



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor



OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Oregon achieves . . . together!

Colt Gill

Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction

**Senate Bill 744 A - Review of Oregon Diploma
House Education Committee
May 13, 2021**

Chair Alonso Leon, Vice-Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the House Education Committee,

The Oregon Department of Education submits the following information as you consider SB 744-A and also encourages your support of this important and necessary study of the Oregon Diploma.

While we have made strides in our graduation rates, especially among our students who identify as Latino/a/x, African American/Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian American/Pacific Islanders, and Emergent Bilingual/English Language Learners, we still have a long ways to go towards the goal of achieving equity for our students. ODE hopes to come back to the legislature with recommendations for your consideration regarding Oregon's high school graduation requirements with the application of an equity lens to the Oregon Diploma. In this process, we commit to an inclusive study that will reflect feedback from communities of color, students, parents, school districts, teachers, and our education associations. We hope the recommendations from this review will impact our students in a positive way.

We urge your support of SB 744 A.

Below we have outlined the current law impacting diplomas in Oregon and information on SB 744 A.

Thank you,
Jessica Ventura

CURRENT LAW

ORS 329.451 governs the awarding of diplomas, modified diplomas, extended diplomas, and alternative certificates. The statute contains a mix of legislative, State Board, and local authority for setting graduation requirements:

Diploma: ORS 329.451 gives the State Board authority to establish requirements and sets some basic unit of credits requirements. Specifically, students must meet all requirements established by the State Board and complete:

- Twenty-four total credits;
- Three credits of mathematics; and
- Four credits of English.

Under the authority of 329.451, the State Board has set requirements for the diploma in OAR 581-022-2000. Requirements include:

- Unit of credit requirements that are in excess of those required by the statute (581-022-2000(6));
- Students must demonstrate proficiency in the Essential Skills adopted by the State Board as provided in OAR 581-022-2150 (581-022-2000(7)); and
- Students must develop an education plan and profile (581-022-2000(9));
- Students must build a collection of evidence to demonstrate extended application (581-022-2000(10));
- Students must participate in career-related learning experiences (581-022-2000(11)); and
- Students must complete twelve years of school except where otherwise allowed (581-022-2000(15)).

Modified Diploma: The statute defines some parameters for who is eligible to earn the modified diploma and then gives the State Board authority to establish the requirements for a modified diploma. The State Board has adopted requirements for the modified diploma in OAR 581-022-2010.

Extended Diploma: Requirements for the extended diploma are set in statute and the State Board does not have authority to add additional requirements.

Alternative Certificate: Requirements for the alternative certificate are to be established by the board of each school district or public charter school.

Since schools were closed for in-person learning as a result of the COVID pandemic, statewide testing was waived for the 2019-2000 school year. Due to the ongoing impact of COVID in the 2020-2021 school year, ODE recently submitted a waiver request to the US Department of Education (USDOE) for the 2020-2021 school year.

SENATE BILL 744-A

Review of current diploma requirements

The bill requires ODE to conduct a review of ORS 329.451 and rules related to the current diploma requirement and report those results to committees and the State Board of Education no later than September 1, 2022. At a minimum, the review must include:

- Comparison of Oregon diploma requirements with those in other states.
- Expectations of employers and post-secondary institutions related to knowledge and skills of persons who earn a diploma.
- Determination if those expectations are aligned with the high school diploma, and
- Determination if the requirements are equitable and inclusive.

The report may recommend changes in legislation and rules including changes to the diploma requirements in this amendment. The language in Section 3(2)(b) appears to eliminate all diploma requirements beyond 24 total credits with 3 credits of mathematics and 4 credits of English.

The amended bill centers an equity framework and inclusiveness of historically underrepresented groups to provide input on the report. Depending on the recommendations and how they would be enacted, this could ultimately

Removal of Essential Skills requirements for a diploma

Section 1 of the bill removes the Essential Skills requirements for a diploma during the 2021-2022 **or** the 2022-2023 school year. In Section 3, Essential Skills proficiency requirements are eliminated starting July 1, 2023. Allowances for accommodations to demonstrate

proficiency in Essential Skills is deleted since the requirement for Essential Skills proficiency is removed. ODE is permitted to recommend repeal of these amendments through the required report. If the Department wants to maintain the Essential Skills, we would have to, in the report, recommend repealing the amendments to 329.451 that are in Section 3. The default is no Essential Skills with no alternative for students to show proficiency to graduate.

We understand this portion of the bill will require more conversation. We look forward to partnering and strengthening this part of the bill.

A final report is due to the Legislative Assembly and State Board of Education no later than September 1, 2022.