

April 14, 2021

Joint Ways and Means Committee
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 2412A – Funding for ASPIRE, AVID, BUILD EXITO, CollegePossible & TRiO

Chair Co-Chair Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair Dan Rayfield, and Co-Chair Elizabeth Steiner Hayway.

I'm writing to you today to urge you to support and fund HB 2412A. This bill provides funding for five different college access programs that were funded in the Governor's Recommend Budget. These programs provide valuable access and support for students from low-income backgrounds, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and first-generation college students to help them achieve their post-secondary goals.

The AVID system in particular has been particularly transformative in my school district. As a former AVID Elective teacher and current AVID District Director, I've seen firsthand the positive effect it can have on individual students, schools, and a district as a whole. Our AVID Elective students have collectively earned tens of millions of dollars in scholarship and grant money and been accepted into prestigious colleges and institutions like Yale University. Our AVID Elective Classes have been incredibly successful at specifically targeting and preparing our first-generation college students and students from traditionally underrepresented groups to apply to, get accepted at, and succeed in any college or career path they choose to pursue after high school.

At a schoolwide and districtwide level, AVID has given us a common definition of what effective instructional strategies should look like in every classroom and the tools, systems, and processes we need to continually assess and improve our not just our classroom instruction, but all of our school and district systems to ensure equitable access to rigorous instruction and success for ALL students. That is the true power of the AVID system.

Investing in these five programs in HR 2412A supports Oregon and the HECC's goals of increasing historically underserved students' pathways to access higher education and earn their degrees. It takes both a strong education system and community partners who deliver quality programs and measurable results to improve student outcomes across the state.

Programs like these are transformative and I strongly urge the committee to pass and fund HB 2412A.

Sincerely,
Benjamin Sell
AVID District Director
Greater Albany Public Schools