

OUR VIEW

# Will graduation requirement changes make things better?

Oregon's high school graduation rates may be moving in a better direction, but many minority students continue to struggle to graduate.

Oregon could target more support to minority students. It could change the graduation requirements.

This week the Oregon Department of Education released recommendations for changes to graduation requirements.

For some, it's going to look like Oregon is dumbing down. For others, Oregon is going to be making necessary changes to interrupt disparities in education.

Some testing would be gone, permanently, under the recommendations.

The proposal is to eliminate the requirement for students to take a test to demonstrate proficiency in math, reading and writing. Students would be required to continue to demonstrate those proficiencies in courses.

A test is viewed by some as an unnecessary barrier to graduation. Many states no longer require them. It is not clear whether tests help students prepare for life after high school, the report says.

Next up, the math requirement would be changed.

The current math requirement is for one credit of Algebra 1 and two credits beyond Algebra 1. The proposal keeps the three-credit requirement but eliminates the requirement for Algebra 1.

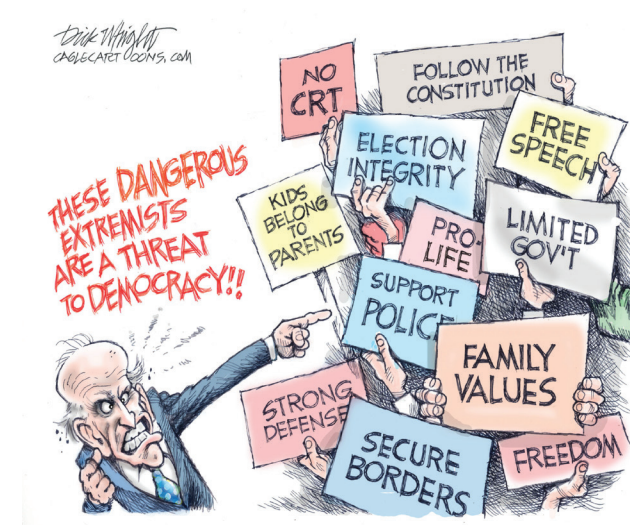
The reason given is it gives districts more flexibility. It may lead to math classes that more clearly reflect practical applications for math that students will encounter in their lives. Algebra 1 is also one of the most repeated courses by students. And that limits what other courses they can take in high school.

A new requirement that would be added has elements of financial literacy and future planning. It would be a one-credit course that would include things like financial planning, interviewing and completing applications for jobs and post-secondary education.

Some students get plenty of support at home to do such things. Others do not.

There are more. And the report also has information comparing education in Oregon and other states and looking at the causes of disparities. You can read the report yourself here, [tinyurl.com/ORgraduation](http://tinyurl.com/ORgraduation).

What do you think? Tell your legislator. They are the ones who may be voting on some of these proposals.



OTHER VIEWS

### City must do something about hazardous 16th Street

It was a sad day when a young person lost their life on 16th Street. Public works needs to do something about the condition of 16th Street. It is a busy connecting road to Gekeler. There are many bikers, runners and walkers (myself included). It is difficult to walk along as the very tall weeds forces one to walk on the pavement that has holes, drop-offs, etc. It needs to be repaved as soon as possible. It has to be one of the worst in the city. For today, at least get the noxious weeds chopped down for the people using the road.

Diana Asher  
La Grande

### LG should spend money on bolstering sense of community

In response to the editorial calling for ideas for the \$3 million La Grande is set to receive from the American Rescue Plan, here's mine:

Spend it working on our security, which benefits all. Start by convening a circle of citizens for multiple deliberative sessions where open questions are asked, listening is a priority, power is shared and people have the freedom to document successes, suggest new views and new questions and address conflicts. Set up a process that is different than choosing from canned alternatives or voting on priorities.

For example, two security risks, deeply injurious to a sense of community, have been highlighted by recent news in Eastern Oregon:

LETTERS

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columns, such as Other Views, must be no more than 700 words. Writers must provide a recent headshot and a one-sentence biography. Like letters to the editor, columns must refrain from complaints against businesses or personal attacks against private individuals. Submissions must carry the author's name, address and phone number. Submission does not guarantee publication, which is at the discretion of the editor. SEND LETTERS TO: [letters@lagrandeobserver.com](mailto:letters@lagrandeobserver.com) or via mail to Editor, 911 Jefferson Ave., La Grande, OR 97850

1) Decades of increasing mass shootings highlight the risk from alienated young men with guns and the glorification of anger and violence they find on the internet. What works, what can be done to give people a positive sense of contribution and community?

2) The increasing size and weight of cars and pickups, along with the attitudes of many drivers, increases the risk of traffic injuries and fatalities. What works, what can be done to reduce these risks?

In addition, there are risks from fire, heat, smoke, flood and drought. A deliberative process can enlist people's wisdom and creativity.

Peter Donovan  
La Grande

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