



# Myrtle Point School District

Bruce Shull, Superintendent

---

Subject: HB 4150 A

Dear Honored Senators and Representatives,

Thank you for the difficult work that you do governing Oregon.

I have been in education for 20 years and have seen many academic concepts come and go. As an educator, I am always looking for instructional strategies to improve our students' learning. I know that as legislators it has to be dear to your heart to implement laws supporting what is best for Oregon's students.

What I don't understand about our K-12 public education system is why we are constantly changing the rules and strategies. Our district has spent over \$20,000 in training our elementary and secondary teachers on the specifics of proficiency based education. We are a small rural district of 650 students and finding the funds, substitutes and expertise to provide quality workshops and embedded training is extremely challenging and consuming, which we do not have an issue in doing. The principals spent hours working with staff through the evaluation process giving feedback to staff to ensure that the Myrtle Point School District would be in compliance with the proficiency legislation.

We believe that, particularly at the secondary level, proficiency based learning better prepares students for post-secondary success, which supports the 40-40-20 concept. The Myrtle Point School District will continue on the track of proficiency based learning by continuing to train our staff and students.

The frustration, as we discussed in our administrative meetings both in our district and as a region, is that Oregon and The Nation cannot figure out what public education is supposed to be doing. One day we are to do this and the next day it is something different. The constant changing of the focus makes us all look like educators are incompetent feeding the lack of trust in our public system that so many of us have dedicated our lives to improving.

With HB 4150 A, do we discard the thousands of dollars spent and the hundreds of hours of training and effort? As I stated in the first sentence, you have a difficult job because your decisions will never be accepted by all. I don't know the philosophy or the pressure behind allowing districts an out on proficiency based learning, but educators need consistency. It is not as much about changing the teaching method as it is training students in a different process or technique. It takes time to retool and reeducate staff and students, and we never seem to have time to finish implementation of the latest idea before we discard it. I will not bore you with the number of concepts that have come and gone in the last 20 years, but it seems we are always retooling for the next best and greatest approach only to leave the last best thing on the shelf. I believe that constantly asking educators to redress is not progress. There is not any magic to improve graduation rates or test scores and jumping from concept to concept hinders progress, and frankly depresses real growth.

Public education in Oregon needs a plan that does not change every time the legislature convenes. In our district, we have been working at proficiency for three years. Our teachers are becoming very knowledgeable and competent in the process. In another 2 years, I predict the staff and students will be



# Myrtle Point School District

Bruce Shull, Superintendent

---

really skillful instructing and learning within this concept. As our district has discovered, the proficiency process is hard work and requires a high level of organization, leadership and effort by all staff. Are you all sure that HB 4150 A is best for Oregon Students or is it an attempt to keep some folks happy? How as school leaders are we to implement a difficult concept and the neighboring district chooses to not implement? What happens to students who move from a proficiency district to a non-proficiency district? When the next change in the educational process comes, do we wait to see if it is real or just a temporary fashion?

Educators will do what is asked of us because that is who we are. It would be helpful if there is a long-range plan, which would allow those in the field to plan and be efficient with the limited resources.

Thank you for listening,

Bruce Shull  
Superintendent of Myrtle Point SD

Bruce Shull  
MPSD Superintendent  
541-572-1220  
413 C Street  
Myrtle Point, OR 97458





**Date:** February 14, 2014  
**To:** Oregon House of Representatives  
**From:** Chalkboard Project  
**Subject:** House Bill 4150

The purpose of House Bill 4150 is to clarify proficiency legislation passed in 2011 (HB 2220). We understand that the bill addresses that need and a collaborative process went into the version originally introduced. However, the amended bill before you today raises important questions that have not yet been addressed. Chalkboard Project believes that clarification is critical and we will work with the Senate Education Committee, the bill sponsors, and stakeholders on an amendment.

Chalkboard's primary area of concern is Section 8, added by the -6 amendment. Section 8 directs the Oregon Department of Education to negotiate the "appropriate use of the new statewide summative assessment" with the US Department of Education.

This language raises questions about the scope of those negotiations. As the bill is intended to address proficiency education and grading, we believe it is appropriate to focus the negotiations on the issue at hand. If the intent of Section 8 is to go beyond proficiency education and grading, we believe it is important to understand the purpose of the negotiations and judge the merits of the bill on those terms.

Chalkboard Project believes consensus can be built around an amendment that provides clarity and maintains a focus on determining the appropriate use of statewide summative assessments in supporting student growth.

For more information, please contact Kylie Grunow (503-707-9653) or Phil Donovan (503-522-3023).

Testimony on HB 4150 – February 5, 2014

Dear Members of House Education:

Adoption of HB 2220 sparked a much overdue conversation across the state of Oregon regarding one of the most archaic practices in schools – grading! Teachers and administrators in schools throughout Oregon began the difficult conversations about what a grade should mean. Much of that work was stymied, when ODE released a narrower interpretation of HB 2220. I believe the interpretation was accurate, just disappointing.

For many years, the grades awarded to students have often been based on how well students “played the game of school” rather than whether they had attained the skills and knowledge that had been set forth in the course curriculum. Students were rewarded for unrelated extra credit, sitting quietly in class, completion of homework –even if it was not corrected, etc. Those behaviors are important, but often have little to do with measuring student academic attainment in the class. HB 4150 attempts to clarify rules around grading; however we believe it goes too far in spots and cements bad practice in others.

It is our understanding that an amendment is being proposed to eliminate Sections 2-4 from the proposed bill. We would support that amendment. We believe the provisions in Section 1, 5, b (lines 19-25) provide districts with the option of choosing a proficiency-based system without adding an extra layer to district operations, as proposed in the sections that would be eliminated. Districts will involve appropriate stakeholders in the discussions prior to adoption.

We are also concerned with page 2, lines 1-18 and 34-36 which seem to run counter to initial intent of the bill and cement in statute the idea that grades may be based on those other factors that may not reflect the academic attainment of the students. At the same time we recognize that some of those behaviors directly demonstrate or are related to employability skills of our graduates. Rather than inserting them into the course grade, we would advocate for them to be included in the comment section on the report card or reflected in a separate section of employability behaviors or skills.

Finally, we recommend changing the word “three” to “five” on page 2, row 23. We strongly support a limitation around the number of indicators that we are asking teachers to report; however, we believe three is too narrow of a restriction in some content areas categories

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ron Wilkinson, Superintendent





P: 541.923.5437

F: 541.923.5142

145 SE Salmon Dr | Redmond, OR 97756

[www.redmond.k12.or.us](http://www.redmond.k12.or.us)

February 5, 2014

I have recently become aware of HB 4150 and its direct impact on our current work as a district and state related to proficiency. Simply put, the bill is counterproductive to the progress that we have made in the area of proficiency and the reporting of academic and behavior progress to students and parents. Based on HB 2220, we have been successful in establishing a roadmap that is leading to much needed reform in our grading practices as well as transforming our communication to parents and community as well. In reality we believe that we have in fact, moved down the right road. HB 4150 clearly weakens our position and limits our ability to continue toward much needed reform in our district and state.

Redmond School District – approximately 7000 students with over 300 teachers – has been involved in making a shift toward reporting to parents the progress of their students based on standards. We have embraced the belief that behavior, attendance and other environmental factors including extra credit are misleading and often do not depict an accurate picture of competence or proficiency. As a result, we have invested significant financial resource in a new student information system, teacher leader positions and professional development to support the implementation of HB2220.

HB 4150 takes the wind out of the sails for Redmond School District by removing the spirit and context of HB 2220. The expectations outlined in the new bill minimize and/or nullify much of the work our district and teachers have accomplished over the past 18 months. Allowing district leaders the option to include non-academic measures and limiting the number of standards we can expect teachers to report on, places the conflict at a local level with much potential to strain staff and board relationships.

Additionally, the end-of-year report outlined in HB 4150 will not provide significantly different information to parents and students than what districts are currently providing through traditional letter grades. Both reports mix academics and behaviors, which means no meaningful change will come about through HB 4150. What we will find instead is another report to add to the long and competing items on the list of to-do's for teachers. Districts that are truly trying to make a difference and raise the expectations and accuracy of the educational process will once again be tuned out as those less inclined to embrace reform say, "just wait a little while and this too shall pass".

We have several high stakes initiatives that are making this a pivotal political issue for Redmond School District. We are making significant progress in the area of Common Core implementation, restructuring the entire assessment and intervention structure as well as a full-scale evaluation system overhaul. This issue of grading practice and reporting is as significant as any of the fore mentioned initiatives; if we lose momentum on this one, I am fearful that the others may fail as well.

I oppose HB 4150 and fully embrace the ideals of accurately reporting progress of our students. Students that complete a course and receive a grade should feel confident that the grade reflects their ability to accomplish a task or exemplify their skills.

Thank you for your continued concern for the welfare and success of our future generations. Our job is to make success possible for every child in Redmond School district.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael D. McIntosh".

Michael D. McIntosh  
Superintendent