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Dr. Rudy Crew
Oregon Education Investment Board
775 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Dr. Crew,

May 7, 2013

I am writing to support the inclusion of funds in HB 3233 to increase the scaling of proficiency-based teaching and learning (PBTL) in the Oregon education budget. Companies looking for communities to create new facilities or expand their footprint in their current location require pools of proficient candidates. I believe that supporting PBTL will enhance the attractiveness of Oregon-trained students to Oregon businesses and draw new businesses to our state. Further, as business opportunities in our state grow, Oregon-trained students will find careers and invest their talents locally, rather than move to other states.

I have attended various meetings of educators and business representatives over the past several years discussing Oregon's business/education environment. The statistics describing the poor graduation rates from Oregon secondary schools, the low retention of Oregon-trained students in Oregon post-graduation, and the numbers of new hires into Oregon companies coming from other states to fill specific high-tech roles were eye-opening.

I've heard of high schools that graduate as many as 17 valedictorians, many of whom don't have adequate SAT scores to qualify for higher education. I have witnessed newly-minted graduates from our high schools, community colleges, and even 4-year colleges who cannot produce written documents consistent with the expectations of their credentials or perform technical tasks correctly based on written instructions.

I have heard passionate teachers describe the satisfaction they feel when they witness the confidence, excitement, and success that students feel when exposed to proficiency-based learning. The students know what is required of them, they learn at their own pace, and they realize that they are far more in control of their own education. When these students graduate, their diploma or degree affirms that they have achieved proficiency versus standards consistent their certification.

I believe that the most important skill that a student can master is how to learn. Over recent decades, the rapid introductions of changes to existing technologies and newly-introduced technologies have added significantly to the importance of commitment to life-long learning as a requirement for a successful career. PBTL acknowledges that we are all students through our formal education as well as our post-graduate years. Funding required to support proficiency-based teaching and learning is a wise investment in our workforce and, ultimately, our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Hartz".

Thomas P. Hartz Ph.D.
Director, Program Management