

Members of the Joint Committee on Student Success,

I am writing in support of SB 456 which would decouple standardized testing from high school graduation and thus eliminate a significant barrier to receiving a diploma for many students. As part of my written testimony, I would like to provide the committee with some important points and references that support the elimination of this requirement. Text in blue will provide links to references. To assure that you have access to those references in support, I have emailed each committee member individually and I have also uploaded most of the links as separate PDFs for testimony. However, two of them are behind pay walls. I have put an asterisk* next to those two references and you can read the abstracts for those two at the links provided as well as download the full reports, if you wish.

- The requirement to pass a standardized test has denied diplomas to tens of thousands of students throughout the US who have completed all other graduation requirements and demonstrated that they have essential skills to move to their next step in life in other ways. [A review by the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences found that linking standardized tests to graduation has done nothing to raise achievement but has increased dropout rates.](#)
- *[Failure rates on standardized tests can contribute to higher dropout rates.](#) Additionally, [students with disabilities, English learners, students of color and low income students are far more likely to be denied a diploma for not passing a test.](#)
- *[Passing a standardized test to graduate does not improve employment prospects for students who pass the test.](#) Meanwhile, the requirement to pass a standardized test to graduate harms those who fail and thus do not obtain a diploma. [Requiring students to pass a high school exit test has even been linked to increased incarceration for those who do not pass.](#)
- A high school transcript is what gives meaning to a high school diploma. [Student grade point average \(GPA\) provides a far more accurate picture of students' college and career readiness than a score on a standardized test.](#)
- California is a good example of a state that has decoupled high school graduation from standardized testing. [The state also awarded around 30,000 diplomas retroactively to students who had otherwise fulfilled all graduation requirements.](#) Some were without a diploma for nearly a decade. Again, [those most negatively affected by California's previous policy were found to be low income students, students of color, and English learners.](#)

I hope you will take some time to look at the links found here. They provide an overwhelming body of evidence that linking high school graduation to a standardized test is an idea that doesn't work. There are currently only 11 states left that link graduation to an exit exam, down from a high of 27. One of those, Washington, recently signed into law [a bill that decoupled standardized testing from graduation.](#)

Oregon should give our students a chance at a better future and move on from this as well.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Kathleen Jeskey
Canby