



Office of the Senate President

Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Hudson and Wright, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Rob Wagner, Senate President and State Senator representing SD 19, which includes Lake Oswego, West Linn, Tualatin, SW Portland, Rivergrove, and Durham.

Many of you know that I got my start as a public servant when I was elected to the Lake Oswego School Board in 2017. Before that, I worked at Portland Community College and lobbied in this legislature for school funding for community colleges. As State Senator, I served as Chair of the Senate Committee on Education and was proud to see the passage of the Student Success Act in 2019, solidifying a higher level of funding for our K12 schools. My ties to education run deep.

Nelson Mandela once said that “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”. Colleagues, our students here in Oregon have the power to change the world partly because of the investments we are making in education. But not all our students are being afforded the same opportunities. Right now, there are dozens of students in Oregon being denied their right to an education. Students with disabilities have been left out and ignored in our schools, being denied the same number of school days as their peers. This is both a disservice to those students and to our state that is putting these students at a disadvantage.

But, here today, we are presented with a bipartisan effort to remedy this. Both chambers and both parties worked hard to get this policy right and we should all be proud of that. I want to close by giving thanks to Senator Gelser Blouin who has been working diligently and passionately for a long time to help these students. I also want to thank Rep. Neron and Hudson and all the education-related organizations that worked on this bill.

Colleagues, it is critical that we pass SB 819 this session so that we can get kids back to school as soon as possible. I urge your support of SB 819.

Sincerely,

Oregon Senate President Rob Wagner
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