

QuickPoint! – Dropping High School Graduation Standards Hurts Students’ Future Prospects

By Stewart Robertson

Recently, Governor Kate Brown quietly [signed Senate Bill 744](#). The new law drops the requirement that high school students show proficiency in math, reading, and writing in order to graduate. The move has received significant media coverage. But little attention is being paid to what will happen once these students receive their diplomas.

A high school diploma is a sign of accomplishment. It shows the student has demonstrated reasonable proficiency in reading, writing, and math. These are important skills for any career path—especially if that path involves college. The new law makes it more likely college admissions staff will think twice before admitting graduates from an Oregon public school. Why would a college want a student who can’t do long division? Why would an employer hire a candidate who doesn’t understand basic algebra?

Just a few years ago, the education establishment pushed STEM skills: science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Oregon’s new law effectively says the days of STEM are over. With SB 744, simply warming a chair is all that’s needed to get a diploma in an Oregon public school.

Believe it or not, the Oregon legislature reconvenes in less than 6 months. In the meantime, let your representative know how important it is we bring back proficiency requirements. The futures of our children are at stake.

Stewart Robertson is a Research Associate at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon’s free market public policy research organization.

August 18, 2021

Word Count: 218

Attention editors
and producers:

Cascade Commentaries are provided for reprint in newspapers and other publications, with credit given to author(s) and Cascade. Contact Cascade to arrange print or broadcast interviews on this commentary topic.

Please contact:

Cascade Policy Institute
4850 SW Scholls Ferry Rd.
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

Phone: (503) 242-0900
Fax: (503) 242-3822

www.cascadepolicy.org
info@cascadepolicy.org

4850 SW Scholls Ferry Road
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

t: 503.242.0900
f: 503.242.3822
info@cascadepolicy.org
www.cascadepolicy.org

Cascade Policy Institute is a tax-exempt educational organization as defined under IRS code 501 (c)(3). Nothing appearing in this Cascade Commentary is to be construed as necessarily representing the views of Cascade or its donors. The views expressed herein are the author’s own.

