

Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Carrier – House: Rep. Frederick
Carrier – Senate: Sen. Edwards

Revenue: No revenue impact

Fiscal: Fiscal statement issued

Action: Do Pass the A-Engrossed Measure as Amended and as Printed B-Engrossed

Vote: 23 – 2 – 1

House

Yeas: Barker, Buckley, Frederick, Freeman, Huffman, Jenson, Komp, McLane, Nathanson, Read, Richardson, Smith, Tomei, Williamson

Nays:

Exc: Hanna

Senate

Yeas: Bates, Devlin, Edwards, Hansell, Johnson, Monroe, Steiner Hayward, Thomsen, Winters

Nays: Girod, Whitsett

Exc:

Prepared By: Laurie Byerly, Legislative Fiscal Office

Meeting Date: June 21, 2013

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Directs Early Learning Council (ELC) and Department of Education to assist school districts in implementing kindergarten readiness assessments for children and establishes a related grant program. Requires standardized screening and referral services for voluntary statewide early learning system. Requires a permanent professional development and labor management committee be established for child care providers. Changes the program name for “Healthy Start Family Support Services” to “Healthy Families Oregon” and sets goal for program to target more than just first birth families and expands assessments to include children from zero to three years of age. Directs Oregon Health Authority and ELC to develop performance metrics for prenatal care, delivery and infant care. Instructs Oregon Health Authority and ELC to establish grant program to support strategies that align voluntary statewide early learning systems and health systems to improve developmental outcomes for children from zero through three years of age. Requires preschool child with disability have comprehensive communication plan by the age of three years. Directs ELC to establish Early Learning Hub Demonstration projects, capping the number of projects at 7 in the first fiscal year of the 2013-15 biennium and at 16 in the second fiscal year. Appropriates an indeterminate amount of General Fund for demonstration projects.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Still some concerns about funding allocations, program continuity, and exactly how hubs will operate.
- While the amendment clarifies some policy pieces, this transition in the early learning system’s service delivery model requires the legislature to place a lot of trust in the discretion and judgment of the executive branch.
- Need to watch out for program duplication and focus on outcomes.

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Clarifies that child care committee is focused on professional development and quality improvement. Recognizes need for coordination between Healthy Families Oregon and other home visiting partners. Refines language around Early Learning Hub Demonstration project requirements, selection, and matching funds. Requires legislative reporting on the projects during both the 2014 and 2015 legislative sessions. Permits Great Start funds to go directly to providers. Removes the blank appropriation in Section 28 of the bill (Hub establishment funding in already in the Early Learning budget).

BACKGROUND: The Early Learning Council (ELC), under the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB), was created through legislation in 2011. The Council guides efforts to “integrate and streamline” state programs for at-risk youth and ensures that children are prepared to learn when they enter kindergarten. Out of every 10 children in Oregon, at least four are not ready for kindergarten. Goals of the Oregon Early Childhood System include, and are not limited to: 1) the prevention of child abuse and neglect; 2) linking and integrating system programs and supports; and 3) parental braces in providing supportive environment for young children.