

February 4, 2015

To: Members of the Senate Education Committee  
Re: SB215

Chair Roblan and members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am a public school teacher and the president of the Lake Oswego Education Association. My two sons went to Portland public schools (entirely in the wake of Measure 5). I urge you to vote no on removing the sunset on the OEIB. It is an expensive and bureaucratic machine designed more to perpetuate itself than lend any real help to public schools. I have tracked this Board for more than two years and cannot, for the life of me, see any benefit the taxpayers of Oregon receive for footing the bill.

Early on in its existence, I attended public meetings (designed to receive public testimony) and, on one of those occasions, the only Board member in attendance was OEA president, Hanna Vaandering. She did not need to hear the testimony of those hundreds of parents, teachers and students who showed up, in good faith, to speak. I have attended subcommittee meetings and listened to presentations from ODE and other various data-pushing entities. I have given public testimony, reminding the OEIB that teachers are the delivery mechanisms for whatever policy the OEIB should devise and it would behoove those Board members to do include educators in decision making. Alas, that has not come to pass.

The so-called achievement compacts are a complete waste of time for School Districts. They do nothing to help teachers reach all students and they force District Administrators to do endless rounds of paper work (with ever upward spiraling promises of reaching 93,94,95% of their students.) As a social studies teacher, it reminds me of China's Great Leap Forward and the hollowness of these sorts of expectation cycles.

Most teachers I know want to connect with all students and help them achieve to their potentials and those teachers are working long hours after school to provide serious feedback to student work. Every state and federal mandate has slowed rather than helped that process as educators are drowning in bureaucracy.

For instance, as a former AP US History teacher, I was required to offer dual credit through PCC (one of the pet programs of the OEIB). I had to jump through many hoops, District level meetings, meetings with PCC personnel, coordinating my class with the PCC class, presenting and collecting sign up forms from my students (in the early years) and wrestling with the grading program through PCC. When I attended an OEIB committee meeting on dual credit, imagine my surprise when the committee discussed plans to expand dual credit and someone from the committee said, "Oh, the teachers can do that."

Without ever asking a teacher.

Brad Avakian has a much better plan and program to improve education by reinvesting in manual arts and vocational education (through BOLI). I would consider funneling OEIB's budget to his Bureau and you'll get greater outcomes.

Or, you could do your bit to promote President Obama's initiative for free community college. Let us not spend our time and money conflating high school with college, but rather work to make college more affordable. Already, many colleges are not even accepting AP scores (unless they are a 5). While some of this is surely economics driven (colleges losing money because students come in with too much college credit), there is still

a great maturation divide between high school juniors and college students and we forget that at our peril.

It is important to consider the annual budget of the OEIB and what it sucks from public school classrooms. I have received information from OEA that, all told, the OEIB budget is around \$20 million. (I would hope that there is a real and transparent tracking of OEIB's expenses.) While the addition of \$20 million to the Education slice of the pie is not going to help us achieve QEM, it is not insignificant.

I have met with Senator Gelser and Representative Lininger and discussed my concerns over the unintended consequences of several legislative initiatives. I urged both of them to allow the OEIB to sunset. I now extend my request to all the committee members. Allow the OEIB to sunset. Listen to the voices of education professionals who care passionately about their profession and worry about its viability and sustainability.

Thank you for your time and efforts on behalf of public education.

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