

HB 2154 - Achievement Compact Advisory Committees Statement of AFT-Oregon, May 21st 2013

There has been a lack of opportunities for involvement of faculty, educators, and staff in the development of higher education achievement compacts and their goals. In order for Oregon to focus its education system on increasing student success and completion, educators have to be involved in the design and implementation of changes to the system. Like they are in the K-12 compacts, we need faculty and staff from community colleges and universities to be engaged in the achievement compact process if we intend a positive, ongoing transformation of our system of education.

Oregon is in the midst of embarking on an ambitious agenda to increase the number of students graduating, focusing on high school diplomas, college certificates and college degrees. This agenda highlights the need to develop ways to improve student success in our state. Achievement compacts can help us focus on the priorities of our education system, the plans to get there, and make sure we have resources to achieve our goals.

The faculty and educational professionals of American Federation of Teachers-Oregon are dedicated to the success of all our students. We know firsthand the barriers that our students face every day, and the degree of their success, both inside and outside the classroom. Our recommendations on achievement compacts stem from our desire to engage education professionals on a deeper level than ever before. Our voices must be a part of the conversation around education reform and accountability. Education professionals are a vital link in this process, and our engagement is vital to the success of the 0-20 system in Oregon.

AFT-Oregon believes that there has been a lack of opportunities for involvement of faculty, educators, and staff in the development of achievement compacts and their goals. According to the leaders of AFT-Oregon locals in primary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions, only one institution included a representative from their membership in discussions to develop compact targets. This is part of the reason that many educators are not even aware of the compacts nor see them as having any relevance to their instruction or students.

Teachers, education assistants, and other educational staff should participate in developing ideas for compacts; setting and meeting targets; and implementing changes for increased student success. This should be implemented above and beyond the minimal level set in the statutory language that defined the compacts. HB 2154 does just this by creating achievement compact advisory committees for Community Colleges that include faculty, staff and students.

In addition to applauding the inclusion of faculty, staff and students in Community College achievement compact advisory committees as outlined in HB 2154, AFT-Oregon believes that achievement compact advisory committees should be established at all levels of public higher education in Oregon, including our public universities.