

Testimony of Duke Shepard, Policy Advisor to Governor Kitzhaber

HB 4165

2/8/2012

At a previous hearing I described to you the components anticipated in legislation, though at that time we did not yet have an LC draft.

I can report to you that HB 4165 contains the key components I described to you at that previous hearing, though the bill requires some additional work and I will have amendments for your consideration as well.

As expected, the bill streamlines state level coordination by eliminating, replacing, and transferring duties to the Early Learning Council from the Oregon Commission on Children and Families, the Commission for Childcare, and the Early Childhood Matters Advisory Council (which was created by executive order and is not in statute). This consolidation of duties includes fulfilling the requirements of the federal Head Start Act by adding required members. Amendments will eliminate the "non-voting" requirement of these members contained in the legislation.

The bill creates a new Youth Development Council to coordinate state efforts for school aged youth. Amendments will create a one-year transition period for the Juvenile Crime Prevention Advisory Committee.

Likewise, the bill eliminates the requirements on counties for local commissions on children and families. Instead, an open application process will allow communities to come together to create the right structure for coordination and accountability that best meets their needs – with a 15% limit on administration. The legislation calls for this to happen this year; amendments move that effective date out to June 30, 2013. The bill lists basic criteria as a starting point for these functions; amendments will require a public process consistent with the Head Start Act to occur across the state to determine additional criteria for these entities, which we had called "hubs" and are now called "community based coordinators" in the bill.

HB 4165 Removes the ELC sunset. This was necessary because the bill is actually replacing existing bodies with ongoing duties. This is the reason that the connection to the OEIB is inconsistent in the bill: because the ELC can continue if the OEIB goes away in 2016. It is the intent of the Governor to have a strong and explicit connection between the ELC and the OEIB.

This legislation embeds Head Start outcome standards in statute and directs alignment with Common Core K-12 standards. This was a request of the Head Start Association.

The legislation directs the Child Care Division to work on the implementation of a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System for licensed childcare facilities.

The legislation calls for a joint planning process between the ELC and the State Interagency Coordinating Council on Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education. It's a loosely directed planning process so that it's clear that there is no predetermined outcome.

The legislation calls for a financial model for a global budget to Early Learning Services. The amendments use the term "comprehensive children's budget" which is a better fit for this particular challenge. There are examples - Louisiana and Connecticut - and I have passed out a useful document that has influenced the approach anticipated for your consideration. Keep in mind that this is a recommendation to the legislature and the Governor; you can use it or not.

Finally, the legislation makes no changes to Oregon Pre-K, or to any funding streams or program delivery at any level. Funding and program delivery discussions should happen in a full session, connected to the budget process in 2013.

In anticipation of some of the issues you will hear today:

The bill aligns precisely with the Head Start Act, including requirements for re-competition. The duties of the ELC under the Head Start Act are directly copied from the Act.

While a limited number of programs want these changes to slow down or not occur at all, there are communities across Oregon that are already embracing this opportunity and have asked if a way can be found to allow for early implementers. I haven't yet found a way to accommodate both delay and early implementation beyond the amendments that we've already pursued. So my hope is that you can just set the process in motion and let a lot of work happen over the next year, but without slamming the door on those communities that want to move ahead. The certainty that their commitment to results and innovation will be worthwhile is key starting to get better results sooner.