

Dear Senate and House Committees and Education Leaders,

I am writing today in strong support of the 5th Year/Post-Graduate Scholar SB 1537. Eugene School District 4J has a rich partnership with Lane Community College (LCC) which includes the Early College and Career Options High School on the college campus where we primarily serve at-risk students. Our Pathways program sponsors students with identified barriers for their first year of college through well-developed support services provided by both the District and College. Our 4J-ACTS (Advanced Career Technical Student) program bolsters Career Technical Education (CTE) in our high schools by offering students interested in CTE careers (and who have taken CTE courses) a 1-year sponsorship to LCC to pursue their goals under closely monitored advising. 5+ years of College data demonstrates that sponsored students supported by a relationship between the School District and College outperform similar demographics of students attending their first year of college independently and on financial aid.

I could present extensive data (which I have done before) on the success and value of 5th-year programs and the benefit of a truly collaborative relationship between secondary and post-secondary, but testimonies from our students tell it best:

The 4jACTS (Advanced Career Technical Student) Program *"helped me feel extremely successful and confident in my new school....The transition from high school is intimidating but having training wheels on so to speak really helped my beginning college experience."* -- Casey C

"I think this is a good way for high school students to enter into college smoother. Like I said, the transition can be tough and confusing...." -- Rick A

"The day I obtained the letter saying I was accepted to obtain this sponsorship I cried because I knew that if it weren't for this sponsorship I wouldn't have gone to college right out of high school. I am very thankful for the opportunity 4J has offered me to start my college career." -- Esli B

"I loved the fact this sponsorship incorporated a more personal advisor because it's great not having to wait in line for 1-2 hours to speak with someone and the advisor was always happy to help me....This program should definitely continue because aside of being a huge economical help it's a great way in making the transition between high school and college...." -- Esli B

"The program opened up a door for me in furthering my education that I will always be thankful for, and never took for granted." -- Chelsea T

"[A] challenge I see is going into college blindly. Both my parents either didn't go to college or didn't stay in college for long....When I look through college courses and for college classes..., I really don't know what I am looking for. With the advising program supplied by the ACTS sponsorship and Lane Community College I'll have the extra help to overcome this challenge." -- Jaclyn B

"The 4j Advanced Career Technical Student Sponsorship is an amazing opportunity that would mean a lot for my family....It would mean a lot to my family to know that I would have extra guidance through my first year of college." -- Molly C

"This sponsorship is very important to me. I will be the first person in my family to attend college and having the financial support and connection to 4j would make that more possible....This sponsorship will be a life changing opportunity." -- Carson P

"My GPA is very low because of my lack in responsibility two years ago....Lane will be very helpful to me because it will prepare me more in the basics like math, reading, science and writing. My Goals in life involve a lot of hard work and a lot of schooling." -- Leslie P

"...without this opportunity, I might not be able to attend college. I've lived with a single mom and brother my whole life, without a father and no extra help. Growing up and seeing my mom struggle just puts more emphasis on getting a college degree. This sponsorship would give me an opportunity that otherwise might not be achievable." -- Alisha T

"My grades haven't always been indicative of my ability or motivation to succeed. Receiving the sponsorship to LCC would be a clean start for me and I wouldn't take the opportunity lightly." -- Jacob M

"Without [this sponsorship], it is very doubtful that [my family] would even be able to afford one class. Lastly, I would love to continually excel in my interest of dental hygiene. Completing Churchill's Health Academy classes have completely changed my outlook on my future and has opened so many doors for me and my future career. Without this sponsorship, I would not be able to invest my time for educating myself to make the impact I would like to have in the medical field." -- Megan F, GPA 2.46

Oregon Promise offers the opportunity of college for many students, but many others will fall into the gap. SB 1537 ensures that the students you heard from above also have the opportunity and first-year support they need for college.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joe Coleman

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*"Come willingly. Find your purpose. Do the work. Leave prepared. Live empowered." --
ECCO Motto*