



## Public Testimony on House Bill 3236

March 9, 2021

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Good afternoon Chair Alonso-Leon, Vice Chairs Neron and Weber, and members of the committee. My name is Korinna Wolfe, and I serve as the Area Senior Director for Multiple Pathways to Graduation for Portland Public Schools. I'd like to begin by expressing my appreciation for this opportunity to speak with all of you and specifically thank you, Representative Alonso-Leon, for the invitation to speak today.

For the past twenty-five years I have worked in mental health and education settings, the past eight as the Area Senior Director of Multiple Pathways to Graduation; supervising principals, schools and programs. Multiple Pathways to Graduation includes (in part) youth Re-engagement, in-district and contracted community based alternative schools, LTCT Day and Residential Treatment Schools and district wide credit recovery. Together we comprise the safety net of the largest school district in Oregon.

As you consider how best to meet the needs of students in alternative pathways in Oregon, it is vital to identify appropriate growth and outcome metrics which center the student communities we have the privilege to serve and to provide appropriate support for the systems established to serve them.

The recent graduation data focused on Oregon's 4-year graduation rate of 82.6%, a continued, and celebrated increase. However, for myself and others in alternative education, the number that also became known that day was 17.4%. In our quest to center students of color, Special Education and emerging multilingual students and eliminate racial opportunity gaps, it is imperative that we ***also*** focus our attention on those students whose lives, for various reasons, are not captured in the 4-year rate.

The 2019-2020 5-year completion rate, the percentage of students who earned either a high school diploma or a GED, was 87.2%, a four and a half percentage increase over the 4-year rate, and up more than 5.5% over the past five years. This rise, ***also*** worthy of celebration, is overwhelming the result of alternative schools. As a member of the State's ESSA Accountability Work group in 2016, we discussed the creation of expanded state report cards to capture appropriate metrics for students in alternative education. This could also be considered within HB 3236.

As we work together throughout Oregon to serve all of our students in K-12 education, it is imperative that we create data systems that assess and account for all students up to age 21, as our law states. It is vital that we expand re-engagement efforts for older students and expand pathway programs from high school diploma and GED to post-secondary. It is important to consider that figures using Net Operating Expense operate from a significantly higher level of funding than a percentage of ADM. It is imperative that we appropriately define and support a strong system of alternative pathways, which resource schools at a level which allows them to provide intensive services.

I support HB 3236 and the creation of a state task force to create recommendations regarding alternative pathways. Thank you.