

Joint Ways and Means Committee

Testimony in Support of HB 3232A (Section 3)

May 2, 2013

Dear Chair Monroe, Chair Komp and Members of the Committee:

I am sorry I didn't have the chance to share my testimony with you in committee, however, I wanted to take Senator Monroe's suggestion to heart and share my testimony in writing in support of House Bill 3232(A), Section 3 – in support of Post-Secondary Aspirations.

Future Connect is an innovative support program for first generation college students from low-income families. The City of Portland first challenged Portland Community College Foundation for Fall of 2011 to match \$380,000 to develop and deliver a program to 200 students that would help reduce the high school drop out rate and inspire youth to set career goals and go on to college to reach those goals. The PCC Foundation was so motivated to make it happen that we handily raised the matching funds from our corporate and philanthropic donors for the first three cohort groups---over a million dollars. We also have the fourth cohort match in hand to meet Portland's contribution this coming year. The results are amazing because the money goes to students and teacher/coaches for wrap around services. This is front line support where the real teaching and learning happens.

I am no stranger to the challenges. I have served as Workforce Development Manager for Intel in both the Pacific Northwest and International. During those years I served on the Oregon Workforce Investment Board under both Governor Kitzhaber and Governor Kulongoski. High drop out rates and low enrollment for critical workforce development programs are issues the State has struggled with for decades. Never before have we seen such amazing results as we have in Future Connect!

Normally only 25% of the students from low income first generation college students complete high school and go on to college, and only about 45% of the general population do so. When we identify these students in high school, coach them, and teach them how to be successful in the education process, over 70% our Future Connect group graduated high school, completed their first year of college, and came back for year two. The second cohort had an over 90% success rate in returning for year two! We can only imagine the increase for the third.

Part of the 'edge' is the program leads students through the college access and success processes and helps them become both successful and independent. They give back with big brother/big sister coaching to the next group. We can see they will now be role models for other family members and neighbors who did not have a role model for college success before.

Remember these are kids who would have blown off their last years of high school with a 'why bother' attitude! Grade point averages can climb from 1.9 (C-) to 3.5 (A-). Higher Ed agrees. Thirty-Eight scholarships have been set up for Future Connect students at PSU, Lewis and Clark, and some for any Oregon university of their choice. They are definitely going to be eligible for good jobs and not dependent on the social services systems.

We have presented these results at the State level and hope long term to seek broader funding to replicate this everywhere. In the meantime, we are motivated to take it out to Washington County and as far as we can within our PCC District. Hillsboro just committed to \$100K for 50 students. We are working with Beaverton for the same \$100K and 50 more students. Newberg is interested for Fall of 2014. Portland has set the bar and the other cities are working to reach it. To leverage this front line program support for teachers, counselors and students in rural areas without city budgets, we will need state support. **HB 3232 especially Part 3 is absolutely congruent with those goals. We are eager to see this implemented so we do not lose any more talented youth to years of lost productivity and lost human potential.**

In all the countries and states I have had workforce development programs, the most sustainable for the long term are the ones where business, education, and government partner to support them. Please let's keep working together to get more youth on the right track to success in life.

Sincerely,
Cheryl Hinerman
Intel Retiree
PCC Foundation Board of Trustees
Chair Corporate Partnership Committee