

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing in support of SB 353-1. Last November I voted against M-98, not because I do not believe that we need to increase high school graduation or career and technical programs in our high schools, but because M-98 required school districts to spend a specific per student amount on these programs without providing for any additional funding source.

When I am continually hearing about the budget shortfalls we face, I cannot support the a state requirement of directing a specific amount of funds to specific programs. Firstly, M-98 led the public to believe that NO money would be spent on its implementation UNLESS new funding became available. Secondly, how any funds are allocated should be left up to local districts. While some districts may need to increase career and technical programs, other districts may need to do things like hire or retain elementary or middle school counselors, restore music or sports programs, or lower class sizes depending on what they have done in the past to balance their budgets and serve the needs of their local populations. All of these things also contribute to keeping kids in school and preparing them for college and career.

Any money that is expended for M-98 should allow for district flexibility and should go directly to school districts, not to additional bureaucracy at the Oregon Department of Education to create and administer a new program controlled from the top down.

I urge you to support SB 353-1.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Jeskey
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