

Submitter: Judith Smith  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure: SB736

Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Hudson, Vice-Chair Wright, Members of the Committee:  
I ask you to support SB 736.

This bill requires a study on the availability and access to advanced courses. I have four grandchildren who are students in OR public schools. Expecting excellence and equity must be twin goals of public education.

Some schools and districts are better than others at encouraging excellence and equity and giving their students courses and opportunities that prepare them for college and careers. My oldest grandchild is graduating this year having taken advanced courses such as AP or college courses through dual enrollment. His access to advanced courses began in elementary school where he had the opportunity to take a math course above his grade level. He took an accelerated math class virtually in middle school – before the pandemic. He has been accepted at a selective college where he will probably receive credit for his AP test scores.

Two of my other grandchildren are in a different district where the availability of advanced courses is limited. Tests are used to limit the number of students allowed into advanced math, for example. My grandchildren have parents who are willing and able to provide enrichment opportunities in many subjects. That is not true for many students whose families don't have financial resources or who live in rural areas where there are other additional barriers to opportunities.

Limited access to advanced and accelerated learning is detrimental to the students and to the well-being of society. Students with high ability in all demographic groups deserve to have opportunities to learn. It is vital that Oregon find ways to increase access to advanced and accelerated courses. A study as required by SB 736 would shed light on the missing opportunities and how to overcome them.

Respectfully,  
Judith Smith