



Testimony in Opposition To Provisions of HB 2587 Reducing Education Expectations For Oregon Learners

The Oregon Business Council strongly opposes the provisions of House Bill 2587, Section 5 (1) (a) and (b). If enacted, these provisions would eliminate the strong postsecondary outcomes in the 40-40-20 Goal that the 2011 Legislature expressed for Oregon's education system and students in Senate Bill 253.

This part of HB 2587 says students should merely have access to postsecondary opportunities. In fact, because Oregon's postsecondary outcomes are not close to what our economy and citizens need, we should keep and keep working to achieve the high outcomes expressed in 40-40-20.

Background. In consideration of rising education needs of 21st Century work and life, Senate Bill 253 defined the desired education outcome, known as 40-40-20, as follows: By the year 2025, 40 percent of adult Oregonians will have earned a baccalaureate degree or higher; 40 percent will have earned an associate degree or post-secondary credential; and the remaining 20 percent will have earned a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Since its adoption, 40-40-20 has been a guide and measure for education system improvement and accountability. It also expresses faith in the capabilities of Oregon students.

The Problem. The provisions of HB 2587 hold that Oregon students "be given the opportunity to attain" a bachelor degree or higher and "be given the opportunity to attain" an associate's degree or similar post-secondary credential.

If Oregon is serious about raising the capabilities and knowledge of its upcoming generations, and of holding its education system accountable, it is our view that it should hold itself to the standard of degrees and credentials earned, not just programs or classes made available.

Based on the data illustrated on OBC's Oregon Learns website, Oregon cannot afford low expectations of its students or its education system expressed in terms of access rather than outcomes. The Education Pathway tool at this site (<http://data.oregonlearns.org/>) for the Oregon high school class of 2006, shows that we are falling dramatically short of our goals for post-secondary attainment. For the full cohort of 41,000 students, by age 25, only 27% had earned any kind of post-secondary credential. For students experiencing poverty, postsecondary attainment drops to 12%; for African-American students, it is 14%; for American Indian/Alaskan Native, it is 12%; and for Latino students, it is 11%.

OBC Position. To do better for our students, we must keep – and keep working to help them achieve – high and well-defined postsecondary outcomes.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Duncan Wyse', is written over a white background.

Duncan Wyse
President, Oregon Business Council

By 2020, 65 percent of all U.S. jobs will require a postsecondary credential.

—Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce

Just less than 40 percent of Oregonians hold at least an associate degree.

—U.S. Census, 2012