



601 108th Avenue NE, Suite 1000
Bellevue, WA 98004

February 20, 2014

Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos
Chair - House Education Committee
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Dear Representative Santos and House Education Committee Members:

Our state has the highest concentration of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) jobs in the nation and we continue to see our economy grow. But, at the same time, we live in a state where we have nearly 25,000 acute job openings – openings that haven't been filled for at least three months because employers are unable to find skilled employees. Case in point, our state ranks 49th out of 50 states in the mismatch between the skills required for available jobs and individuals with those skills.

To address this great opportunity and great challenge, we need to help the state's young people reach their potential by the time they achieve a high school diploma regardless of where in the state they live and the high school they attend. In Washington state, we have growing achievement gaps between racial and ethnic groups in math and science. We are only one of dozen states where our achievement gaps are increasing, not decreasing. And yet, to ensure Washington's economic and democratic well-being, all Washington students should have the opportunity to graduate on equal footing career and college ready.

As the President and Chief Operating Officer of Concur Technologies, a local business and employer with an international clientele and reach that provides integrated travel and expense management solutions, I believe it's vital for the state legislature to authorize the State Board of Education's adopted 24-credit Career-and College-Ready High School Diploma. By increasing the number of credits it takes to graduate from 20 to 24, students would also be better prepared with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed after high school. **This is why I am writing to express my support of SB 6552 and urge you to do so as well.**

At Concur, we are continually seeking employees that have the skills and knowledge to be able to join the Concur team. The Career-and College-Ready Diploma opportunity not only signifies to colleges, training institutes and employers that Washington students are prepared for their next step, but it will most importantly provide Washington students with equitable opportunities to pursue post-secondary education and training regardless of their home zip code or school district.

Our states' economy needs its students to have strong performance and credit accumulation in STEM subjects. And given that these highly-competitive and high-wage jobs require postsecondary education, we should be preparing more of our students – regardless of the zip code in which their school is located – to meet this opportunity, and address our state's job skills gap. Please support SB 6552.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rajeev Singh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rajeev Singh
President & COO, Concur Technologies

Cc: House Education Committee Members