



BLACHLY SCHOOL DISTRICT #90
Triangle Lake Charter School K- 12
"A community is known by the schools it keeps"
Superintendent: Adam Watkins

Submitter: Adam Watkins
Committee: House Committee On Higher Education
Measure: HB3120

Good afternoon, Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Ruiz and Vice-Chair McIntire and members of the committee. For the record my name is Adam Watkins and I am the Superintendent at Blachly School District 90. We are a small rural district West of Eugene. Thank you for allowing me to share with my experience and support of HB3120-2.

I am here to provide testimony supporting HB3120-2, The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall establish a grant program for the purpose of supporting organizations that expand the scope and community reach of college access and success programs for the purpose of increasing college enrollment and post-secondary completion rates for Oregon's historically underrepresented. This bill also aligns with the recommendations of the Joint Task Force On Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education (JTUSHE).

In the last biennium budget, HB 2412-2 invested \$5 Million to five College Access and Success organizations in the state. The intended purpose of those funds was to increase support services for Oregon's historically underrepresented students and expand the number of students served across the state.

As a small rural superintendent, we struggle being able to provide some the amazing opportunities that our larger districts can provide for higher education and the skills that we have identified that students need to be successful post-high school. We have several students that are first generation to even consider high education as an option.

We have been fortunate enough to receive the HECC grant for small rural districts in partnership with AVID. Without this funding and/or support, we would not have been able to bring AVID to our district and to start changing the culture of our district. We have taken the attitude that every student deserves the opportunity to attend college and the skills necessary to be successful in college and their career choices. With the funding from HECC, we are now able to see this dream and opportunity for our students become a reality.

I would ask that you continue to support HB2412-2 and invest into our students futures. Without this funding, we would not be able to bring AVID to our small district, that has truly been transformational. We daily have conversations with our students and families now about their dreams and futures. No longer does that lack of opportunities that our district could not provide is a barrier.

Thank you again for you continued support of small rural districts and our students. All students truly have the right to pursue and achieve their dreams, no matter what geographical location or circumstances they find themselves in, at no control of their own.

Sincerely,

Adam Watkins