

SB 81

Relating to waiver of tuition for community college courses

SB 81 establishes the Oregon Promise program which will provide eligible recent graduates from high school the opportunity to attend an Oregon Community College at least half time and effectively have their tuition waived. The Higher Education Coordinating Commission or HECC will administer a grant program for those students who meet specific requirements including enrolling in a degree or certificate program or a one year program leading to a transfer to another post-secondary institution. The student must enroll for community college classes within six months of their high school graduation. Other eligibility criteria include Oregon residency, minimum grade point average, continued academic progress, and acceptance of any federal and state aid. Students would be required to pay \$50 to the Community College for each term prior to the calculation of the waiver related grant. The bill also sets limits on the size of the grant.

This bill appropriates \$10 million for the program which would start in the 2016-17 academic year. HECC will use approximately \$438,000 to develop and administer the program as well as market the plan in high schools. Since the amount available is capped at \$10 million per year, HECC is provided rule-making authority including on how to prioritize the grants if there are insufficient funds to meet the demand. A biennial report is required of HECC regarding the program.

The Education Subcommittee recommends SB 81 be amended by the -A11 amendment and be reported out do pass, as amended.