Testimony on SB 739 from Coquille High School
Hearing Scheduled for May 14th, 2019
Joint Committee on Student Success

Co-Chair Roblan, Co-Chair Smith Warner, Co-Vice Chair Knopp, Co-Vice Chair Smith, and Committee Members:

My name is Dr. Nancy Golden and I am here today representing the Oregon Research Schools Network (ORSN), a unique program sponsored by the University of Oregon, that is transforming educator practice in several school districts in Oregon and holds great promise for improving our K-12 educational outcomes. I will give you a brief overview of the program and then let you hear directly from the practitioners who are benefitting from this unique partnership on a daily basis.

ORSN is based on the agricultural extension model, which extends service, instruction and research statewide by placing experts in the field to help improve the academic and career outcomes for Oregon's youth. We are currently in a unique five-year pilot project, in partnership across Oregon, with North Eugene High School (4J), Roosevelt High School (PPS), Pendleton High School (PSD #16R) and Coquille High School (CSD #8).

ORSN expenditures: Senate Bill 739 seeks $2.5 million to grow this model and extend it to six additional districts across Oregon, serving additional high schools identified as high need, highly impacted, and geographically diverse. ORSN holds strong promise for creating an improvement and accountability model to increase K-12 performance statewide. This pilot will be expanded and evaluated, to assess its impact on diverse high school graduation rates, better participation in and completion of post-secondary education. In addition, this allocation will allow us to develop affordable scale-up strategies including training materials on how to successfully implement an improvement model (which can be delivered online or in person), the development of a train the trainers approach, and a framework for how to increase university partnership opportunities.

How ORSN works: The ORSN research practice partnership allows an identified and respected teacher leader in each school to contribute 40% of their contract time working within the network, coordinating leadership efforts and collaborating with university faculty and researchers on school-identified goals as an instructional leader. Selected ORSN teacher leaders are recognized as Courtesy Appointment Clinical Professors in the UO College of Education. These Courtesy Appointment Clinical Professors, in partnership with university researchers, are helping to develop a scalable model that can be used in high schools across the state.

Current areas of focus: The four initial schools in our network are solving critical problems of practice with their university partners while at the same time engaging in field-initiated research to measure the impact of the intervention. These areas of focus include chronic absenteeism, 9th grade on-track, trauma-informed practices, classroom management, engagement strategies, and math success.
What is unique about ORSN: ORSN work is rooted in the Oregon Equity Lens and implementation science. It uses an improvement cycle, leveraging localized data to examine systems, structures and achievement in order to establish key school-specific, evidence-based improvement goals and strategies that will positively impact academic outcomes, student behavior and graduation rates. The partnership process includes a continuous and robust evaluation process to help ensure the effectiveness of ORSN and the school specific interventions.

The systemic approach of ORSN: ORSN establishes a structure that ensures deep and value-added partnerships between high schools and universities. Most importantly this structure will ensure that the resources allocated are part of a systemic, coherent approach to increase student outcomes, close opportunity gaps, reduce behavioral problems and increase graduation rates.

The interest and need for ORSN: There is an ever-increasing waiting list for schools, districts and ESD's who want to participate in ORSN. Hillsboro School District is an example of such a district. We have been in close contact for over a year attempting to find resources so they can formally join the network.

The unique opportunity of ORSN: This unique partnership focuses on state-of-the-science teacher and administrator professional development, in conjunction with field-initiated research projects, to improve student learning through a university to practitioner collaborative. Advancing this work throughout Oregon high schools allows them the opportunity to address their unique challenges in collaboration with university faculty who directly participate throughout the improvement cycle and program implementation. This close and continuous partnership between the university faculty and high school staff provides the opportunity to:

- Jointly shape the focus and direction of the research, goals and strategies within their schools
- Develop teacher leadership teams that lead the improvement and implementation cycle while ensuring voices from the field are heard and teacher expertise in valued.
- Meet regularly over a virtual network to connect, collaborate, learn from each other and shrink geographic gaps
- Provide input into the development of a scalable model to improve all Oregon's high schools and ultimately graduation rates

Early returns on ORSN: We are currently finishing the first year of the five-year pilot, so it is too early to have in depth findings. However, at this point, data has shown that:

- The amount of teacher communication regarding their classroom implementation of the ORSN facilitated professional development (PD) has increased compared to prior ORSN implementation.
- Teachers feel their teaching practices, knowledge and skills have been enhanced by ORSN.
- Teachers feel the professional development delivered under ORSN will: increase student confidence as learners; positively influence students' physical or emotional well-being; positively affect student performance and / or achievement; increase graduation rates.

One of the ORSN clinical faculty recently stated, "[Before], our professional development program consisted of a hodgepodge of various unconnected topics. Our professional development today, due to the UO/district partnership is data-driven, consistent and effective. We are so fortunate to be a part of this groundbreaking pilot project."