

Our most vulnerable high school students need the opportunities provided by this bill.

SB 1537 is a carefully crafted bill to put severe restrictions on the use of the state school fund for community college tuition for students who have met requirements for a standard high school diploma. Increasing high school graduation rates is a critical goal we all share.

SB 1537 carefully ties the Post-Graduate Scholar Program (formerly known as fifth year programs) to improving high school graduation rates for at risk students. It is modeled off of the experience of districts who have been using this strategy to retain students at risk of dropping out and to engage students who previously dropped out of high school. The fifth year is the "carrot" that gives some students hope, and has helped many become first generation high school graduates AND the first in their family to enroll in college.

This program is not just about tuition. SB 1537 requires districts to provide in person, 1:1 counseling with school district staff at least twice a month. In addition, districts can hold students accountable for attendance, course selection, and academic performance. This support is essential for our most at risk students. In almost every case, districts will need to contribute general fund beyond their ADM to offer this program.

SB 1537 also creates a mechanism to track the students and the cost. That data will help determine the future of this program.

Please support this important pathway for Oregon students.

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