
MEMORANDUM

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To: Members of the Education Subcommittee

From: Doug Wilson, Legislative Fiscal Office
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Date: April 22, 2013

Subject: Oregon School for the Deaf

The 2011 Legislature included the following two budget notes as part of the Oregon Department of Education's budget dealing with the Oregon School for the Deaf (OSD).

Staffing Model for the Oregon School for the Deaf

The Department of Education shall develop a staffing model for the Oregon School for the Deaf to demonstrate an appropriate, not necessarily optimal, and comprehensive level of staff coverage to ensure student safety. The Department shall report to the 2012 Legislative Assembly on its findings and final staffing model

Deferred Maintenance

The Department of Education shall work with the Department of Administrative Services' Facilities Division and develop a five-year maintenance plan for the OSD that is inclusive of funding available within the existing operating budget, community donations, proceeds from the sale of the School for the Blind, and any resources available from other state agencies. The report should include an update on facility use with the improvements sponsored by the Extreme Makeover: Home Edition program. The report shall be considered in conjunction with the work of a legislative interim workgroup to review deferred maintenance needs and sustainability of OSD and the staffing model prepared by ODE in response to the budget note in the report for House Bill 5020

The agency drafted reports for both of these budget notes/legislative directions but after discussion with LFO did not submit them to 2012 Legislature. A joint report now is finished and is being presented to the Education Subcommittee as part of larger discussion regarding the Oregon School for the Deaf.

Some Issues for Consideration

- The OSD facility has numerous deferred maintenance needs as indicated by the report which will be presented today. A portion of the deferred maintenance can be funded by the proceeds generated by the sale of the Blind School which were

in part dedicated to OSD. There is a time element to consider – OSD staff would like to move ahead with the replacement of roofs on two buildings. The funding is generally in place and remains to be rescheduled. Now is the time to move forward in the bid process for the upcoming building season. If there are no concerns raised by the Subcommittee, the process will likely commence. The full Committee Co-chairs have approved to move forward on these roof replacements.

- The School provides an instructional model for all three levels (elementary, middle & high school) and also provides a residential option. This model does not come “inexpensive” with an overall annual cost of \$55,229 per student for 2011-12. Costs vary across grade levels based in part on the services provided and the number of students in each grade level. For high school students where there were 73 students the annual cost was \$41,657 per student, for middle school (20 students) the annual cost was \$87,785, and for the eight elementary students the annual cost was \$97,683 per student. The number of students at a grade level is very important in the cost. For example, the residential cost for the one elementary student who was a resident was \$95,300 for the 2011-12 school year while the residential cost for the 47 residential high school students was just under \$6,000 per student.
- There are a number of policy questions that are raised over the role of OSD. It is expensive to operate a residential school and there are more students with similar educational needs being served in their home school district or local regional providers. Many states do have counterparts to OSD so Oregon is not alone in providing this option. One policy question as an example is if OSD should provide services at all three grade levels or concentrate its services to older students. Currently high school students and adult transition students represent 71% of the school’s students while middle school students represent 16% of the student body and elementary 12%. There are also other policy questions which the agency’s presentation will likely generate.