

HB 2013 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

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Meeting Dates: 5/9

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Expands eligibility requirements for lead preschool teachers under preschool program administered by Early Learning Division (ELD). Eliminates requirement that lead preschool teacher have plan to attain bachelor's degree. Permits lead preschool teachers:

- to have at least bachelor's degree in a field not related to early childhood education if teacher has completed coursework equivalent to major in early childhood education and has sufficient training in early childhood education;
- to have associate degree with additional training or certification in early childhood education or field related to early childhood education; or
- to have alternative credentials to indicate teacher is highly trained.

Authorizes Early Learning Council (ELC) to adopt rules. Requires ELC to develop lead preschool teacher target salary guidelines. Authorizes ELC to develop strategies to increase mean salary for preschool staff. Directs ELC to conduct evaluation on accessibility and quality.

Requires ELD to determine how compensation contributes to a stable and qualified workforce. Directs ELD to provide guidelines and technical assistance to programs to address salary disparities among preschool teachers and staff. Requires ELD to provide progress report by February 1, 2018 and final report by October 15, 2018. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Benefits of employing qualified, culturally competent teachers with diverse experience and training
- Barriers such as time and cost that prevent lead preschool teachers in meeting bachelor's degree requirements
- Low compensation and high turnover among preschool teachers and staff
- ELC flexibility in creating salary guidelines
- Pay disparities within and across preschool programs
- Bachelor's degrees for lead preschool teachers are not synonymous with quality

EFFECT OF 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 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, leading to instability for children. For example, Oregon's largest preschool program, Oregon Pre-Kindergarten, has high teacher turnover; 25 percent of teachers left their positions in 2015-2016.

In 2015, House Bill 3380 created Preschool Promise under 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, including elementary schools, Head Start programs, licensed centers, home-based child care programs and community-based

organizations.

Lead teachers in the Preschool Promise program 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 (ELC) 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. The salary requirements result in Preschool Promise lead teachers and non-Preschool Promise lead teachers being paid at different rates, even when they are 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.