

**TRACY CRAMER**  
State Representative  
House District 22



OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

September 18, 2023

Via Electronic Mail

Oregon State Board of Education  
255 Capitol Street NE  
Salem, OR 97310

RE: State Board of Education's September 21, 2023 Consent Agenda

Chair Martinez Zapata, Vice Chair Scurlock, and Board Members Wheeler, Morales, Russell, Howard Wade, and Montgomery:

As a member of the House Committee on Education and Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education, I request the removal of item 3A from Board of Education's September 21, 2023 agenda.

I understand that the Superintendent of Public Instruction (the Governor) has the authority to place items on the Consent Calendar. Per page 48 of the Board's Policy Manual, "items may be placed on the consent agenda upon the recommendation of the superintendent."

The consent agenda is a tool that should only be for non-controversial business items, but this proposal would fast-track a consequential decision that impacts the next four years of Oregon high school graduates.

**I request you exercise your power as board members to remove item 3A from the consent agenda to allow for more parental and public input.**

In the September 2023 Docket Packet for item 3A, Department staff acknowledges that suspending the Assessment of Essential Skills requirement "may also result in less student accessibility, public transparency, and comparability." These concerns should not be downplayed by rushing this decision through the consent agenda.

Senate Bill 744 (2021) suspended the Essential Skills Learning requirements through the end of this school year. Further, it gave you, as the Board of Education, unilateral authority over the future use of Essential Skills Learning requirements.

Beyond being what I believe is an improper delegation of power by the previous Legislature, I wholeheartedly disagree with the idea that we should have no graduation standards for students graduating for the better part of this decade. The Essential Skills Learning requirements provide

valuable assessments and data to ensure our students can read, write, and do math before graduation.

If the current standards are not working as intended, let's replace them. Having no standards turns our diplomas into participation trophies. As we have seen an inching up of our graduation rates in the last few years, we have seen a corresponding decline in achievement.

The suspending of graduation standards is only a disservice to Oregon students and erodes trust with parents who expect that when they send their students off to school, they come home better prepared for their future.

Trust in our public schools is dwindling. At a time when a record number of parents have pulled their kids from public schools, we should be doing more to earn their trust. I believe pulling item 3A from the consent calendar and rescheduling more time for public input would be a good first start in earning some of that trust back.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tracy Cramer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Tracy Cramer  
Oregon State Representative  
House District 22

**CC:**

Governor Tina Kotek  
Charlene Williams, Acting Director of the Department of Education and Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Nicole Peterson, Legislative Coordinator – Oregon Department of Education  
Zoe Larmer, Government Relations & External Affairs Director – Oregon Department of Education