

## ANALYSIS

### Item 8: Department of Education Educator Advancement Council

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**Analyst:** Julie Neburka

**Request:** Increase Other Funds expenditure limitation by \$5,617,861 and establish ten limited duration positions (7.50 FTE) to support the implementation of a comprehensive preschool-through post-secondary (P-20) educator professional learning system and to provide one-time increases in Regional Educator Network capacity grants.

**Analysis:** The Educator Advancement Council (EAC) was established by SB 182 (2017) to strengthen educator professional learning statewide. Through a system of ten Regional Educator Networks, the EAC provides technical assistance and distributes non-competitive grants to enable professional learning opportunities for preschool through post-secondary educators at the local level. The program is funded through a statutory dedication of State School Fund resources deposited each biennium into the Educator Advancement Fund (ORS 342.953) and with funds from the Student Success Act; the program has a 2021-23 budget of \$86.2 million Other Funds. Of that amount, \$38.9 million is Grant-in-Aid funding for formula, capacity, and technical assistance grants; \$30.7 million funds professional development grants with Fund for Student Success dollars; \$11.5 million is for two new projects discussed below; and \$5.1 funds 10 positions (9.68 FTE) and other program operational expenses.

As a result of COVID-19 pandemic-related delays in operationalizing the Regional Educator Networks, the EAC's grant-in-aid funds were significantly underspent in the 2019-21 biennium, leaving a carryforward balance of \$36.3 million in the Educator Advancement Fund. \$11.5 million of that amount is included in ODE's 2021-23 budget to establish a new Indigenous Educator Institute (\$10 million) and for an anti-racist leadership initiative (\$1.5 million). The Department proposes using \$2,129,656 of the remaining balance to establish ten limited duration positions (7.50 FTE) for implementing integrated, statewide professional learning design and delivery, grant administration, research and monitoring, and communications. An additional one-time increase of \$3,488,205 Other Funds is proposed to increase the capacity grants provided to Regional Educator Networks for implementation of professional learning programs for educators. These uses do not fully spend the carryforward balance, and the Department proposes including \$2,820,463 of the unspent balance in its 2023-25 budget to continue the ten limited duration positions through the end of the 2023-25 biennium.

The Legislative Fiscal Office (LFO) notes that the limited duration positions are requested for 18 months of funding in the current biennium, which is well in advance of the timeline for potential approval during the 2022 legislative session; the LFO recommendation is based on a position start date of May 1, 2022.

**Recommendation:** The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means recommend including an increase of \$5,157,019 in the Other Funds expenditure limitation, on a one-time basis, and authorizing the establishment of ten limited duration positions (5.80 FTE) for the Department of Education, Educator Advancement Council, in a budget reconciliation bill during the 2022 legislative session to support the design and launch of the comprehensive educator professional learning system and to increase Regional Educator Network capacity grants.

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**Request:** Increase Other Funds expenditure limitation by \$5,617,861 to expend unused resources in the Educator Advancement Fund from the 2019-21 biennium, to fund 10 limited duration positions, to support the design and launch of the P-20 professional learning system, and to enhance capacity supports for the Regional Educator Network.

**Recommendation:** Approve the request during the February 2022 Legislative Session.

**Discussion:** The Educator Advancement Council (EAC) is comprised of an operations unit and grant-in-aid portfolio within the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). The EAC was created with the passage of Senate Bill 182, which was passed into law during the 2017 Legislative Session. EAC is tasked with providing statewide P-20 educator supports and resources, creating open access to high-quality, culturally responsive professional learning, fostering a comprehensive early childhood professional development system, enhancing the capacity of all educators to create inclusive learning environments, and supporting a diverse educator workforce reflecting the state's overall population.

EAC is funded with a “carve-out” or fund transfer from the State School Fund to the Educator Advancement Fund (EAF). While EAC's resources are technically Other Funds, the source of those funds is General Fund converted to Other Funds through the transfer process. EAF has built up a sizeable ending balance with a projected 2019-21 ending balance of \$36.3 million. The Legislature approved the use of \$14 million of this ending balance in 2021-23, for the Indigenous Educator Institute, an anti-racism leadership initiative, and four limited duration positions (3.68 FTE) to implement these projects.

This proposal would continue to utilize remaining one-time resources in the ending balance of the EAF to support 10 limited duration positions (7.50 FTE) for the design and launch of a comprehensive, P-20 educator professional learning system and enhance grant in aid support for Regional Educator Network (REN) capacity grants. As mentioned, EAC received four positions through an added one-time investment in 2021-23, and there are an additional six permanent positions in the base budget of the EAC operations unit. EAC's six base positions are all filled and the Department is in the process of recruiting the new positions for 2021-23, which phased in on September 1, 2021. Given EAC's limited number of staff, there is not sufficient capacity to accomplish all the policy goals placed upon the Council. EAC is still in the beginning stages of establishing necessary structures for K-12 learning and anticipates a need for more rapid growth to scale plans.

Specifically, this request would provide funding for the following positions:

- Research Analyst 3
- Research Analyst 1
- Public Affairs Specialist 1
- Program Analyst 1
- Six Education Program Specialist 2 positions.

These classifications were selected because the work will involve research and monitoring, professional learning design, grant administration, and strategic communications. The proposed positions will allow the Council to implement a professional learning system that leverages a state-supported network learning model based on sound program design, informed research and policy monitoring, and expand grant management and communications. EAC projects sufficient one-time resources to fund this investment through 2023-25, and if the work proves fruitful, would return with a request for the 2025-27 budget to fund these positions permanently.

In addition to the positions, the proposal would also provide a one-time increase of \$3.5 million for the REN Capacity Grants. RENs were established to coordinate and prioritize funding decisions at a regional level, by representing educator voice within a localized context and career stage. Since implementation in 2019, the RENs, facilitated by a REN Coordinator, aim to improve teaching and learning conditions to support a PK-12 high quality, diverse educator workforce. In the 2019-21 biennium, the Capacity Grants were fully expended and additional needs for Capacity Grants were identified in the REN plans for 2021-23. For 2019-21, the Formula Grants to REN's were not fully expended (\$5.2 million of the budgeted \$29.4 million was expended). There were significant delays in startup, as the launch of the RENs coincided with the pandemic and wildfires in the state, significantly reducing the ability of the regions to implement at the pace and scale anticipated. This additional funding would be used to support staffing, supplies, and travel costs for REN Coordinators, costs related to convening a coordinating body, actual costs of hiring substitutes for teachers, and contracts for services to support with data collection and educator development content.

This proposal should be considered within the overall context of one-time, EAC funding commitments in 2021-23. As noted in the Budget Report for ODE's 2021-23 budget bill (Senate Bill 5513), at least a portion of the newly funded EAC work at the time of budget adoption also represents ongoing efforts that may require a new revenue source or future budget requests. Similarly, this package would add to the commitment of one-time resources for work that is likely ongoing. Combined, the two one-time investments would comprise a \$19.6 million budget increase this biennium. While the funding method is not ideal, the education workforce is facing heightened retention challenges due to teacher burnout as the pandemic enters its third calendar year. Professional development support, which is known to contribute to overall satisfaction and retention, is a powerful and immediate way to combat the challenges impacting Oregon's teachers.

#### **Legal References:**

- Increase Other Funds expenditure limitation established by Chapter 603, section 5(2), Oregon Laws 2021, for the Oregon Department of Education, Operations, by \$2,129,656 for the 2021-23 biennium.
- Increase Other Funds expenditure limitation for grant-in-aid, program costs and purchased services established by Chapter 603, section 6(3), Oregon Laws 2021, for the Oregon Department of Education, Educator Advancement Council, by \$3,488,205 for the 2021-23 biennium.



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor



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DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

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**Colt Gill**

Director of the Oregon Department of Education

December 6, 2021

Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair  
Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair  
Interim Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
900 Court Street NE  
H-178 State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

### **Nature of the Request**

The Department of Education, in conjunction with the Educator Advancement Council (EAC), respectfully requests an increase of \$5,617,861 in Other Funds expenditure limitation to expend Educator Advancement Fund (EAF) carryover funds from the 2019-2021 biennium in the 2021-2023 biennium. These resources will fund 10 limited-duration positions (7.50 FTE) to support the design and launch of the comprehensive, P-20 educator professional learning system as described in SB 182 (2017) and HB 3427 (2019), and a one-time increase in grant-in-aid funds to support Regional Educator Network (REN) Capacity Grants.

### **Agency Action**

In recognition that high-quality educator preparation and ongoing, effective professional learning and support for educators are critical variables to excellent teaching, improved student learning, and educator retention, SB 182 (2017) establishes and directs the EAC to coordinate a systemic approach to continuously assessing needs, as well as coordinating priorities for services and resources to support Oregon educators. The EAC provides direction, technical assistance, and administration of Educator Advancement Fund (EAF) Formula and Capacity grants to ten Regional Educator Networks (REN), which establish and coordinate educator professional learning that is reflective of and responsive to regional and local needs.

Additionally, the 2019 Student Success Act (HB 3427), in conjunction with SB 182, directed the EAC to develop a statewide strategy that creates a comprehensive and aligned system of professional learning that is grounded in continuous improvement for educators across the P-20 education system based on consideration of increasing: (a) Educator retention; (b) Educator diversity; (c) Mentoring and coaching of educators; (d) Participation in educator preparation programs; and (e) Educator scholarships. In support of these strategies, the EAC administers Statewide Education Initiatives grant funds to accelerate statewide progress toward achieving the goals of the Educator Equity Act (HB 3375, 2015) and other statewide equity initiatives (including the African American/Black Student Success Plan, American Indian/Alaska Native Student Success Plan, and Latino/a/x Student Success Plan). Additionally, since the sunset of the Oregon

Education Investment Board (OEIB) in 2018, the EAC has been directed to coordinate the production of the annual Educator Equity Report as required by HB 3375 (2015).

The policy goals of SB 182 and HB 3427 require an integrated approach to accelerate outcomes for diversification of the educator workforce and the development of culturally competent educators in every classroom, as well as call for services and support to be differentiated by local context. External technical assistance providers do not have the inner working knowledge of state frameworks across the P-20 continuum that would allow for a sustainable, higher leverage solution that is fiscally responsible.

Current staffing levels at the EAC do not support the sustainable implementation of statewide and regional strategies for establishing and sustaining a comprehensive P-20 educator development and professional learning system. The EAC is requesting use of carryover funds to support additional staff in order for the EAC to build system-wide capacity to effectively implement state and regional strategic priorities, coordinate equitable funding resources aligned to research and evidence-based practice, and design and sustain state and regional learning organizations that are able to respond with real-time, flexible, differentiated supports.

Educator Advancement Funds (EAF) from the 2019-2021 biennium remain unspent as a result of pandemic-related delays in staff hiring, legislative and administrative processes, as well as system wide lack of capacity to begin new work amidst comprehensive distance learning (CDL) efforts. The use of carryover funds for limited-duration positions and a one-time increase in Capacity Grant funds for RENs will provide the needed human capital and resources for addressing gaps in alignment between policy intent, practice, and outcomes (OAR 581-012-0015 (5)).

### **Staffing Costs**

The agency is requesting \$2,129,656 in Other Funds expenditure limitation to add 10 staffing positions, 7.50 Full Time Equivalent (FTE), including (1) Research Analyst 3, (1) Research Analyst 1, (1) Public Affairs Specialist 1, (1) Program Analyst 1 and (6) Education Program Specialist 2 positions. These positions are intended to support the additional demand and workload directly related to carrying out comprehensive professional learning design and delivery, grant administration, research and monitoring, and strategic communications necessary to implement the policy intent of SB 182 and HB 3427. These costs include salary, all other associated payroll costs, benefits, and Service and Supplies expenses totaling \$2,129,656 to fund through the end of the biennium.

The EAC intends for the ten limited-duration positions (10.00 FTE) to extend through the 2023-2025 biennium and will include a request for the use of carryover funds totaling \$2,820,463 in the next budget development cycle to cover the cost of these positions.

### **Regional Educator Network Capacity Grants**

\$3,488,205 in Other Fund expenditure limitation is proposed to provide additional funding for Capacity Grants in support of needed staffing and data support to the ten Regional Educator Networks as they design and support open access to regional high-quality, culturally responsive professional learning and support for educators that reflect educator voice, local context, and career stages. Current Capacity Grant levels are insufficient to account for regional differences in salary and travel costs, as well as address the system-wide strain of implementing new models of educator professional learning amidst the pandemic. This one-time increase in Capacity Grant funds for RENs will support: staffing, supplies, and travel costs for Regional Educator Network Coordinator; costs related to convening the REN coordinating body or district teams,

including costs for travel and actual costs of hiring substitutes for teachers; and contracts for services to provide support with data collection, technical assistance, evaluation, and educator development content expertise.

**Projected Outcomes**

Additional staff and resources will allow the EAC and the regional networks to execute on the state’s policy goals to ensure that Oregon’s students have highly qualified educators in every classroom that reflect their identities and experiences, as well as improve student achievement outcomes. Projected outcomes include:

- Ten (10) limited-duration employees dedicated to developing adaptive resources and supports that meet the changing needs as well as varying needs of school districts across the educator continuum;
- Development of three (3) Education Innovation Learning Hubs to serve as demonstration sites for EAC Future Ready Schools;
- Development of Professional Learning Systems Support and Resources: Differentiated Culturally Responsive Professional Learning Toolkits for integration into Grow Your Own Programs and Regional Educator Network supports, Differentiated Professional Growth Plans by State Initiative, Practice Profiles for Targeted Problems of Disparity, Disproportionality and Predictability in Student Academic Outcomes; ongoing development of differentiated resources tied to continuous improvement of statewide initiatives being implemented through our Regional Educator Networks and Grow Your Own Programs;
- Development of Adult Learning Dashboard to track growth towards demonstrating regional capacity across state initiatives; and
- Development of Academic Return on Investment Framework that Measures impact of EAC support and resources on P-20 initiatives (P-20 Workforce Development, Culturally Responsive Educators in Every Classroom, High Quality Educator Preparation and Workforce Diversity).

**Action Requested**

The Educator Advancement Council (EAC) respectfully requests an increase of \$5,617,861 in Other Funds limitation to expend carryover funding from the Educator Advancement Fund (EAF) in the 2021-2023 biennium, and authorization for 10 limited-duration positions (7.50 FTE) to support the design and launch of the comprehensive, P-20 educator professional learning system as described in SB 182 (2017) and HB 3427 (2019).

**Legislation Affected**

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|---------------------------|-------------|
| Chapter 603, Section 5(2) | \$2,129,656 |
| Chapter 603, Section 6(3) | \$3,488,205 |

Thank you for consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Colt Gill  
Agency Director



Kimberly Matier  
Council Executive Director