



HB 5015: High School Graduation and College and Career Readiness Fund

Letter of Support | February 25, 2019

To Co-Chair Johnson, Co-Chair Hayward, Co-Chair Rayfield, Co-Vice Chair Winters, Co-Vice Chair Gomberg, Co-Vice Chair Smith, and members of the Joint Committee On Ways and Means:

My name is Jessica Yu and I am a senior at West Linn High School in West Linn, Oregon. I am also a member of [Oregon Student Voice \(OSV\)](#), a student-led organization that empowers students to be authentic partners with K-12 education decision makers. I am writing on behalf of OSV in support of House Bill 5015. This bill calls for the full funding of the High School Graduation and College and Career Readiness Fund as prescribed by Ballot Measure 98 (2016), providing districts with dollars to spend on programs for career and technical education (CTE), college readiness, and dropout prevention. We see this initiative as an extremely important first step to raising Oregon's graduation rates, as well as preparing students' life after high school. In the following, I share how the partial funding of Measure 98 has already expanded learning opportunities for students at my school, and why full funding is essential to maximize its impacts.

Following the passage of the High School Graduation and College Career Readiness Act, one of my former teachers was designated as our school's Academic Success Coordinator. At any given time, she works with approximately 100 students in our school of 2,000 to who are struggling academically, for reasons ranging from executive function to trauma experienced at home. Some of her responsibilities include running programs that teach academic skills for fostering success, meeting with individuals to discuss and support them in their goals, and serving as a liaison between families, teachers, and students.

Her work has had tremendously positive impacts on the success of students at our school. For example, last year, she worked with a student who was struggling academically and in navigating cultural barriers. She coordinated discussions between the student, their counselor, and their family, which ultimately helped discover that the student had an undiagnosed learning disability. In another instance, she sought out a student who was academically struggling. Through working with them, she learned they were living in an abusive household and she reported the abuse to the Department of Human Services.

However, she was hired for this position only for two years through the funding of Measure 98, and she is uncertain as to whether she will be able to continue her role as the Academic Success Coordinator after this year. Both of us feel that it would be extremely detrimental to students to institute this program for support, then take it away for their last two years. Furthermore, the number of students she is supporting is limited by her capabilities as the single person with this task—there are actually many more students within our community who could use her help.

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This is why I feel so strongly about full funding the College and Career Readiness Fund: not only is it important for professionals like her to keep their position and their programs in place, it is also necessary to begin expanding this initiative to ensure help reaches all of the students who need it. Funding is also necessary to support the career and technical education (CTE) programs that have formed within my school and others. CTE has been used to expand broadcasting/journalism, environmental science, and engineering programs that close opportunity gaps by enabling students to actively engage in real world, career-based learning.

I, as well as the high school members of Oregon Student Voice, believe that House Bill 5015 is essential to students' success. With the full funding of Measure 98, we will be able to continue and further expand programs for academic success and Career Technical Education, which have already positively impacted the lives of students in our schools. We hope that the Senate Committee on Education approves House Bill 5015.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jessica Yu

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