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## ***Inspire, Challenge, and Prepare***

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### **JFK and the Mt. Angel School District Statement to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC):**

It is a privilege and my duty to speak on behalf of small rural schools everywhere. Especially those like John F. Kennedy High School in which 67% of our student body qualifies for free and reduced lunch, and 56% of our students represent marginalized race and ethnic populations.

Members of HECC, in my small community and others like it, there exists a perception that some kids can go to college and some kids can't or "won't". Kids who will go to college take dual-credit, AP, and honors courses. Kids who "won't" go to college typically are not given as many opportunities for such classes, or have limited access to see if they have what it takes.

They ALL have what it takes. The diversification of our dual-credit options, especially through Willamette Promise, are an integral part of how we ensure equitable access for ALL students we serve.

Willamette Promise gives our marginalized students an opportunity to break that perception and find out that they too can go to college. Willamette Promise provides students a risk free shot at obtaining college credit. When they earn that credit, they want more. And, when that happens, we get a growing number of students deciding to pursue higher education.

I have seen first hand the illusion of rigor established by a timeline of tasks, which represents minimal skill development. In contrast, Willamette Promise provides a system that clearly defines student learning objectives. Through Willamette Promise courses our students demonstrate academic proficiencies that support the student learning process.

Like many of the other forty-three 2A schools and eighty-two 1A schools in the state, when we lose a teacher, we are at risk of losing the services that teacher's certification provides, including dual enrollment options. Willamette Promise bridges that gap by providing a system that ensures almost any certified teacher I hire has the opportunity to teach a college-level course, and will have the professional support needed to inspire, challenge and support their students.

Willamette Promise is a significant part of our equitable education process. Of our 329 college credits earned in 2017, one fifth were earned through Willamette Promise. From 2016 to 2017, JFK's college credit attainment increased by 36% overall. College credit attainment through Willamette Promise alone increased by 41%. And to cap it off, 82% of our students earning credit with Willamette Promise were earned by our marginalized populations.

ALL students deserve equitable access to rigorous courses. ALL students need to be college ready when they complete high school. Providing ALL students with multiple pathways for earning college credits bridges equity in our school. We need Willamette Promise credits to help our marginalized populations understand that they too can go to college.

***John F. Kennedy High School Mission:***  
***We inspire lifelong learning to strengthen our diverse community.***