

Dear Senate Ed Committee and House Ed Committee members and State Leaders,

I am writing to encourage your approval of State Bill 1537. As a former high school principal and current director of secondary education in Eugene SD 4J, I have witnessed the transformational impact of our district's post-graduate scholars programs (Advanced Career Technical Sponsorship and also the Pathways Program) on students who otherwise would not be able to afford a college education. Not only have these programs motivated these students to stay connected and complete all their HS graduation requirements; the data clearly shows that they have had **far greater success** in community college than the great majority of other students.

While many of these future post-grad scholar candidates will qualify for Oregon Promise, many struggled in high school at the start and due to this handicap were not able to raise their gpa to a 2.50, even though they finished strong. Nearly all these students come from low-income families, and many would be first in family to attend college; the 5th year program funding is their only chance to get on track in college and build a better life while also helping our state to achieve the 40-40-20 goal that we strive for.

It is one thing to provide funds as in the Oregon Promise and another thing to provide both funds *and* supports to ensure each student's success at college, and especially those in greatest need. Senate Bill 1537 will fill the gaps of the Oregon Promise program, by meeting the needs of students who struggled in high school before getting on track and may not have a 2.5 grade point average. It would be a shame if this gap in the Oregon Promise is not addressed. *All* students deserve not only the opportunity to go to college, but the supports to succeed. SB 1537 will provide both.

Thank you,

Randy

*Randy Bernstein
Director of Secondary Education
Eugene School District 4J*