

Date: March 12, 2025

From: Jill Vogt

Subject: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 141

Dear Chair Frederick, Vice Chair Weber, and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

For the record, my name is Jill Vogt. I have worked in Oregon public education for over 15 years, partnering with districts, ESDs, and the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). As a native Oregonian, I am deeply committed to student success and the power of education in shaping our state's future. I am also on the Board of Camp Yakety Yak, a local nonprofit serving youth experiencing disabilities.

I support SB 141 because research demonstrates that clear expectations, strong policies, and evidence-based strategies drive student achievement. States like Louisiana and Mississippi, once among the lowest-performing, now lead in student growth due to their commitment to accountability and instruction. As we develop policy and move into implementation, we must rely on evidence and learn from successful models. My testimony focuses on strengthening this bill and recommendations going forward.

Clear Priorities with Focused Investments

The success of SB 141 relies on ODE's capacity and investments. Strong-performing states share common elements:

- **Data-driven accountability:** Prioritizing and aligning investments with attendance, literacy, and math proficiency, especially for struggling learners.
- **A commitment to statewide, science-based professional development:** State education agencies (SEAs) are leading statewide professional development while also engaging site-based educators. For example, Mississippi's model engaged 400+ teachers in advisory committees, which directly shaped and iterated their teacher training.
- **Unified state leadership:** Strong backing from the Governor, Legislature, and State Board of Education with local partnerships ensures consistency.
- **Family engagement:** The SEAs provide aligned instructional resources in multiple languages to empower families.
- **High-quality instructional materials:** SEAs identify a select set of well-curated high-quality instructional materials and provide incentives and support to help districts adopt and implement them effectively.

Coaching Capacity & Expertise

The success of this model depends on ODE's expertise and capacity. A well-defined theory of action, aligned with growth indicators and grounded in proven evidence-based practices, is essential for the coaching model's effectiveness. While the bill focuses on district accountability, it can hold ODE accountable in this area.

For example, more explicit language should be used regarding student success team expertise. The bill references expertise in "improvement strategies, including the use of differentiated instruction and inclusionary practices." However, research consistently emphasizes "evidence-based, high-quality curriculum, instruction, and educator professional development" as the most impactful school improvement strategies.

Reporting and Transparency

I support data transparency and accessible school performance reporting for families. Many state leaders and SEAs also play an active role in this effort. I appreciate ODE's commitment to transparency and encourage prioritizing family-friendly (i.e., easy to understand, prioritized on key metrics, and accessible) reporting tools whenever possible. Two additional areas where Oregon can do this:

1. **Statewide recognition of high-performing schools:** Many state leaders recognize and celebrate schools demonstrating growth through public relations campaigns--fostering hope, showcasing successes, and sharing what works. Rhode Island's Governor-led campaign, for example, highlights top-performing schools to celebrate those increasing their attendance.
2. **Enhanced online report cards:** While the bill assigns school reporting responsibilities to districts, redesigning Oregon's Online Report Card for families would improve the clarity and accessibility of performance data.

Reduction of Redundancies and Administrative Burdens Based on Priorities

Districts invest significant resources in compliance. Expanding the study of reporting requirements to include all state-mandated data collections, including over 100 grant applications, reports, and other data collections--will provide an additional reprieve from the compliance burden.

Prioritizing data collection based on research and student outcomes that are aligned with growth targets would also enable districts to focus their resources on students, making the right work easier to do. State statutes often pose additional barriers to true reductions. I urge the Oregon Legislature to commit to the necessary statutory changes for a streamlined, prioritized, and student-centered data collection process.

Additionally, integrating grants and reports should be assessed for actual reduction in administrative burden. The Integrated Guidance was intended to provide relief but instead added complexity and just co-located many requirements.

School Improvement Alignment & Visibility

The Longitudinal Performance Growth Target (LPGT) framework focuses on districts, but individual schools—including charters—should not be overlooked as the data are aggregated at the district level. State charters operate with additional independence and are accountable to the State Board of Education, which should also be reflected in the model.

Establishing clear school identification and exit standards for improvement and coaching are critical for the accountability model. It's also important to align and clarify the process and criteria used to identify

Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) designations under ESSA alignment. Schools and districts need these processes to be clear, coherent, and based on sound research practices.

Assessments

Interim growth measures are vital for tracking student progress. Norm-referenced assessments (e.g., iReady, MAP) are research-based, correlate with state assessments, and are widely used in Oregon. I recommend explicitly including norm-referenced in addition to criterion-referenced assessments.

The bill states that districts and charters "shall implement statewide assessment systems in math, science, and language arts and the interim assessment" however science is not an LPGT. If science is a required interim assessment, it could divert focus from prioritized indicators and add a significant time requirement.

Oregon's stance on summative assessment needs clarification. The state promotes a generous summative assessment opt-out policy while simultaneously using that same assessment data to hold districts accountable. States leading in this work view assessments as essential tools for system improvement and make meaningful use of their data for improvement. Finally, summative assessment results should be released in the summer rather than the fall, as done in many other states, to allow timely planning.

Workforce and Career Readiness

Including math in LPGTs addresses a prior accountability gap. Leading states (i.e., Maryland, Massachusetts, and Indiana) also incorporate workforce and career readiness indicators, such as Career and Technical Education (CTE) completion and industry certifications. While career readiness is absent from LPGTs, the bill's local option metrics allow districts to integrate these measures where applicable.

Conclusion

SB 141 represents a significant step toward strengthening Oregon's accountability model and ensuring that all students have access to a high-quality education. Refinements and considerations for implementation, as we move forward, will ensure it has the intended impact.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jill Vogt