

May 24, 2021

Members of the House Committee on Education,

I urge your support for SB 744 A-5, with some reservations.

The push for additional assessments beyond the traditional graduation requirements of credits and GPA has been a dismal failure. It has served to push students out of high schools and has taken precious time from counselors -- turning them into testing coordinators -- for tests that serve no meaningful purpose.

There is no credible evidence that graduation tests produce any positive outcomes, nor have they been found to have any predictive value of post-high school success.

While I applaud SB 744's suspension of these barriers to graduation, I fear that the provisions of Amendment-5 will ultimately renew this harm in Fall 2024.

Why do I have this fear? Because I have no trust that the ODE will make any determination on Essential Skills that differs from the disastrous course they have charted for the past twenty years: an obsession with testing and data collection that harms everyone except the testing corporations and all who earn their paychecks from useless testing data processing in its many forms.

The ODE's role in excessive testing has done great harm. Their lack of accountability has resulted in a decidedly tone-deaf government agency. In short, the ODE has never missed an "opportunity" to test and collect data and they have been historically dismissive of those who have criticized their testing-and-data-based world view.

Until the ODE becomes accountable, they will continue to do harm. I do not trust their judgment in the ultimate fate of the Essential Skills graduation requirement.

Sincerely,

Roscoe Caron

Retired Eugene District 4j teacher  
Member, Community Alliance for Public Education (CAPE)  
Member, Oregon Public Education Network (OPEN)