

March 1, 2021

Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I write in support of SB 744 to remove Oregon's "Barrier to Graduation". I am a retired middle school teacher and I am very concerned about what has happened to public education in Oregon. In fact, it breaks my heart.

Since the "No Child Left Behind Act" was passed in 2001, I watched the "standardized testing-based" model cause more damage every year. Beginning in elementary school, kids are treated like "data points". For some students, standardized testing is relatively easy. For other students, with fewer resources, it is an anxiety-producing nightmare. Some learn soon enough to give up, no longer trying. They accept their label and their tracking.

Then, with the advent of the Essential Skills graduation requirement, the stakes of the failure-based model got higher. Even if students passed all of their classes and completed the required number of credits, it wasn't enough. It was enough for past generations, but no longer.

Consequently, the state of Oregon has played a measurable role in pushing countless students to drop out. The state of Oregon has turned far too many counselors into test-taking coordinators, rather than mental health professionals and mentors. It's all lose-lose. Nothing of true value is gained. So much is lost.

This data-based model of education has been an unqualified failure. So much taxpayer money has been squandered and so much damage has been done to students, teachers and families. We've truly lost our way.

Please have the courage to be the leaders who finally say, "Enough!" Support SB 744. Be the ones who lead the way toward a more sane, rational and equitable schooling experience for Oregon students and teachers.

Roscoe Caron
840 W. 22nd Ave.
Eugene, OR 97405
roscoecaron@gmail.com

Member, Community Alliance for Public Education (CAPE)
Member, Oregon Public Education Network (OPEN)