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Colt Gill

Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction

HB 2817 - Interscholastic Activities for GED Students

House Education Committee

March 11, 2021

Chair Alonso Leon, Vice-Chair Weber, Vice-Chair Neron and members of the committee, I am Jessica Ventura, Government Relations Director for the Oregon Department Education (ODE). Thank you for the opportunity to submit additional information for HB 2817 for your review. ODE has no position on this bill.

Current Law:

ORS 339.450 prohibits schools, school districts, or associations from excluding certain students from participating in interscholastic athletics. This would include students who have transferred between schools, students who attend a public charter school, and students who participated in athletics at another school.

ORS 339.460 also prohibits school districts from denying students who attend public charter schools or home schools the ability to participate in interscholastic activities including athletics, music, speech, etc. The law stipulates students must live within the school district and attendance boundary of the school providing the activity and meet eligibility requirements.

Issue:

There is currently no mechanism for students who attend GED Option Programs to participate in interscholastic activities.

House Bill 2817:

HB 2817 would allow students enrolled in GED programs provided by school districts or education service districts to participate in interscholastic activities. If passed, the bill would become effective July 1, 2021 and would apply to the 2021-2022 school year.

Amendment -1:

The amendment would provide additional clarifications on eligibility regarding GED programs and students. It inserts requirements to participate specific to GED students, including meeting an attendance threshold of 80 percent over the course of a month as well as passing one GED practice test.

Equity Impact:

Historically underrepresented students are often GED students. During the 2018-2019 school year, 1,870 students took GED tests through a GED Option Program and roughly 30 percent of those students were non-white. This bill would allow students who are largely removed from traditional school culture to engage in a different way. GED Option students are often separated from other students, even in traditional settings (high schools). This bill would allow for some measure of inclusion previously unavailable to these students.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments, and we welcome any questions you may have.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Ventura

Government Relations Director