

I am respectfully submitting public comments regarding SB 322 in writing; I am currently out-of-state and unable to attend the hearing.

My name is Matt Coleman, and I am the Executive Director of the Educational Policy Improvement Center in Eugene. I spent 15 years as an administrator in Oregon schools, including nine years at high and middle school buildings in the Beaverton School District and six years at the district level in the Springfield Public Schools.

Formerly as Springfield's assistant superintendent, I engaged a handful of staff regarding development of an "advanced diploma" option to take advantage of the ability to claim average daily membership for students who might have completed the requirements for an Oregon diploma, but not requirements for an advanced diploma. As a district where nearly 70% of students qualified for free and reduced-price meals, this option appealed to us.

After much thought and deliberation, we did not feel this practice met the spirit of the law with regards to the appropriate use of resources from the State School Fund (SSF). Specifically, we did not believe students who had completed (or could complete) the state graduation requirements should be able to access resources from the SSF to support a fifth-year program. Though we appreciated and applauded the efforts in communities that engaged in this type of programming, we did not believe the SSF was the appropriate funding stream. This practice benefits a small number of districts/students at the expense of all others in the state.

I believe passing SB 322, without amendment, will validate the practice of using the SSF to support an additional year for students who have, or could have, met state graduation requirements during their K-12 experience, ultimately encouraging more districts to pursue this option. If this bill passes, many more districts will engage in this practice, effectively reducing SSF resources further and hindering K-12 education statewide.

As we move toward the 2017-19 biennium, I encourage the state to consider funding at least a year of post-secondary education within the Oregon University or community college systems for **ALL** high school graduates that meet state-determined provisions. One such provision could call for students to enroll in a senior year that includes courses aligned with students' post-secondary aspirations and/or plans. This type of strategic investment, coupled with clear requirements for the senior year, would support more students successfully transitioning into post-secondary education.

From a strategic investment perspective, the size of investment that has been proposed for full-day kindergarten in this biennium would support all of Oregon's graduates at the level recommended in SB 322 and would align directly with Oregon's commitment to realizing 40-40-20 and ensuring students are ready to learn, work, and succeed beyond high school.