



To: Members of the Senate Education Committee
From: Iris Maria Chávez, Oregon Coalition of Community Charter Schools
Date: March 3, 2021
Re: Senate Bill 744 - [Relating to High School Diploma Requirements and Essential Skills](#)

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Thomsen, and members of the Committee,

The Oregon Coalition of Community Charter Schools is our state's charter support organization and are a coalition of community-based, public charter schools representing all corners of our state. Although, we are all unique in our pedagogy and practice, what unites us is our commitment to educational innovation and to high-quality schools for all students.

Now more than ever, we have seen how Oregon families and students have varying needs and wants when it comes to their education. Our schools, as public charter schools, have been developed to meet these varying needs and our educational models are founded on the principle of meeting our students where they are. As such, any review of Oregon's graduation requirements must include the perspective of our varied communities across the state. Communities who know their students well, who understand their disparate needs, and know that we need to address by inequities embedded in our current system. It's critical that Oregon's diploma requirements and proficiency assessments ensure all students—especially Black students, Indigenous students, students of color, students experiencing poverty, students with disabilities, and English Language Learners—have access to the unique social, emotional, and academic support they need to thrive.

ORC3S is also a supporting organization to the Oregon Partners for Educational Justice and are in agreement with our partner organization's analysis of what we need in a comprehensive graduation requirements review and the necessary authority of the State Board of Education. We concur with our partners that SB 744 would be strengthened by the adoption of amendments that:

- Maintain the State Board of Education's authority to ensure Oregon's education system is providing rigorous and relevant learning opportunities to all students.
- Ensure the diploma requirement review's recommendations prioritize developing more equitable and inclusive requirements.
- Ensure the diploma requirement review undertakes an inclusive and transparent process that meaningfully engages historically underserved communities and all stakeholders.
- Ensure the diploma requirement review is comprehensive by covering all of Oregon's diploma options, including the standard diploma, modified diploma, extended diploma, and alternative certificate.
- Ensure the diploma requirement review utilizes disaggregated data to determine if current requirements have resulted in disparities or have been applied inequitably.

We appreciate the attention to this issue and look forward to working with the Committee, ODE, and the SBOE on furthering this work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Iris Maria Chávez", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Iris Maria Chávez

Oregon Coalition of Community Charter Schools (ORC3S)