

Dear Senate and House Education Committees, as well as Education Leaders,

I am writing this message in strong support of the **5th Year/Post-Graduate Scholar SB 1537**. During my 4+ years as Director of High School Connections at Lane Community College in Eugene, we have partnered with the Eugene 4J School District to support their 5th year program, which primarily serves students with risk factors (low income, first generation college, low family support, students of color) that typically present powerful barriers to succeeding in the transition from high school to college. My office works with a variety of programs that support this transition for students, and I have extensive experience through statewide dual credit work (dual credit oversight committee, dual credit coordinators work group) that has exposed me to many additional programs. In all of my experience, no program has been more successful than our 5th year program. Over 5 years, our students have achieved an average **college** GPA of 2.9, a course completion rate of 88%, and 60% have continued at Lane Community College after the 5th year. Why? Because this is one of the very few programs that has not relied on grants but instead relied on true collaboration between secondary and post-secondary, along with what I refer to as "co-ownership" of the student by both the high school and the college, which includes all the supports offered by both the high school and the college to ensure that the students develop positive relationships with caring (and highly accessible) professionals and access the supports they need to succeed.

Passage of SB 1537 is critical to maintaining these highly innovative, highly collaborative, and highly successful programs for students that need this type of support the most. These are the types of programs that make a real difference in improving graduation and college-going rates, as well as reduce achievement gaps between those with privilege and those who are underserved.

Oregon Promise is a positive step in the right direction, but will leave out many, many kids... in fact, the kids that we can least afford to leave out if we care about the future of our state.

Please do all that you can to ensure passage of SB 1537.

I would be pleased to speak further about this issue, and welcome your thoughts.

Thank you so much for all that you do,

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