

SB 420 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

Prepared By: Lisa Gezelter, LPRO Analyst

Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/9, 3/16

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs the Oregon Department of Education to study incentives for students to pursue educational degrees in mathematics.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Benefits of majoring in mathematics
- Statewide need for mathematics teachers
- STEM careers
- Percentage of college students majoring in mathematics
- Demographics of mathematics majors

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Replaces the measure. Directs the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to establish rules for reimbursing resident students for tuition spent on upper-division mathematics courses at public universities under certain circumstances. Requires reimbursements to be made by public universities by direct payment or by credit against the student's tuition for a succeeding term of enrollment. Establishes the Task Force on Creating Incentives for Mathematics Teaching in Oregon and specifies the task force's membership. Requires the task force to submit a report to an interim legislative committee by September 15, 2018. Repeals the task force on December 31, 2018. Takes effect 91 days after sine die.

BACKGROUND:

Senate Bill 1540 (2016) required the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to investigate methods for increasing mathematics degree attainment at Oregon public universities. According to HECC's report issued in January, 2017, approximately 1.4 percent of all bachelors' degrees awarded by Oregon's public universities are in mathematics. HECC also found that mathematics degree attainment is dependent on a student's K-12 experiences with mathematics and other science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses, and that the math major is less diverse than the student population as a whole. HECC's report recommended incentivizing upper-division mathematics courses and attracting and keeping highly qualified math teachers, especially in rural and underserved school districts.