

Seventy-Eighth Oregon Legislative Assembly - 2015 Regular Session
STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY
Senate Committee On Education

MEASURE: SB 553 A
CARRIER: Sen. Gelser

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 03/26/15

Action: Do Pass With Amendments. (Printed A-Eng.)

Meeting Dates: 03/10, 03/26

Vote:

Yeas: 7 - Baertschiger Jr, Beyer, Gelser, Hass, Knopp, Kruse, Roblan

Prepared By: Gretchen Engbring, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Limits instances under which students in fifth grade or lower may be suspended or expelled. Requires school district take steps to prevent recurrence of behavior that led to out-of-school suspension. Stipulates calculations for number of school days student is considered removed from classroom due to exclusionary discipline. Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2015.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- History and frequency of exclusionary discipline in Oregon
- Disproportionate impacts of exclusionary discipline on minorities, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students
- Negative impact of exclusionary discipline on graduation rates
- Effects of exclusionary discipline on students remaining in the classroom
- Challenges of out-of-school expulsion for parents

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

Requires consideration of student age and behavior patterns prior to imposing suspension or expulsion. Specifies circumstances under which suspension or expulsion may be allowed for student in fifth grade or lower. Requires school district take steps to prevent recurrence of behavior that led to out-of-school suspension. Modifies calculations for number of school days student is considered removed from classroom.

BACKGROUND:

Currently, ORS 339.250 allows suspension or expulsion for students of all ages, but requires that the age of a student be considered prior to imposing their suspension or expulsion. Findings from six Oregon school districts in 2011-2012 indicate that approximately 6.4 percent of students were suspended or expelled from school, and that nearly 40 percent of students who were suspended received more than one suspension.

Legislation restricting suspensions and expulsions has been enacted by other states. California AB 420 (2014) eliminated the authority to suspend a pupil enrolled in kindergarten up to grade three. This legislation also limits expulsion as a disciplinary response to students enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12 who are disrupting school activities or defying the authority of school personnel.

Senate Bill 553-A limits instances under which students in fifth grade or lower may be suspended or expelled and requires school districts to take steps to prevent the recurrence of behaviors that initially led to exclusionary discipline.