

**STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY****House Committee On Education****Fiscal:** Fiscal impact issued**Revenue:** No Revenue Impact**Action Date:** 02/05/16**Action:** Do Pass And Be Referred To Ways And Means By Prior Reference**Meeting Dates:** 02/03, 02/05**Vote:**

Yeas: 9 - Barreto, Doherty, Frederick, Hack, McLain, Piluso, Reardon, Sprenger, Wilson

**Prepared By:** Richard Donovan, Committee Administrator**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Directs Chief Education Office to design and implement pilot program to decrease rates of school absenteeism. Sunsets pilot program January 2, 2020. Appropriates moneys from General Fund to office for purpose of pilot program. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Goal of re-implementing child support specialists, or similar position, in schools
- Existing need for counselors, support specialists, and health care professionals in schools
- Desire to quickly implement pilot program to be "at the front of the line" for possible federal funding related to the recently passed federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- Details of pilot process, desire to have many different parts of the state represented so as to generate best possible findings
- Measure as compatible with HB 4002, a chronic absence study, with pilot projects potentially feeding data and information to the study participants
- Intent to amend measure in Joint Committee on Ways and Means to include school nurses in measure text, as relevant

**EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:**

No amendment.

**BACKGROUND:**

House Bill 4031 directs the Chief Education Office (CEdO), in coordination with the Oregon Health Authority and Oregon Department of Education, to design and implement a pilot program to combat absenteeism using trauma-informed approaches to education, health services, and intervention strategies. "Trauma informed approach" is defined in the measure as an approach that recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in students, families, and staff and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices for the purposes of resisting the reoccurrence of trauma and promoting resiliency.

Absenteeism has been a challenge in Oregon schools for quite some time. The definition of chronic absenteeism varies, but is generally listed as missing between 10 and 20 percent of school days in a year. This translates to missing roughly 18 to 40 days of school. Multiple studies have been conducted on chronic absenteeism, all finding dramatically negative impacts on students. Some examples include:

- "In a nationally representative data set, chronic absence in kindergarten was associated with lower academic performance in first grade. The impact is twice as great for students from low-income families." (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012.)

- “Chronic Absenteeism is the strongest predictor of dropping out of high school... stronger than other factors such as number of suspensions or student test scores, even when taking into account student demographics.”  
(Byrnes & Reyna, 2012.)
- “Significant gaps in academic performance are apparent in third grade and persist all the way through high school for students who are chronically absent, leading to increased dropout and decreased graduation rates.”  
(Buehler, Tapanoga, & Chang, 2012.)
- “In the 2009-10 school year, nearly a quarter of all K-12 students in Oregon were chronically absent.”  
(Ibid.)