

Cassell Kristalyn

From: Margaret DeLacy <margaretdelacy@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, February 20, 2013 10:41 PM
To: Sen Hass; Sen Knopp; Sen Beyer; Sen Kruse; Sen Roblan
Cc: Cassell Kristalyn
Subject: Amend SB 222

Dear members of the Senate Education Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Oregon Association for Talented and Gifted concerning Senate Bill 222.

OATAG supports making advanced instruction more accessible by providing teacher training and fostering greater cooperation between the OUS system and the k-12 system.

We are, however, concerned about Section 4 subsection 2a that would require every student to obtain twenty-four credits "six credits of which must qualify for college credit at a post-secondary institution" .

OATAG believes that students have differing interests, strengths and needs, and that educational services should be tailored as much as possible to individual students. Although we recognize the need for a meaningful diploma, we do not support requiring college credits instruction for graduation.

First, this section is ambiguous about whether the credits to be earned are high school credits or college credits.

Six high school credits would equal *one full year* of High School classes taught at college level. (Twenty-four credits are required for graduation which breaks down to four years with six credits each year.)

Second, even if we assume the bill means "college credits" there is no such thing as a standard college credit nor do colleges award the same credit for a given score on an AP test.

Amending the bill to define "credits" as credits awarded by OUS schools would not remove all the problems with this section.

Presumably, to earn these "college credits" to graduate, students must either take an AP or IB examination or pass an actual college class.

For AP/IB exams:

--The AP exams are only given once in May. If a student is ill that day or discovers after the fact that he or she earned too low a score for credit at an OUS institution, that student would not be able to graduate.

--The odds are high that a student taking one AP class will not get a high enough score to earn college credit. Even among the small number of Oregon students currently participating in the AP program, the mean grade was 2.92. Only 15% of the Oregon class of 2012 received a score of 3 or higher on an AP exam.

--In many cases OUS schools do not award six credits for an AP course, or they award credits only for grades of 4 or 5.

For dual-credit classes

--College terms don't mesh with high school semesters. For example this year Portland State will post grades a week after Portland High School graduation. If students' diplomas depend on passing these classes, no one will know by graduation whether the students have earned their diplomas.

--A typical college class takes one-quarter of a student's time whereas a high school class takes one-eighth. In addition to travel time and different term schedules, this creates many scheduling and time-management headaches for students.

In general, we support providing advanced instruction to all interested Oregon students in grades k-12 (not just the final two years of High School) but we do not believe compelling unprepared and/or unmotivated high school students to enroll in AP or college-level classes represents good policy. Neither does the College Board.

Trevor Packer, Senior Vice President for the AP program recently wrote that:

"We call for continued commitment to expanding the availability of AP courses among prepared and motivated students of all backgrounds. This is not at all the same as claiming that all students, here and now, should be enrolled in AP courses. These are, indeed, college-level courses. ... just as all American students are not yet prepared for college, all American students are not yet prepared for AP course work."

Thank you very much,

Sincerely yours,

Margaret DeLacy
Government Relations Committee
Oregon Association for Talented and Gifted (OATAG)

REFERENCES:

http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/exgrd_sum/2012.html

See page 16 of the 8th. AP Report to the Nation

<http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/public/pdf/ap/rtn/AP-Report-to-the-Nation.pdf>

<http://www.npr.org/2012/12/03/166414595/op-ed-ap-classes-are-a-scarn>