



Oregon Department of Education

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SB 135: Long Term Care & Treatment Payment

Senate Committee on Education

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Good afternoon Chair Roblan and members of the Senate Education Committee. For the record, I am Jan McComb, Legislative Coordinator for the Oregon Department of Education. I am here today to speak in favor of SB 135. SB 135 modifies how the department pays for education services for children in eligible day and residential long term care and treatment facilities.

Background:

Long Term Care and Treatment (LTCT) programs provide education services to children in state-licensed residential and day treatment programs that serve children with mental health or behavioral issues. There are 47 programs in Oregon whose educational programs are funded through ODE. The size of these programs vary greatly in the number of students served, from 3 students to 74 students. An average of 903 children were served in the 47 programs during the 2013-14 school year.

Many factors go into placement and treatment decisions, and those decisions determine the length of a child's stay. Children can be placed into these programs by a public entity such as a school district, the Oregon Youth Authority, Department of Human Services, a private entity, or a parent.

Placement has historically been for between a few weeks to over a year. However, with changes in the children's mental health services model, the average stay has been reduced to 30-90 days, with funding for the mental health services moving to a fee for services model.

The school district in which the LTCT site resides is responsible for providing all education services to the LTCT site. The Oregon Department of Education is responsible for funding the education of these students. In 2013-14, ODE contracted with 26 school districts and education service districts to provide education services for these children.

Issue:

In 2011, the responsibility of educating children residing in long term care and treatment facilities changed from the Oregon Department of Education to the school district in which the facility was located. When this change was made, language regarding how the payment was not changed and continued the requirement that the funding flow to districts through a contract. Contracts create

paperwork for the state agency, the school district, and the facility. Bills must be invoiced and paid on a reimbursement basis.

Legislation:

SB 135 seeks to simplify the process of paying for the education services that districts provide to children in eligible residential and day long term care and treatment facilities. The measure changes the current practice of the department contracting with individual school districts and will, instead, provide the funding to districts in the form of a grant-in-aid. This not only simplifies and streamlines the payment process but has the added benefit of funding programs on the front end, rather than an after-the-fact reimbursement basis.

Thank you for your time and hearing about this special group of children.

