

HB 2013 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Early Childhood and Family Supports

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Meeting Dates: 3/14, 4/11

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Expands eligibility requirements for lead preschool teachers under preschool program administered by Early Learning Division (ELD). Eliminates plan to attain Bachelor's degree as satisfying lead preschool teacher requirement. Permits lead preschool teachers to have at least a bachelor's degree in a field not related to early childhood education if, the teacher has completed coursework equivalent to a major in early childhood education and has sufficient training in early childhood education; associate degree with additional training or certification in early childhood education or a field related to early childhood education; or alternative credentials to indicate the teacher is highly trained. Authorizes Early Learning Council (ELC) to adopt rules and ELD to make determination.

Specifies that ELC develop lead preschool teacher target salary guidelines instead of requirements. Directs ELD to provide guidelines and technical assistance to programs to address salary disparities among preschool teachers and staff. Authorizes ELC to develop strategies to increase mean salary for preschool staff. Directs ELC to conduct an evaluation on accessibility and quality. Requires progress report by February 1, 2018 and final report by October 15, 2018. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, but no statement issued

REVENUE: No revenue impact.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Benefits of employing qualified, culturally competent teachers with diverse experience and training
- Barriers such as time and cost present challenges for lead preschool teachers in meeting Bachelor's degree requirements
- Low compensation and high turnover among preschool teachers and staff
- Flexibility by Early Learning Council to create salary guidelines
- Pay disparities within and across preschool programs
- Bachelor's degrees for lead preschool teachers are not synonymous with quality

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

High quality preschool is an effective tool for closing learning and opportunity gaps for children. Studies have shown that children who attend high quality preschool are more likely to arrive at kindergarten ready to learn and are more likely to sustain academic growth. Teacher and child interactions are an important component of high quality preschool. Both education and training for teachers are associated with more positive teacher behavior and child outcomes. Compensation of teachers and staff in early childhood education is systemically low, which creates recruitment and retention concerns, can lead to instability for children. For example, Oregon's largest preschool program, Oregon Pre-Kindergarten, has high turnover; 25 percent of teachers left their positions in 2015-2016.

In 2015, House Bill 3380 created the Preschool Promise, located in the Early Learning Division (ELD), to provide publicly funded, high quality preschool, for families with incomes at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. Preschool Promise is a "mixed delivery model" that gives families the option to choose a setting, which

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includes elementary schools, Head Start programs, licensed-center and home-based child care programs, and community-based organizations.

Preschool Promise lead teachers must have a bachelor's degree in early childhood or a field related to early childhood education. There are waivers available to lead teachers if they submit plans for completion of a bachelor's degree. Federal Head Start requires that half of Head Start lead teachers have a bachelor's degree. The Early Learning Council is required to establish target salary requirements for Preschool Promise lead teachers. Further, the minimum salaries of Preschool Promise lead teachers must be commensurate with local kindergarten teacher salaries in public schools. The Early Childhood Workforce Index reports that in 2015 the median wage for an Oregon kindergarten teacher was \$27.36 per hour and the median wage for a preschool teacher was \$13.31 per hour.

As a result of these salary requirements, Preschool Promise lead teachers and non-Preschool Promise lead teachers, are paid at different rates, even within the same organization. Salary targets for lead preschool teachers in Preschool Promise are between \$34,000 - \$63,000 depending on region and education level. For 2015-2016, the average Oregon Head Start lead teacher salary was \$28,388 and the average center-based preschool teacher salary was \$27,000.