

SB 322 Testimony

Thank you Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee for the opportunity to speak to you today on this important topic. My name is Maria Delapoer and I am superintendent of the Albany School District.

I believe we have the same goal of wanting our students to receive further training or education after they graduate from high school so that they can reach their full potential and become productive citizens of our communities.

Albany's "Advanced Diploma" program enables more students to achieve this goal, especially students who struggle with navigating our often complex and confusing systems for enrolling in higher ed.

We have a full time teacher who is assigned to work with our students to:

- Explain the program to kids and parents and what it takes to be eligible
- Help them enroll in the program and meet all the required deadlines for the paperwork
- Set goals with students and develop a plan of coursework to accomplish their goals
- Counsel students who struggle and help them figure out a way to make it work
- Monitor their attendance and grades and assign tutoring sessions as needed
- Require regular meetings with advisors to understand expectations
- Provide the support and encouragement until they are ready to be independent

These are not students who typically earn lots of credits within the 4 years of high school because they need this time to complete the graduation requirements. Many are the first in their family to go beyond high school. Many are Latino students or are economically disadvantaged. Many students in Albany are those interested in careers in the trades and have taken CTE classes in high school.

They are an untapped resource of future taxpayers who can get the training and education to qualify for family wage jobs in our local area. Our unemployment rate in Linn County is 7.6% vs. Oregon at 5.8% and our local industry has positions that are going unfilled. We have worked for two years to align curriculum at high school and LBCC to fill the needs our local industry have for workers. They often pay for continued training and education for their employees.

By providing these programs we are showing student that they have a bright future, many have never thought possible. We are helping them to achieve their goals to become contributing members of society which is in everyone's best interest and the right thing to do for our young people.

I ask that those districts currently providing these programs to be able to continue for another couple of years and that we have time to explore the best way to make this happen without jeopardizing students who are counting on this being available or other students across the state of Oregon. Thank you for your time and consideration.