



PRESS RELEASE

OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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House Votes for State Board of Education to Review High School Diploma Requirements

SB 744 requires the Oregon Department of Education to do a comprehensive review of high school diploma requirements with a focus on equity, accessibility, and inclusivity.

SALEM, OR—Today the Oregon House voted in support of [SB 744](#), which requires the Oregon Department of Education to do a comprehensive review of all high school diploma options (high school diploma, modified diploma, extended diploma and alternative certificate) and requirements, report to the Legislature and State School Board with the results and findings, and suspend the Essential Learning Skills requirement for one additional year while under review. The bill emphasizes equity, accessibility, and inclusivity in both processes and outcomes.

“It’s time to understand just what we want to see in the next generation of Oregonians,” said [Sen. Lew Frederick](#) (D-Portland).

The bill includes a comparison of our Oregon high school diploma requirements with diploma requirements in other states, as well as an analysis of employer and post-secondary institution skill and knowledge expectations.

“As a teacher, I can say this firsthand: It is time for a comprehensive review of high school diploma requirements with all stakeholders at the table and it is imperative that we ensure each Oregon student has an equal opportunity to receive their diploma and meet necessary requirements,” said [Rep. Paul Evans](#) (D-Monmouth). “I’m proud to support SB 744. This will help us work toward a more equitable and sustainable measure of student success and proficiency.”

In addition to passing grades in required courses, Oregon students must demonstrate proficiency through an Essential Skills requirement, added in 2009. Many districts report challenges in implementing this requirement as it was originally intended.

“The original goal of the Essential Skills requirement was to make sure that students can actually apply their learning outside the classroom and in real-world situations. We need to get back to that original goal, and SB 744 will get us there,” said [Sen. Michael Dembrow](#) (D-Portland).

The Department of Education, in light of pandemic challenges facing our students, families and educators, suspended the Essential Skills requirement due to COVID. SB 744 will further suspend Essential Skills through the 2023-2024 school years as the review, recommendations, and policymaking proceed so that outdated requirements do not act as a filler while the board, department, and legislature make modifications.

“Oregon has a practical opportunity to evaluate the Essential Skills requirement and report to the State School Board as to how it can be strengthened or modified, or if it should continue at all.” said [Rep. Courtney Neron](#) (D-District 26), who carried the bill today. “As we review what should be included to earn a high school diploma in Oregon, education advocates are calling on us to evaluate if this is a necessary and helpful added layer to our graduation requirements.”

The review will also incorporate the new Civics Education requirement that the legislature passed earlier this session in [SB 513](#).

The bill passed 38-18 and now heads to the Governor’s desk.

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