

HB 2954 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Sen. Thomsen

Senate Committee On Education

Minority Report

Action Date: 05/26/21

Action: Do pass with different amendments. (Printed A-Eng.) Minority

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No revenue impact

Report Signers: Sen. Chuck Thomsen, Sen. Art Robinson

Prepared By: Lisa Gezelter, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 5/12, 5/26

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Allows public charter schools to implement weighted lottery that favors historically underserved students, defined as students at risk because of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, income level, proficiency in the English language, socioeconomic status, or geographic location. Modifies priority admission requirements. Allows priority admission for historically underserved students. Raises the limit on the percentage of students who reside in a school district who may be enrolled in a virtual public charter school not sponsored by that district from three percent to four percent. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Needs of students
- Ability of charter schools to ensure diversity in student population

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Raises the limit on the percentage of students who reside in a school district who may be enrolled in a virtual public charter school not sponsored by that district from three percent to four percent.

BACKGROUND:

Charter schools were first enacted in Oregon with passage of Senate Bill 100 in 1999. Charter schools operate under agreements with local school boards that allow them a measure of independence from certain state and district policies. Charter schools receive public funding, calculated as a percentage of the weighted average daily membership (ADMw) of their sponsoring districts. According to the Oregon Department of Education, 38,430 students attended 133 charter schools in Oregon during the 2019-2020 school year. Twenty of those schools are fully or primarily virtual. Of the total number of students attending charter schools in 2019-2020, 75 percent were white and 45 percent qualified for free and reduced price lunches. Senate Bill 100 (1999) allowed for an equitable lottery selection process.

House Bill 2954 MRSA modifies that provision to allow charter schools to implement a weighted lottery selection process and raises the limit on the percentage of students from any school district who can attend a virtual charter school not sponsored by the district.