



Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

Oregon Youth Authority

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February 18, 2014



The Honorable Mark Hass, Chair
Members of the Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: House Bill 4008

Chair Hass and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of House Bill 4008. This bill revises the method by which State School Fund grants and School Improvement Fund grants are calculated for the Youth Corrections Education Program (YCEP) and Juvenile Detention Education Program (JDEP). The bill aligns the Extended Average Daily Membership Weighted (extended ADMw) formula for schools in correctional and detention settings with the formula used for traditional school districts when dealing with funding and population shifts.

Education is a vital component of the Oregon Youth Authority's ability to safely and successfully work with youth. More often than not, youth come to us well behind in their credits and disengaged from school. We are required by federal law to provide education to the high school age youth in our facilities. However, it is not the legal requirements that drive our goals in education. Education plays a paramount role in the successful reintegration of youth to their communities and improves their ability to lead productive crime-free lives. Research shows that the more education an incarcerated individual receives, the less likely that person is to recidivate.

Extended ADMw allows a calculation option that prevents mid school year changes. It allows our schools to look further back at population levels when determining a population base for future funding. The ability to look further back in time at a fluctuating population is extremely helpful for planning when reductions are imminent. Our school and facility administrators are better able to address future staff and program changes and to better ensure the operational stability of the facilities.

It is important to note that House Bill 4008 does not prevent reductions from occurring; it impacts when and how fast they occur. House Bill 4008 allows us to have more time to plan for necessary changes, which promotes stability during a school year, an important factor when dealing with youth who in many cases have lacked a stable educational experience.

Our schools form an integral part of the supportive communities we strive to create in our correctional facilities. Changes in a school year have major impacts on our ability to create that community and help reform youth. Our conclusion is that an extended ADMw formula is a valuable component for operating a school with fluctuating population levels.

We have a recent example of how the current ADM calculations created a reactionary response in our operations due to education cuts at Robert Farrell High School (Hillcrest) and William Lord High School (MacLaren). The Statesman Journal story explaining the change is included with this letter. Also attached to this letter are the names of the high schools our youth attend and the contracted service providers.

I would like to extend my appreciation to Chair Hass, Vice Chair Knopp, and the Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee for hearing this bill. I would like to also recognize the efforts of the Oregon Department of Education and the educational partners that work in our schools for their continued efforts to educate our youth. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Fariborz Pakseresht". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Fariborz Pakseresht
Director

The Oregon Youth Authority operates 10 youth facilities in the state. Education services are contracted by the Oregon Department of Education. These contracts include four school districts and three educational service districts to administer the education programs. The breakdown below has the facility, location, name of high school and contractor.

| Facility and School Name | | Education Contractor |
|--|--|---|
| Tillamook YCF and Camp Tillamook, Trask River High School 6820 Barracks Cir Tillamook Tillamook, OR 97141 | | Tillamook SD 2510 1st St. Tillamook, OR 97141 |
| North Coast YCF, South Jetty High School 1250 SE 19th St. Warrenton, OR 97146 | | Warrenton-Hammond SD 820 SW Cedar Warrenton, OR 97146 |
| River Bend Facility, River Bend High School 58231 Hwy 244 La Grande, OR 97850 | | Intermountain ESD 2001 SW Nye Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 |
| Eastern Oregon YCF, Monroe School 1800 W. Monroe Burns, OR 97720 | | Harney SD 3 550 N Court St. Burns, OR 97720 |
| Rogue Valley YCF, Newbridge High School 2001 NE "F" St. Grants Pass, OR 97526 | | Three Rivers SD PO Box 160 Murphy, OR 97533 |
| Camp Florence, Ocean Dunes High School 4859 S Jetty Rd. Florence, OR 97439 | Oak Creek YCF & Young Women's Transition Program, Three Lakes High School 4400 Lochner Rd. SE Albany, OR 97322 | Multnomah ESD 11611 NE Ainsworth Cir. Portland, OR 97294 |
| Hillcrest YCF, Robert Farrell High School 2450 Strong Rd. SE Salem, OR 97302 | MacLaren YCF, William P. Lord High School 2630 N. Pacific Hwy Woodburn, OR 97071 | Willamette ESD 2611 Pringle Rd. SE Salem, OR 97302 |

Statesman Journal: Schools At Two Youth Facilities Face Staff Cuts

Oct. 02, 2013

Queenie Wong / Statesman Journal

The Willamette Education Service District is laying off about 31 percent of staff from its youth corrections education program because of a drop in student enrollment and a budget shortfall.

The district contracts with the state to manage the education program at two high schools at the Hillcrest and MacLaren youth correctional facilities in Salem and Woodburn, respectively.

Staff reductions would mean that the two schools, which are about 25 miles apart, would operate like a single facility with one principal instead of two and under the same schedule. Teachers that teach certain subjects such as science, health/physical education and social studies would rotate between the two schools among other changes.

Ten full-time teaching positions and one administrative position will be cut, under layoffs approved by the district's board of directors Tuesday night. Cuts will also include two full-time classified staff and any temporary workers in the current school year.

Currently, 25 teachers, 14 classified staff and 2 administrators are employed in the program.

Layoffs are expected to offset a projected \$789,291.77 budget shortfall in the youth corrections education program during the current school year.

Scott Harris, principal at William P. Lord High School that serves MacLaren, said he learned about two weeks ago that he would be losing his job.

"My initial response is I'm going through what most of my staff is going through," Harris said. "We've lost a great number of staff and the number of services we can provide is greatly restricted now."

Harris, who has been a principal at the school for six years, said with the large reduction in staff members there's no way that the quality of education at the correctional facilities won't be impacted.

"We've lost the capacity to provide a level of education we had before but that's just the nature when you lose the volume or the funding. Something's got to give," he said.

Harris will be among staff members including teachers who will learn today that they lost their jobs. Their last day will be Nov. 1.

Bill Conlon, principal at Robert S. Farrell High School, which serves Hillcrest, will be overseeing the education program at the two correctional facilities as it undergoes a significant restructuring.

“We’ll make it work. It will be a challenge. We have some pretty heavy lifting to do I think to put some of the pieces into place and we’ll rely on our staff to make sure they work hard and continue this commitment to these kids to provide a solid education,” said Conlon, who has been principal for 11 years.

A large chunk of the projected budget shortfall — \$483,600 — stems from the drop in student enrollment at the two schools which is tied to how much state funding the program receives.

Current student enrollment in the program is 71 students at the MacLaren school and 103 students at the Hillcrest school.

Each school is averaging 19 fewer students than anticipated this school year under WESD’s contract with the state. The district receives about \$12,440 per student.

C.J. Drake, a spokesman with the Oregon Youth Authority, said the decline in student enrollment reflects a drop in the number of juvenile delinquency statewide and nationally.

“We seek the most beneficial options for educating at-risk youth so they can lead productive, crime-free lives after the completion of their court-ordered commitments,” Drake said. “We will continue working with WESD to make sure any changes maintain those options.”

Overall, the youth corrections education program revenue is expected to drop from \$3.8 million in the current school year to \$3.3 million.

Keith Ussery, director of WESD’s School Improvement & Instructional Services Department, outlined to the board various factors that negatively impacted the youth corrections education program position fiscally.

For example, the service district can’t carry over funds from the previous biennium because it’s an Oregon Department of Education contractor.

“That’s an important distinction between a traditional school district that’s essentially able to bank resources and have revenue available for the tough times,” Ussery said.

Traditional school districts also have the option to use current or last year’s student enrollment figures, whatever number is higher, to calculate their funding but WESD does not.

“We don’t look back. We don’t look forward. It’s set (in the contract) and then it’s adjusted retroactively,” he said.

Ussery then showed WESD board members a diagram that illustrated the new structure for the two schools.

“Is this ideal? I don’t think so. Is it creative enough to meet the needs? I think so. Has it been done here before?” No,” he said.