

FISCAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Measure: SB 279 - 2

81st Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2021 Regular Session
Legislative Fiscal Office

*Only Impacts on Original or Engrossed
Versions are Considered Official*

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Measure Description:

Directs Department of Human Services, to extent practicable, to avoid scheduling meetings and appointments involving child in foster care during school day.

Government Unit(s) Affected:

Department of Education (ODE), School Districts, Department of Human Services (DHS), Oregon Health Authority (OHA)

Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Costs related to the measure may require budgetary action - See analysis.

Summary of Expenditure Impact:

	2021-23 Biennium	2023-25 Biennium
General Fund	\$188,931	\$0
Other Funds	62,977	
Total Funds	\$251,908	\$0
Positions	1	0
FTE	1.00	0.00

Analysis:

SB 279 - 2 requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to avoid scheduling visitations for a child in foster care that would require the child to miss all or part of the school day. If a child misses all or part of more than four school days in a semester due to Department visitations, the child’s caseworker must record the number of days missed in the Department’s records.

The State Board of Education is directed to adopt rules to require each school district to report to DHS at the conclusion of each semester for the next two full school years, regarding days missed by a child in foster care due to visitations scheduled by DHS. DHS is directed to report to interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to human services no later than September 1, 2022 with information regarding school days missed by children in foster care during the 2021-22 school year due to scheduled department visitations; any initiatives DHS plans to implement to address school absences; and recommendations for policy initiatives to improve school attendance and educational success of children in foster care. Reporting requirements under this measure are repealed January 1, 2024. This bill declares an emergency and takes effect on passage.

DHS, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), and School Districts all note that it may be difficult to collect the data required by this measure.

DHS notes that under this measure, the definition of “visitations” excludes activities such as medical appointments, court appearances, or interviews with law enforcement or DHS; however, schools will not necessarily know if a child is leaving school that day for a visitation or some other reason, which could lead to absences that are not related to visitations being incorrectly recorded as visitations.

ODE currently collects attendance data but does not track why a student was absent, or collect attendance records by period. ODE will need to update their data collections systems to reflect this information, which can be done using current resources.

School Districts will need to determine how to identify and report the data required under this measure to ODE, and write and submit reports on foster student attendance. Since this information is not able to be flagged in existing school attendance systems, School Districts may be required to implement new data collection and reporting systems. There is an indeterminate fiscal impact for School Districts if they will need to report attendance data that is not already collected.

DHS anticipates that implementation of this measure will require one limited-duration, full-time Operations and Policy Analyst 3 position (1.00 FTE in 2021-23). The total cost of this position is estimated at \$251,908 total funds in 2021-23, including position-related Services and Supplies. This position will be required to work on policy recommendations for the report to the Legislature, and to work with school districts to establish procedures for data sharing. Additionally, DHS and the Oregon Health Authority anticipate minimal costs related to updates to the OR-Kids system, to track school absences for visitations in order to meet reporting requirements.

This measure warrants a subsequent referral to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means for the establishment of a new position.