

HB 2957 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Early Childhood and Family Supports

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 4/6, 4/18

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to award grants to school districts with an elementary school considered high poverty to enable at least one teacher for every 15 kindergarten students. Directs state Board of Education to adopt rules. Appropriates funds to ODE from general fund. Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2017.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Lower teacher-to-student ratios, particularly in early learning create positive short and long-term learning outcomes
- Limited budget and resources require targeting students that are low-income
- Large classrooms challenge ability of teachers to protect children and provide individual attention
- Licensed child care program regulations differ from public school requirements
- Educational assistants in classroom

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-2 Amendment: Replaces measure. Directs Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to award grants to enable school districts to provide at least one teacher for every 15 kindergarten students. Requires schools to have a full-day kindergarten program, 90 percent of students eligible for free or reduced lunches under federal guidelines, and capacity in classroom to comply. Allows a school district to apply for more than one grant. Appropriates funds to ODE from general fund. Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2017.

FISCAL: Fiscal impact issued

REVENUE: No revenue impact

BACKGROUND:

Research indicates that a high-quality, full day kindergarten experience is critical for short and long-term academic success and strengthening social and emotional skills. Class size reduction programs are a measure of quality, particularly for kindergarten through third grade. Further, class size reduction is associated with greater gains for low income students. The experience and qualifications of teachers and the type of engagement between teachers and students impacts the effectiveness of class size reduction programs. States vary in ratio-requirements for kindergarten to third grade:

- Fourteen states require 1 to 15 to 1 to 18 ratios
- Twelve states require 1 to 20 to 1 to 25 ratios
- Twenty-four states require 1 to 26 to 1 to 33 ratios, ratios based on grade level or no ratios