



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. **Right now the financial investment that we are making into education is not aligned with the results that we are seeing. And improved accountability to maximize our investment is imperative.** We use the word accountability synonymously discipline. But this is not what accountability really means. Accountability means that what we do is impactful to those that we are accountable to. Accountability means that we make decisions with the realization that our choices are bigger than ourselves, and so we give those choices greater weight and consideration. And before we can say that we are implementing accountability then we have to determine who we are going to be accountable to, and we then have to allow that party to hold us accountable. Are we accountable to our state departments or elected officials? Are we accountable to our tax paying public? Or are we accountable to the students that we are supposed to be serving with excellence in education?

If it is the latter, and I believe that we would universally say that this is the case, then 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. Only then can we say that we are actually accountable to our students. If we are accountable to a student then we do not need a test to tell us that this student needs support. If we are accountable to this student then we have empowered the student's teachers to be relationally connected to them, and the teachers will provide the support that is needed long before a test dictates it.

SB 141 can 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 accountability in education that they deserve. We need to double down on our kids and prove to them that WE, the adults, are truly accountable to THEM, the students. Our systems of education must do more to fulfill this mandate of accountability, and SB 141 is a step towards making this happen. 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 move SB 141 forward. It is time! We must build accountability to our youth by ensuring that we hold high expectations for every student, and that we will invest in the relational learning that we know works. Our state must send the message to our kids that we will support schools to deliver quality learning experiences to ALL children.

Thank you

Sahaan McKelvey

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