



**To: Senate Education Committee**

**From: Jared Mason-Gere, Oregon Education Association**

**RE: Support for SB 456**

The Oregon Education Association representing nearly 45,000 professional educators across Oregon urges your support for SB 456.

Oregon's essential skills graduation requirements allow for high school students to demonstrate a mastery of essential skills in a variety of ways. This is in recognition that there are different ways for students to show what they know and to share their knowledge. Allowing for multiple ways to meet this graduation requirement also honors the myriad programs high school students may be involved in including advanced programs like International Baccalaureate or Advanced Placement, and students seeking diplomas through alternative means, such as the GED. The flexibility also honors student learning needs that may impede their ability to demonstrate mastery through a prescribed method, like a standardized test. Students identified for special education, English learners, and students with other learning needs (including test anxiety among others) should have access to opportunities to demonstrate their mastery and proficiency that may look different from the standardized options.

Currently, Oregon law allows school districts to limit the ways that students can show mastery of this requirement. This basically circumvents the intent of the essential skills administrative rules to allow students multiple options to demonstrate mastery.

This essential skills bill is structured to honor the intent of the essential skills graduation requirement. Students learn and show their learning in a variety of ways. School districts that require students to only show mastery through one vehicle, often the high school Smarter Balanced Assessment, are acting contrary to the legislative intent and contrary to what we know about how students demonstrate learning.

This bill does not seek to erase the graduation requirement but rather give students the options to demonstrate mastery in a way best suited to their learning style, specific learning needs, and/or high school programming that the bill intended.

**The Oregon Education Association urges your support for SB 456.**