

To Senate Education Committee:

The Essential Skills Graduation Requirement does not work. Instead of requiring rigor and high standards to close the achievement gap, it punishes the very students we proclaim to want to catch up.

Instead of awarding these students their rightful high school diploma upon meeting all course requirements and electives with the requisite grade point average, they must jump through an additional hoop that somehow is supposed to prevent an erroneous diploma. They must demonstrate - using one of five measures - that they meet the state's standard on the Essential Skills of reading, writing, and math.

Too many students struggle to pass this final standardized test. That's why nineteen states have abandoned their unfair, punitive measure.

SB 744 ("Eliminating Oregon's Graduation Barrier") would:

- Suspend for the next two years the state-mandated Essential Learning Skills assessment requirement in order to receive a high school diploma.
- Require Department of Education to review state requirements for high school diploma.
- Prohibit State Board of Education from requiring for high school diploma that student show proficiency in any academic content area if student successfully completed credit requirements.

We urge your support for this Bill.

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