



RE: SB 141 – K-12 Accountability

Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Sahaan McKelvey and I am the Director of Advocacy & Engagement at Self Enhancement, Inc (SEI). At SEI we have been serving children and families for 44 years by creating people, place, community and purpose that allows our young people to achieve success.

I am here today to offer support for SB 141.

Over the decades of SEI's existence, we have seen Oregon make meaningful increases in public education funding, yet our system continues to fail our students, especially those from the historically marginalized communities that SEI serves. **When our educational investments can be directly tied to student achievement, as SB 141 proposes, we can progress towards closing persistent disparities for low-income students, students with disabilities, and students of color.** Only then can we be confident that we are investing well. We need quality relational investment in our kids from their educators, and interim data gleaned from those year-round relationships, not just end of year summatives that do not allow for meaningful interventions for teachers -- or for their partners in education, like SEI. When we invest our time and resources in this way, then we can assure our students that we are building an improved system of education that can be impactful year-round.

SB 141 will advance a promising plan for K-12 improvement and accountability by ensuring the state has the authority to provide targeted and meaningful supports to struggling school districts - we need this. Underperforming schools and struggling districts need to be bolstered so that we can give our students the education that they deserve. Contrary to fears related to previous national accountability efforts, SB 141 does not propose school takeovers or withholding funding. This bill is a reflection of Oregon learning that those strategies don't work. This bill will strengthen partnerships between the State, districts, and hopefully also with local communities and their partners in educating children, like SEI.

We cannot turn our backs on struggling schools or perpetuate damaging assumptions about who is deserving of, or capable of learning. **All children can learn!**

Today, SEI urges the committee to support SB 141 so we can make clear we hold high expectations for every student, and that the State will support schools to deliver quality learning experiences to all children.

Thank you

Sahaan McKelvey
Director of Advocacy & Engagement
Self, Enhancement, Inc.