



*Oregon Connections Academy Parent Association (ORCAPA) represents a group comprised of Connections Academy's online schooling families and friends.*

25 February 2015

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

As the Oregon Connections Academy Parents Association (ORCAPA), we represent the roughly 3800 students and families enrolled in Oregon Connections Academy (ORCA). We support the creation of statewide standards for accelerated college credit courses for high school students. However, as currently written, SB 84 would cut off access to these offerings from many students in our state.

The measure states that accelerated credit courses can not be provided exclusively online. Disqualifying courses only because of their delivery method, without consideration for content, will unfairly exclude participation by some of our student populations who most desperately need these course offerings. Rural students often do not have access to a nearby college campus, making it infeasible for them to attend face-to-face lectures or work sessions. Even in urban areas, many underserved populations do not have transportation or time available that would allow them to participate in classroom settings away from their neighborhood school or home.

Rather than exclude potentially high-quality and worthwhile programs based solely on their delivery method, we support certification of each course based on its content. Many accelerated credit courses can, should and will be developed with an in-person component included, while others may be tailored to serve those who physically or financially would be precluded from such participation. Parents and educators should be interested in developing more options of the highest quality and to afford the most opportunity, not imposing blanket exclusions for arbitrary reasons.

We are in agreement with the Provosts of Oregon's Public Universities who support removal of this limitation from the language of the bill. Provide a framework within which talented and creative educators can develop the curriculum all our students need, and allow the flexibility to reach all students no matter their location or social status. For some students, online-only courses will continue to be their gateway to success. Let us devote our time and resources to opening up collegiate credit options, rather than placing legislative roadblocks in their way.

Sincerely,

ORCAPA Board Members:

*Anne Marie Gurney, Jessica Cousineau, Preston Baxter, Mark Scarborough, Lori Conklin*