

**REVENUE: Revenue statement issued**

**FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued**

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| <b>Action:</b>        | Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed and Be Referred to the Committee on Ways and Means by Prior Reference |
| <b>Vote:</b>          | 8 - 2 - 0   |
| <b>Yeas:</b>          | Dembrow, Harker, Huffman, Komp, Roblan, Sprenger, VanOrman, Gelser  |
| <b>Nays:</b>          | Maurer, Thatcher  |
| <b>Exc.:</b>          | 0   |
| <b>Prepared By:</b>   | Kevin T. Christiansen, Administrator  |
| <b>Meeting Dates:</b> | 3/18, 4/3, 4/7, 4/10  |

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:** Requires Superintendent of Public Instruction (Superintendent) to close Oregon School for the Blind (OSB) prior to September 1, 2009. Abolishes OSB Board of Directors. Requires Department of Education (Department) to ensure comprehensive transition plan (Plan) is developed for each OSB student prior to August 1, 2009. Requires that educational services offered under the Plan be substantially equivalent to educational services offered at OSB. Provides Plan criteria and identifies parties required to assist in Plan development. Obligates public employer to give preference for vacant positions to qualified person who worked for OSB. Repeals preferences for OSB employees on July 1, 2012. Creates Oregon Trust Fund for Blind and Visually Impaired Students (Trust Fund). Requires that Trust Fund moneys be used to further the independence of, and educational opportunities for, blind and visually impaired students (Students). Prohibits Trust Fund moneys from being used to replace or eliminate expenditures that would otherwise be provided by a state or local source. Requires those who receive moneys from Trust Fund for purchase of equipment to find public use for the equipment after equipment is no longer needed. Establishes Trust Fund Board of Directors. Requires Trust Fund board to provide an annual audit. Requires Trust Fund board to develop written plan to sell OSB site and facilities. Prohibits sale of OSB facilities or site until written plan is completed. Requires written plan be submitted to the Governor and made public no later than June 1, 2010. Requires all proceeds from sale of the OSB site and facilities be deposited into Trust Fund. Requires Department of Administrative Services to hold OSB site in trust until a written plan is developed to sell OSB. Provides that property other than OSB site or facilities be 1) distributed to regional programs or school districts that will serve Students who were enrolled at OSB at the time of closure; or 2) disposed of to support of Students. Establishes Blind and Visually Impaired Student Legacy Fund (Legacy Fund). Specifies Legacy Fund moneys are continuously appropriated to the Department for specified purposes. Appropriates \$6.5 million from General Fund to Department for the 2009-2011 biennium to be deposited into Legacy Fund. Permits Department to make appropriation for the 2009-2011 biennium from Legacy Fund to Department of Human Services of no more than \$750,000 for services provided to Students through plans. Allows Superintendent to designate regional program that provides special education to Students to provide statewide coordination and technical assistance related to activities paid for by Legacy Fund. Specifies regional program duties. Declares emergency; effective upon passage.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Closure of the OSB
- Protecting students impacted by the closure
- Impact on local districts
- Maintaining the OSB site and facility and maximizing potential returns
- Co-location with Oregon School for the Deaf
- Creating transition plans for students returning to their home districts
- Coordination of efforts to integrate students back into their home districts

**EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:** Replaces the measure.

4/17/2009 11:04:00 AM

*This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.*

**BACKGROUND:** The Oregon School for the Blind (OSB) opened in February, 1873 to provide education and establish programs to ensure the independence of blind students. In 1895, OSB located to its present campus in Salem. From 1971 until the present, responsibility for operating OSB has rested with the State Board of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Department of Education (Department). In 2007, the Legislative Assembly created the Board of Directors for OSB in House Bill 2263.

Current enrollment in OSB is 32 students (6 day students and 26 residential students). Recent enrollment levels have fluctuated between a high of 52 students in 2000 to a low of 28 students in 2006. The Department estimates that the 2007-2009 per year cost per pupil at OSB is \$143,000.

House Bill 2834A closes the OSB prior to September 1, 2009 and facilitates the integration of OSB students into their home districts. It requires the formulation of plans to accomplish the transition and creates the Oregon Trust Fund for Blind and Visually Impaired Students, to hold proceeds from the sale of the OSB site and facilities, and the Blind and Visually Impaired Student Legacy Fund, to hold moneys to assist blind and visually impaired students. The measure allows the superintendent to designate one of the regional programs that provides special education to blind and visually impaired students to provide statewide coordination and technical assistance related to activities paid for by the Legacy Fund.