



The Standard®

May 14, 2013

Representative Betty Komp
Senator Rod Monroe
Representative Lew Frederick
Representative Sherri Sprenger
Senator Chris Edwards
Senator Fred Girod
Joint Ways and Means Education Sub Committee
Salem, Oregon

Dear Representative Komp, Senator Monroe and Committee Members:

I am testifying today in support of the inclusion of funds in HB 3233 to increase the scaling of proficiency-based teaching and learning in Oregon schools. I'm convinced that proficiency-based teaching and learning must be a key part of our state's plan for achieving our educational goals, and should become a cornerstone for achievement of HB 3233's intent.

Having skilled workers to support the growth of our businesses and economy is a business imperative. We need employees graduating high school, community colleges and 4 year colleges with the skills, work habits, and knowledge to be able to immediately contribute to the workforce. We need an education system that has a strong national reputation to attract business and key talent to our state. As a manager in our business community, when those students graduate with their degrees, I expect those degrees to mean something. They should represent that the student demonstrates a technical competence, a proficiency, in a wide variety of subjects and should also represent that they have the problem solving and critical thinking skills to continue learning and contributing throughout the rest of their lives.

I've heard teachers, who use current methods of instruction, describe their frustration in passing students to the next unit or even grade level, knowing that the kids didn't achieve the level of proficiency they should have. I've then heard those same teachers, once they've been trained in true proficiency-based teaching and learning, with a renewed passion for their profession, and a confidence that they are passing students who have truly demonstrated competency in a subject. The teachers and students are both clear on what success looks like and they leave the classroom with a measurable proficiency.

I need these same kids, as adults, with the competency in math, language, science, the arts, technology, and finance that they need in order to help grow our business. I need people who have learned that

what they're learning matters and that proficiency in these topics will lead to the results we need to achieve in our business.

I've heard school administrators talk about the behavioral differences they see in the classrooms in their schools once the teachers have learned how to teach using proficiency-based teaching and learning. Students have transitioned from a passive group, experiencing education that is being done to them, to a group who is engaged in their own learning, taking initiative and thinking critically. This is same initiative I need in our company. I need people who haven't been trained to just follow a process; I need people who can find a better way to work, who can problem solve in situations that we haven't seen before, who are inspired to ask "why" and find a new way to meet opportunities.

I've heard both teachers and administrators share stories about how proficiency-based teaching and learning helps them reach the kids who they couldn't reach before. I've seen the data that shows they are increasing their graduation rates and improving test scores. They are helping these kids succeed, setting them up for a positive future. I need these types of people in our company; people who know how to overcome challenges and engage in a positive future.

Educators, who are arguably doing some of the most important work in our state, deserve the support, tools and networks to enable them to educate our students to help prepare them to not only graduate, but graduate with the skills they'll need to become productive members of our state. These students are our future educators, business leaders, parents, leaders of non-profits, legislators, volunteers, and entrepreneurs. I'm depending on these students as future employees of Oregon's businesses, and I'm depending on an education system that will help these students in getting there.

Oregon is better than using an antiquated education system that is better suited for Oregon in the 1940's than it is in the 2000's. We're better than a 68% graduation rate. We're better than the 6,000 kids who dropped out of our high schools in the 2011-2012 school year.

If we're going to set the lofty goals outlined in HB 3233, then we must fund the resources to do it. Funding to support proficiency based teaching and learning is smart investment in Oregon's kids, in Oregon's teachers, and in the long-term economic success of our state.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cari Bacon Flick', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cari Bacon Flick
2nd VP, Standard Insurance Company