

Dear Chair Alonso Leon and members of the committee,

RE: Support for SB 744-A without -4 and -5 amendments

I refer back to my testimony to the Senate committee on 3/3/21 and express concern about the amendments that might allow reinstatement of a requirement to show proficiency in Essential Learning Skills in the future. As I said then,

When we require such an additional barrier to graduation we put students' graduation at risk because we don't trust the quality of the teaching they have received.

This punishes students for our failure to fully fund schools, adequately train teachers, and offer a relevant accessible curriculum. This is wrong.

On the other hand, I applaud the opportunity offered by SB744-A to do a zero-base look at high school diploma requirements based on hearing all the relevant voices.

In this age of extreme media engagement, both the way we teach and our subject matter need to move out of the 20th century. I see these as some of the ideal goals in a high school education:

1. To give the student skills to move forward into further schooling or training that will eventually result in meaningful work

2. To provide a "commons" which brings young people together to break down barriers between groups, to learn about the values and experiences of others, and to be ready to live together in a community.

3. To teach critical thinking and joy in learning.

4. To teach the "soft skills" such as empathy, collaboration, problem solving, self-motivation, etc. so desired by employers and so needed in our society today.

Many of these needs were addressed in the hearings for the Student Success Act. i hope that this review of graduation requirements addresses all of these issues. It could be transformational for education in Oregon if pursued fully.

Thank you for your service,

Carol Greenough, Ph.D.