and knowledge in support of reading and student literacy needs. Their continued enrollment and financial support is extremely important and coincides directly with the goals for [our high school].
Multnomah	I am writing to share my support of CREADe's Tuition Assistance program with you. At a time of dwindling resources and increased focus on effective teaching practices, CREADe's Tuition Assistance program provides an opportunity for teachers to pursue necessary professional course work of which they might not be able to afford. Thanks to this program, one of my teachers participated in literacy courses this summer and has begun to use these new-learned strategies with her students. The "No Child Left Behind" Act is requiring more teachers to pursue their reading endorsement and develop/refine their teaching strategies. Sixty-three percent of [our] 3rd - 5th graders meet or exceed the reading benchmarks. Our goal is to increase our students' reading achievement through teachers' professional development. I strongly encourage our teachers to gain more expertise in literacy. A Tuition Assistance program supports schools and teachers in their efforts to improve their students' literacy skills. It is my hope that CREADe is able to support teachers in the future as they did with one of my staff.
Lane	I wish to acknowledge my support and thanks for the CREADe Literacy Program that is allowing one of my teacher leaders to gain not only great reading intervention skills and knowledge, but a reading endorsement, too! As an administrator, I am thrilled to have a skilled teacher leader, [name], to assist in building capacity for "every [school name] teacher a reading teacher" philosophy. This CREADe program, by providing critical instruction at a low cost to teachers, is very beneficial and supportive of our School Improvement Literacy Goals. Having skilled reading teachers at the middle school level is a key component for systemic change and improvement in how we provide reading intervention at this level. In times of limited resources, high stakes testing, requirements for highly skilled teachers, programs such as these are a must if schools are to meet state and federal benchmarks!

Multnomah	My Title I teacher, [name], has been involved in your program and I support her involvement in participating in your literacy course offerings and assistance in completing her reading endorsement. This support, through professional growth and with tuition, has been extremely advantageous in these financial times. Without this program, [name] would not be able to complete her assigned position and that would be an extreme loss to our building and district.
Marion	I am writing this letter in strong support of the CREAD program. I am an Oregon elementary principal and have two teachers participating in the CREAD program. They not only benefit professionally by increasing their knowledge of teaching literacy skills, but they benefit personally as well. Our district, like all districts in Oregon is in tough financial shape. CREAD allows our teachers to participate with tuition support. The ultimate reason for our teachers participating in the CREAD program is to benefit our students. By earning an endorsement in reading and a literacy certificate, the teacher can further enhance the students' education. I believe our students will benefit to a greater degree as their teachers refine their expertise. I strongly encourage our teachers to participate in this program.
Jackson	It is most certainly the case that we in [school district] are interested in having the support of such initiatives as CREAD. The need for this type of on-going training is critical to many of the mandates imposed upon districts across the state. Additionally, tuition assistance provides yet another support of teaching staff as they work to contend with their responsibilities in these interesting times of educational reform. Our district is certainly appreciative of this program, and I will advocate participation whenever possible. Thanks for what you are doing, and if I can help, please let me know.
Clatsop	We have 400 students in our K-8 elementary school. I would like to convey my support for CREAD. As a small rural district, recent budget cuts have further impacted our resources to provide training and support to teachers, despite our dedication and desire to have high quality teachers who have the latest education about teaching trends and effective instruction. We have fewer specialists than larger districts and so our teachers have to wear "many hats." We are appreciative of any resource that will help our teachers improve their reading instruction and literacy skills. Support from CREAD would allow us to stretch our staff training dollars further. Our district has always been concerned about the reading achievement of our students. We have a significant number of students living in poverty. We have a strong Title I program. We recognize that effective reading instruction is the cornerstone of our educational program. We have one teacher who is currently working on her reading endorsement and other teachers who have expressed interest. Tuition support from CREAD may be the impetus to help those teachers make the final commitment to formally improving their literacy skills. I applaud and support your efforts to continue to provide this valuable resource to districts, especially during these dire financial times.
Deschutes	This is a letter of support for CREAD Program, which I believe can play an important role in improving academic success for students by increasing teacher literacy skills. This program provides the critical incentive of tuition support for teachers as they pursue their reading endorsement. Assisting high school students that require remediation to improve their reading skills is critical to their future academic and professional success. The CREAD Program assists schools in providing the professional resources needed to systematically address poor reading. I wholeheartedly support CREAD and am hopeful it will be able to continue to impact students in a positive manner in the future.
Yamhill	Literacy is an area we have identified for further need of improvement. In high school we often assume students have the ability to read and comprehend the material. When in fact we know their skills are not satisfactory. Staff development is another area that has suffered due to budget restraints. I would certainly support any efforts in this area. The incentive of tuition assistance would help encourage teachers to add this endorsement or certification. The addition of workshops to aid in staff development would help. Currently, we have one staff member that would take advantage of this program. As the word gets out there will be others.

Multnomah	I am sending this note in support of the CREADe program. As I understand it, CREADe has applied for funding to continue to offer tuition assistance to teachers as they seek additional literacy training. I believe that anything we can do to make literacy training more accessible to teachers deserves our support. With the new requirements of federal No Child Left Behind legislation and the recent dramatic increases in Title I funding to our school district, we have been caught short in many ways. We are scrambling to meet the challenge of the law and to design programs that will serve the needs of our students best. The CREADe program has provided our Title I teacher with a solid foundation of coursework as she works to complete her reading endorsement. I'm sure there are teachers all over the state who are doing their best to find programs they can afford and access from their geographic locations, such as CREADe. In these difficult economic times, tuition support can be critical to many. We need teachers with current training in literacy education. We need more teachers with reading endorsements. In general, these times demand a higher level of expertise in literacy education than any other. Please recognize that the CREADe program is a necessary resource of our times.
Washington	This letter is in support of [name] participation in your program to obtain her reading certificate. She is an important part of our schoolwide reading program and we have had many conversations regarding what are the best practices for teaching special education children how to read. Further training in this area for [name] means better reading programs schoolwide.
Coos	I have the fortunate and unique opportunity to work with [name], 8th grade English teacher at [middle school]. In these difficult economic times, the CREADe program has been a God-send for young teachers such as [name]. I strongly support all your efforts in providing financial assistance to teachers, which allows them to grow as professionals and provides educational value to all of our students.
Multnomah	As a principal and superintendent responsible to see that every child meets reading benchmarks, I am an enthusiastic supporter of the CREADe program. While every elementary teacher has studied the rudiments of literacy instruction as part of his or her training, there is a constant need both to refresh understandings and to build skills based on current best practices in reading. [School] has benefited tremendously from the participation of [name] in the CREADe program as she has returned to the classroom informed and enthused about implementing her new understanding in her primary classroom. Beyond the limits of her classroom, [name] serves as a model and mentor to other teachers.
Jackson	The purpose of this letter is to give my support for the CREADe Tuition Assistance Support program. I am the principal of [middle school.] [name] approached me for support to gain additional training through your tuition assistance program. I am very supportive of your program and specifically of [name]. She is an excellent classroom instructor. I have observed her roughly 5 times this year and I am impressed with her instructional skills as well as the rapport she has with her students. How would her training benefit [our school]? I have instituted an instructional leadership model in our school this year. We are working to improve instructional strategies throughout our building. I will be identifying teachers to help in-service our teachers on sound instructional strategies. I can see [name] being part of that instructional cadre. Specifically, the benefits to [our school]: [name] will assist in developing building-wide instructional strategies for our teachers; [name] will be part of an instructional cadre that in-services teachers on sound instructional practice as they relate to reading development classes as well as to cross-curricular classes; [name] will work closely with our ELL teacher to assist in reading development with our ELL students.
Marion	Thank you for making this program available to staff. This has been a great plan and our entire school has benefited from their course work. They have presented strategies at staff development meetings, and are implementing their techniques in the classrooms.
Lane	I am writing in support of the efforts of CREADe in providing the opportunity for teachers (one here at [our middle school] in particular) to access training and to obtain their reading endorsement. In tough economic times, it is not only refreshing, but necessary for organizations such as CREADe to step

	<p>forward and offer support where it is not currently being offered by the state. One of our Reading teachers utilized the support that CREADe offers, and was able to get her Reading Endorsement. I am so thankful that she was able to gain this endorsement. She is an outstanding teacher, and does wonderful work with her Reading students. I was in her classroom recently, and they are in a very comfortable environment, and are making gains in their reading abilities. I don't think that she would have been able to get this training and endorsement any other way.</p>
Klamath	<p>When the teachers [at my school] found out that CREADe needed [letters of] support they immediately came to me. Those teachers have great things to say about the opportunities the program has provided. The online format of the classes makes it possible for busy teachers to take classes and add to their skills. Also, the classes are available to people living in rural areas who don't usually have access to such classes. Working with different teachers across Oregon has allowed them to gain strategies, programs, and ideas that they wouldn't otherwise be exposed to. This program has been a wonderful way for them to learn new skills, gain credits and not have to spend a ton of money.</p>
Deschutes	<p>I fully support CREADe's assistance to teachers pursuing reading endorsements and bringing literacy courses to teachers. At our school, nearly all students come with moderate to severe reading disabilities. We're fortunate to have [name], who is our language arts teacher, bring into our classroom skills derived from taking literacy courses. Support for professional development in reading should be encouraged, and certification of reading teachers, particularly at the middle grades, should require a level of training equal to that required for other disciplines. All teachers should be trained in how to teach reading in the content areas. Teachers should have the opportunities to upgrade their skills and knowledge about current reading instructional techniques and appropriate materials for instituting those techniques, such as literature-based instruction. Our school is an alternative school serving students in 7th-12th grades. We have the flexibility of providing a reading class and believe time for reading is important. With such an emphasis on reading, it is imperative that we have well-trained reading teachers. It's good to know that there are organizations such as CREADe that can assist teachers in increasing their literacy skills.</p>
Multnomah	<p>This summer, [name], a Language Arts teacher at [our school] was able to attend reading/literacy classes because of your tuition assistance. The skills and perspective she gained have enriched her curriculum and her classes, and have been shared with other staff who have incorporated her ideas. [name] as an employee of a small private school with extremely limited training resources would not have been able to afford the training she received without your program. We could not afford to contribute to her tuition, though we know how crucial training is for both the individual's professional development, for our team, and, most importantly, our students. I have encouraged [name] to earn a reading endorsement as our school focuses on LD & ADD students, the vast majority of whom struggle with reading/literacy. I hope CREADe can keep finding funding sources in this challenging time. Your work is deeply appreciated by those of us trying to maximize teacher development without the benefit of the necessary funds.</p>

Compiled by the CREADe project, Office of Academic Affairs, Oregon University System, January 2004.