



Testimony on SB 3126
Submitted to the House Committee on Education
Submitted by Danny Mielke, Acting Dean and Executive Director
April 2, 2015

Rep. Margaret Doherty, Chair; Rep. Sherri Sprenger, Vice Chair; Lew Frederick, Vice Chair

Four years ago, Eastern Oregon University along with Blue Mountain Community College, Treasure Valley Community College, Intermountain and Malheur ESD's embarked on the Eastern Promise project. Our goals were to grow the college/post-secondary culture in rural eastern Oregon; and to increase opportunities for accelerated learning college credit delivered to regional high schools.

A significant barrier for our rural students to acquire early college credits is of course our remoteness and distance from college campuses. But additionally, rules have existed that require a high school teacher to have a master's degree in a specific subject discipline. While most teachers do have a masters degree, they are typically a master of education with some disciplinary content.

Eastern Promise designed a program that has proven highly successful. With permissions from the state, we developed a comprehensive professional development strategy that enables high school faculty with masters degrees to join in Professional Learning Communities with university and community college discipline faculty from which they earn graduate credits, and are authorized to teach college level classes in their high schools.

These classes offered in the high schools - that we call Credit By Proficiency - are a modified version of dual credit where the outcome expectation for the high school students is that they achieve the same level of proficiency as is required of college students taking that same class on a college or university campus. They achieve this through rigorous coursework, measured by a series of assessments (not just a single test), presenting as much as possible an authentic college experience.

During 2013-14, 1915 high school students acquired nearly 14,000 credit hours through the Eastern Promise program. They did this at a reduced tuition rate of \$10 per credit saving families substantial future tuition costs.

I urge you to reject the SB 3126 proposal that dual credit instructors have a minimum limit of credits necessary to be qualified. The determination of instructor qualifications for accelerated

learning should be the purview of the partner higher education institution. I believe that if the bill moves forward then I suggest the following change:

A school district in partnership with a college or university shall ensure that a teacher of a course that is part of a dual credit program has completed a Masters degree along with a minimum of 27 quarter hours of combined undergraduate and graduate level course work as determined by the partner college or university that aligns with the proposed course, and an appropriate subject endorsement that relates to the course being offered as dual credit. The requirement of this subsection does not apply to career and technical education courses.

Sincerely,

Danny Mielke
Acting Dean and Eastern Promise Executive Director