

LOCAL, STATE & REGION

GRADUATION | MATH, READING, WRITING

Students would no longer have to prove proficiency in core skills

BY BETSY HAMMOND
The Oregonian

A bill removing the requirement that Oregon students in the classes of 2022, 2023 and 2024 demonstrate basic proficiency in math, reading and writing to earn a high school diploma passed a key milestone Thursday and is likely to become law.

The bill, approved by majority Democrats in the Senate, was greenlit by Democrats on the House Education Committee for a vote on the House floor as early as next week.

The provision to cancel

the requirement that Oregon schools get all students proficient in the three core skills by the end of high school is in a bill requiring an in-depth examination and likely update of Oregon's graduation requirements. Such a reexamination is almost universally supported. Oregon might, for instance, set differentiated requirements for students who opt for a career tech or fine arts focus in their high school educations. The report would be ready for the 2023 Legislature to act on.

But all Republicans who've been given a chance to vote

on Senate Bill 774, plus Sen. Betsy Johnson, a Scappoose Democrat who parts way with her party more than any other Democratic lawmaker, voted no due to the removal of proficiency standards.

When the Senate approved the bill in April, Senate Republicans issued a press release headlined, "Democrats Drop Education Standards." It charged Democrats with trying to cover up the lack of learning since schools were ordered closed last March.

Proponents of dropping the requirement to demonstrate

the ability to read, write and do math at about a 10th-grade level say students who pass all classes required for graduation shouldn't have to do more.

Many of them are critical of standardized tests. But Oregon gives students the option to demonstrate proficiency with in-depth work done at school and graded by their own teachers. And some concede that if the bill is approved, as expected, students who can't write very well or do elementary algebra would nonetheless be allowed to graduate without the school having to teach them more.

Alaska cruise lines announce summer sailings

BY JAMES BROOKS

Anchorage Daily News, Alaska

President Joe Biden on Monday signed legislation that will allow large cruise ships to travel to Alaska this summer. The first voyages under the new Alaska Tourism Restoration Act are scheduled for late July.

Federal law prevents large cruise ships from traveling between the Lower 48 and Alaska without a stop in Canada, but that nation has blocked most cruise travel until February 2022.

The Alaska Tourism Restoration Act temporarily waives the requirement that those Alaska-bound ships stop in Canada. Small ships were not affected by the Canadian action.

The president's press secre-



A boat maneuvers near a large cruise ship near Juneau, Alaska, in 2018. Becky Bohrer/AP file

tary, Jen Psaki, called the signing "a critical step to returning to normal in a state where 1

in 10 jobs is in the tourism industry." Shortly before the bill was

signed, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines announced that it will send two ships to Alaska this year. Combined with previously announced voyages from other cruise lines, that means at least six large ships will come to Alaska on weekly visits later this summer.

More than 1.2 million tourists visited Alaska by cruise ship in 2019. Last year, during the COVID-19 pandemic, just 48 passengers came to the state, according to Rain Coast Data, a Juneau economics firm.

The six ships coming to Alaska later this summer have a combined average capacity of 3,200 passengers. If each were to sail for eight weeks on average at full capacity, that's the potential for 153,600 cruise tourists.

TODAY

It's Saturday, May 29, the 149th day of 2021. There are 216 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

In 2020, fired Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was arrested and charged with third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter in the death of George Floyd. He would be convicted in April 2021 on those charges as well as second-degree unintentional murder.

In 1790, Rhode Island became the 13th original colony to ratify the United States Constitution.

In 1914, the Canadian ocean liner RMS Empress of Ireland sank in the St. Lawrence River in eastern Quebec after colliding with the Norwegian cargo ship SS Storstad; of the 1,477 people on board the Empress of Ireland, 1,012 died. The Storstad sustained only minor damage.

In 1953, Mount Everest was conquered as Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Tensing Norgay of Nepal became the first climbers to reach the summit.

In 1973, Tom Bradley was elected the first Black mayor of Los Angeles, defeating incumbent Sam Yorty.

In 1977, Janet Guthrie became the first woman to race in the Indianapolis 500, finishing in 29th place; the winner was A.J. Foyt.

In 1985, 39 people were killed at the European Cup Final in Brussels, Belgium, when rioting broke out and a wall separating British and Italian soccer fans collapsed.

In 1988, President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev opened their historic summit in Moscow.

In 1998, Republican elder statesman Barry Goldwater died in Paradise Valley, Arizona, at 89.

In 2009, a judge in Los Angeles sentenced music producer Phil Spector to 19 years to life in prison for the murder of actor Lana Clarkson. Spector remained in prison until his death in January 2021.

In 2014, Starbucks closed thousands of stores for part of the day to hold training sessions for employees on unconscious bias, in response to the arrests of two Black men in Philadelphia at one of its stores.

In 2015, the Obama administration formally removed Cuba from the U.S. terrorism blacklist.

In 2019, in his first public remarks on the Russia investigation, special counsel Robert Mueller said charging President Donald Trump with a crime was "not an option" because of federal rules, but he emphasized that the investigation did not exonerate the president.

Ten years ago: A week after Joplin, Missouri, was nearly leveled by the deadliest tornado to strike the U.S. in decades, President Barack Obama visited the city to offer hope to survivors and promises of help.

Five years ago: An Army veteran of two Afghanistan tours killed one person and wounded several others during a shooting rampage in west Houston before being gunned down by a SWAT officer. Alexander Rossi won the 100th running of the Indianapolis 500.

One year ago: Thousands of protesters in Minneapolis angered by the death of George Floyd ignored a curfew as unrest again overwhelmed authorities; fires burned unchecked in cars and businesses. In a tweet, President Donald Trump called protesters in Minneapolis "thugs" and added that "when the looting starts, the shooting starts." The tweet was flagged by Twitter for "glorifying violence." Protests over Floyd's death spread to dozens of cities. Hundreds of protesters gathered outside the White House, some throwing rocks and tugging at barricades; officials later said Secret Service agents rushed Trump to an underground bunker.

Today's Birthdays: Former Baseball Commissioner Fay Vincent is 83. Motorsports Hall of Famer Al Unser is 82. Actor Helmut Berger is 77. Rock singer Gary Brooker (Procol Harum) is 76. Movie composer Danny Elfman is 68. Singer LaToya Jackson is 65. Actor Ted Levine is 64. Actor Annette Bening is 63. Actor Rupert Everett is 62. Actor Adrian Paul is 62. Singer Melissa Etheridge is 60. Actor Lisa Whelchel is 58. Actor Tracey Bregman is 58. Rock musician Noel Gallagher is 54. Actor Anthony Azizi is 52. Actor Laverne Cox is 49. Cartoonist Aaron McGruder ("The Boondocks") is 47. Singer Melanie Brown (Spice Girls) is 46. NBA player Carmelo Anthony is 37. Actor Billy Flynn is 36. Actor Blake Foster is 36. Actor Riley Keough is 32. Actor Lorelei Linklater is 28.

—Associated Press

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