

Submitter: Mel Bankoff
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB421

Dear Senator Dembrow and the Senate Education Committee

My name is Mel Bankoff from Eugene and I am in full support of Senate Bill 421. I am presently the Executive Director of a 501-C-3 Partners for Sustainable Schools. Our organization has been working directly in the public schools over the last 15 years. We have seen the demographics shift over the years with the influx of students with various ethnic backgrounds from around the world. Therefore we see the importance of the passage of SB 421 for various reasons

Senate Bill 421 creates leadership and empowerment opportunities for the cultural changes occurring in Oregon Schools.

Senate Bill 421 offers a wonderful opportunities for civic engagement of our youth from diverse populations to work together to find common ground in advising the ODE on policies that directly affect their lives and future generation of students.

Senate Bill 421 affirms that all our youth are important and we are listening to their concerns. Working for many years with students we are always impressed and many times amazed in how thoughtful they are in expressing their concerns and developing creative solutions to various challenges that arise.

Senate Bill 421 will contribute more diversity to the decision making process that will create greater equity in our educational system.

Senate Bill 421 will honor the plurality of our student population throughout the State. I believe that hatred, fear and discrimination arises when there is a lack of understanding of cultural differences. The diversity of the student population within our schools can add to greater appreciation and understanding of these cultural differences which can foster greater respect and acceptance.

Senate Bill 421 creates the opportunity for Oregon to be a model and pathfinder for other States to emulate. We live in a time of dangerous division and violence throughout the country. As conscious adults it is beholden on us to assist the next generation to bring more understanding, empathy, and peace into the world. Senate Bill 421 is a important step in that direction for youth and therefore I strongly support the passage Senate Bill 421

Thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts on the importance of the passage of Senate Bill 521 Sincerely Mel Bankoff