

April 7, 2025

Subject: Support for SB 141 – Renewing Oregon’s K-12 Accountability System

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

I serve as Vice President of Education for the national nonprofit [Results for America](#), where I work closely with the U.S. Department of Education, state education agencies, and school districts to make investing in what works the “new normal” so that government decision makers regularly and effectively use evidence and data to increase the impact of the over \$1.3 trillion that governments spend each year to open opportunities and advance economic mobility. I also have the privilege of serving on the Board of Directors of [Children’s Institute](#) and am the parent of a 4th grader and a 6th grader who attend public schools in Portland.

I am writing to express my support for SB 141, a bill that, while imperfect, represents an important step forward in ensuring that Oregon’s public schools provide the kind of world-class education our students need in order to thrive in a changing global economy. As a champion of data- and evidence-based policymaking, I am particularly glad to see the bill’s emphasis on:

- **A comprehensive set of accountability *metrics*** that help paint a clear and holistic picture of how students are doing, and in particular the inclusion of the K-2 attendance metric, which will give us earlier visibility and opportunity to intervene and support our youngest learners.
- **A simplified but strengthened accountability *system*** that balances support with intervention when schools and districts are not meeting expectations, including by ensuring that districts’ proposed use of funds are grounded in evidence and aligned with local need and context.
- **Interim assessments that educators, students, and families alike can use** to understand whether and to what extent they are on track and make more frequent adjustments as needed throughout the year.
- **A streamlined data and reporting system** that will reduce burden on districts and shift their focus to the work of supporting and improving schools.

Oregon has quite a long road ahead if it’s serious about its commitments to improving outcomes for students. Nationally, Oregon ranks in the middle of the pack for per student spending, yet ranks among the worst in the nation for outcomes. This is unacceptable. **Our schools are filled to the brim with brilliant students overflowing with potential - and it is our job to ensure that we are *putting every single dollar spent on our public schools to work, investing funds as effectively as possible on the things we know matter.*** We cannot afford to preserve the status quo. Our students and families need and deserve bold, urgent action.

Change is hard, and can feel messy - but we cannot continue to let adult discomfort or the pursuit of a “perfect” bill stand in the way of making changes we know are best for students.

I urge the Legislature to act with swiftness to pass SB 141, a bill that has the potential to catalyze significant and sustained change for Oregon's nearly 500,000 students.

In partnership,
Sara Kerr