



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor



OREGON  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

*Oregon achieves . . . together!*

**Colt Gill**

Director of the Oregon Department of Education  
and Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction

June 7, 2019

Dear Sen. Hass, Sen. Roblan, and Rep. Smith Warner,

Thank you for your letter dated May 30, 2019. I appreciate your focus on eliminating barriers to graduation. Several studies have shown that high school GPA is actually a better predictor of college success than assessments, including "[Predicting College Success: How Do Different High School Assessments Measure Up?](#)".

I am happy to convene a group of stakeholders to review [OAR 581-022-2115 – Assessment of Essential Skills](#) to address concerns around the demonstration of proficiency in the Essential Skills using assessment options that are approved by the State Board of Education for the purposes of student eligibility for the high school diploma as established in [OAR 581-022-2000](#) and the modified diploma as established in [OAR 581-022-2010](#).

As requested, we will have the convened group work specifically to address issues around student's accessibility to alternative assessments. However, as the Oregon Diploma requirements that established demonstrated proficiency of Essential Skills were established over a decade ago, the group may also review and provide recommendations on the need and model for the proficiency-based requirement as well other Oregon Diploma requirements.

Our Oregon Diploma requirements were developed at a time before the iPhone, Twitter/Facebook (and other social media), Uber & Lyft, broad access to GPS service, Slack, LinkedIn, Spotify, SpaceX, CRISPR, and several other modern day life technologies and instructional/educational practices such as restorative practices, trauma informed practices, and culturally responsive & sustaining practices.

Governor Brown has set a vision for Oregon that ***every student graduate with a plan for their future***. It is time to take another look at our requirements and understand if we are preparing our students for the Oregon in which they will live, work, play, create, and contribute as a citizen.

We will ensure the group reviews the assessment white paper "A New Path for Oregon" as well as Washington State's HB 1599, Sec. 102, and Tennessee's "Ready to Graduate" indicators. I would also like to have the group review the studies you indicated show that a "*reliance on exit exams, even pseudo exit exams, is tied to higher high school dropout rates.*" I am not familiar with these studies and hope that you can forward links to me.

Again, I appreciate that you entrusted this request to me and we will seek to have the group align to your stated goals to

- provide for a meaningful assessment tool that is clear,
- consistent across all school districts,
- uplifts historically underserved students, and
- does not impede a student's ability to graduate if they have met all other requirements.

Finally, please let me know if any of you would be interested in participating in the convening of this group.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Colt Gill", with a horizontal line underneath.

Colt Gill  
Director of the Oregon Department of Education and  
Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction