

Testimony opposing SB 84

Jodie Marion

Mt. Hood Community College Dual Credit Committee

Dear Chair Roblan and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

As a writing instructor at Mt. Hood Community College, I have first-hand experience with the accelerated learning models being implemented in Oregon. I am also a member of the Dual Credit Work Group at Mt. Hood Community College, and I serve on the state-wide committee OWEAC (the Oregon Writing & English Advisory Committee) that establishes standards for writing curricula in Oregon. For several years OWEAC has investigated the benefits and shortcomings of the various models for accelerated learning in Oregon. Classroom experience coupled with research has convinced us that “whole” and “middle college” offerings provide many lasting benefits to students, while we see mostly perils in replicating the Eastern Promise model of accelerated learning. These are some of our concerns about the Eastern Promise model:

1. Keeping students in a year-long cycle gives high-school students a false sense of the pace and demands of college-level work. College courses that span 10 weeks on a college campus protract into a year in the high school setting. This calls into question the “acceleration” in accelerated learning.
2. Students who do not leave their high-school campuses fail to benefit from crucial elements of a college education, for example, encountering diversity, diversity of thought, and paradigm shifts. Forgoing these inhibits critical thinking.
3. When limited to high school, students don’t have access to college-level libraries and library instruction, so they will be hampered in meeting the information literacy outcome required for first-year composition and for success in future college coursework. Other support services, such as tutoring at a Writing Center, may not be available for students not on a college campus.
4. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the lack of consistent statewide course quality guidelines endangers quality and equity among the various institutions offering college credits. Without guidelines based on best practices, how can we ensure students who receive these credits are actually prepared for college-level writing?

I ask that you please consider the dramatic differences between whole/middle/early college experiences with those of the Eastern Promise model, and, if you find you are still are not able to oppose SB84, I ask that an oversight committee and stronger protections within SB 84 be established that would ensure quality, uniformity, and good stewardship of accelerated learning programs.

Thank you.