

HB 3106 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

Prepared By: Lisa Gezelter, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 5/4

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Early Learning Hubs (Hubs) to convene annual meetings between representatives of the Oregon Prekindergarten (OPK) program and preschool program to coordinate the enrollment of eligible children and the provision of programs that best meet the needs of eligible children and their families. Requires Early Learning Council (ELC) to adopt rules to implement plans for changes to the federal Head Start program. Allows ELC to adopt rules to provide half-day, full-day or combined OPK program based on community assessments.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Oregon Prekindergarten (OPK) program alignment with federal Head Start guidelines and performance standards
- Ability of a family to choose a program that meets their needs
- Enrollment and coordination of preschool programs depends on regional differences across Early Learning Hubs (Hubs)
- Preschool programs should have flexibility in determining the length of a program day

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

BACKGROUND:

In 1987, the Oregon Legislative Assembly enacted Senate Bill 524, which created the Oregon Prekindergarten (OPK) program to provide free preschool education, child health and nutrition and family support services to children ages three to five. OPK is free to families with incomes up to 100 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Oregon law allows for 20 percent of children enrolled in OPK to come from families not in poverty and requires at least 10 percent of children to have identified disabilities. OPK is modeled after and designed to work in congruence with federally funded Head Start programs and follows federal Head Start performance standards, operating procedures and monitoring. The Early Learning Division (ELD) funds 21 OPK programs that receive federal Head Start funding and seven OPK programs that do not. For 2015-2016, the total OPK-funded enrollment was 13,641 slots and an estimated 12,201 of the slots were filled by children living at or below 100 percent of the FPL. The remaining 1,440 slots were for children with other risk factors.

In 2015, House Bill 3380 created the Preschool Promise program, under the ELD, to provide free, high quality preschool in a mixed delivery model. Preschool Promise gives families the option to choose a provider setting, which includes federally funded Head Start programs, elementary schools, licensed centers, home-based child care programs and community-based organizations. Preschool Promise serves children ages three to four, in families with incomes at or below 200 percent of the FPL, providing a higher income threshold than OPK. Providers under Preschool Promise must meet standards such as class size, adult-to-child ratios and require approximately 900 hours of instructional time. For 2015-2016, Preschool Promise served roughly 1,300 children, of which 67 percent had incomes that range between 100-200 percent of the FPL and 33 percent have incomes below 100 percent of the FPL.

The Early Learning Hubs (Hubs) are 16 regional, community-based organizations that help children reach kindergarten ready to succeed in school. Hubs identify undeserved children and families, evaluate the needs of those families, and ensure that programs and services meet their needs.

HB 3106 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Research shows that longer preschool duration has a positive impact on early learning outcomes. As a result of these findings, the Department of Human Services modified the federal Head Start standards in 2016 to require 1,020 annual hours of planned class operations, which Head Start grantees will phase in over five years.

House Bill 3106-A allows Hubs to convene OPK and Preschool Promise programs to coordinate enrollment of children in respective programs. It also creates alignment with federal Head Start standards to give OPK programs flexibility in duration of instructional time.