

SB 283 -2, -3 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

Prepared By: Tamara Dykeman, LPRO Analyst

Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/27

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to prepare a statement that discloses the potential health risks of wireless network technology. Directs ODE to adopt rules to offer guidance for including this information in school curricula and at school, parent, and community settings. Requires school districts and private elementary and secondary schools to distribute annually the ODE statement, as specified. Directs ODE and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to review peer-reviewed, independently funded studies of the biological effects of exposure to microwave radiation in schools or similar environments. Establishes review requirements. Directs ODE and OHA to develop recommendations to limit exposure. Requires ODE to adopt a policy to ensure that it will not procure or approve procurement of technologies that are uninsurable because of hazards or harmful effects. Authorizes ODE to adopt rules. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued.

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-2 Removes requirement that schools distribute statement. Removes requirement that ODE adopt a policy to ensure that it will not procure or approve procurement of technologies that are uninsurable because of hazards or harmful effects.

-3 Requires OHA to conduct the review of studies, removing requirement that Oregon Department of Education conduct the review in consultation with OHA. Requires OHA to report results to interim education committee no later than January 2, 2021. Requires ODE to develop recommendations to schools for practices and alternative technologies that would reduce students' exposure to microwave radiation as identified by the review of studies. Removes requirement that schools distribute statement. Removes requirement that ODE adopt a policy to ensure that it will not procure or approve procurement of technologies that are uninsurable because of hazards or harmful effects.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon public schools serve approximately 581,000 students in 197 school districts. Oregon law directs school districts to provide opportunities for students to use technology. Oregon law also requires school districts to develop and adopt a Healthy and Safe Schools Plan. The plan must address environmental conditions at the facilities owned or leased by the district or school where students or staff are present on a regular basis. The Department of Education, in consultation with the Oregon Health Authority, the Department of Environmental Quality and other interested stakeholders, must develop and adopt a model plan to provide guidance to the districts and schools. Senate Bill 283 directs ODE to inform schools about potential health hazards of using wireless network technology in schools and provide recommendations for minimizing exposure to possible harmful effects.