

Kelley Keith
Dean of Pre-college and Transitions
Mt. Hood Community College
26000 SE Stark Street
Gresham, Oregon 97030

House Bill 2987

Chair Doherty and members of the committee:

My name is Kelley Keith and I am the Dean of Pre-college and Transitions at Mt. Hood Community College which includes Adult Basic Education and GED test preparation students. I am testifying on behalf of House Bill 2987. I support this bill for the following reasons:

1. This bill supports the work that many community colleges have already implemented which is using GED test scores of 165 to bypass college placement testing and developmental education sequences, placing students directly into college level courses. I would support this approach statewide for several reasons.
2. Not recognizing a GED test score of 165 as college ready is an equity issue. As community colleges around the state adopt a more holistic placement approach by using multiple measures to place students including, high school GPAs and Smarter Balanced test scores, GED test scores at the honors level of 165, need to be included as one of the measures for placement. The inequity is clear when students who enter directly from high school are able to present GPAs and test scores as proof of college readiness and GED graduates are not able to provide alternative proof of readiness and are expected to take an additional high-stakes test and potentially additional developmental coursework when not needed. By establishing the use of GED test scores of 165 as a college placement measure, we would be creating a more even threshold for GED completing students seeking post-secondary education and training across the state of Oregon.
3. I believe in the skill and capability of our GED completers. Asking GED students who have achieved an honors score of 165 to take two high-stakes tests to demonstrate high school equivalency and college readiness, presents a significant barrier and does not recognize their achievement. The GED tests are rigorous and robust. The tests align with College and Career Readiness Standards which are a subset of the Common Core Standards in our k12 schools, aimed at adult learners. The college ready score of 165 is quite an achievement and should be recognized and honored at our institutions. When our students pass the GED tests and are faced with another long and difficult test to prove their readiness alongside the application, advising, financial aid, and navigation processes at our institutions, they often choose the alternative which is to not continue. I want to see our higher education institutions promote and expand meaningful, equitable, quality, and low-barrier pathways into our colleges for all people in the state of Oregon. This bill supports statewide efforts to implement equitable practices, increase college access, accelerate education opportunities for all students, and increase college completions for even more Oregonians.