

ANALYSIS

Legislative Administration Committee Civics Education

Analyst: Amanda Beitel

Request: Acknowledge receipt of a report on civics education programs offered by the Oregon House of Representatives, Oregon State Senate, and Legislative Administration Visitor Services.

Analysis: The budget report for HB 5016 (2021), the budget bill for the seven Legislative Branch agencies, included the following budget note related to civics education programs:

The Chief Clerk of the House and Secretary of the Senate shall work in coordination with Visitor Services in Legislative Administration to explore creating a civics education unit, in compliance with Oregon Department of Education curriculum standards for primary and secondary grades. A report on options for a civics education program that may be integrated into classroom settings and guided tours of the State Capitol shall be submitted to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means in the February 2022 session.

Legislative Administration Visitor Services, the Oregon House of Representatives, and Oregon State Senate currently offer a variety of civics education and engagement programs and resources to the public and students. Onsite guided and virtual tours of the Oregon State Capitol are provided by Visitor Services and include both a history of the building and the legislature. Pre-pandemic, over 50,000 people, including more than 40,000 students, participated in guided onsite tours during a biennium. A pilot program offering virtual tours to classrooms was initiated in March 2021 as a result of the pandemic and extended to the 2021-22 school year. School tour programs support lesson plans aligned with the Oregon Department of Education Social Study Standards.

An Honorary Page Program is offered by the Secretary of the Senate's office to students ages 12 and older. Pages are able to learn about and experience government, including lessons on legislative process, performing duties on the Senate floor, assisting the sergeant at arms throughout the floor session, visiting committee meetings, and interacting with staff and members. Civics education focuses on the three branches of government, elected officials, legislative process, and the state's governance history. Senate members and staff have also supported the statewide Classroom Law Program and assisted the Secretary of State's office with the Oregon Kid Governor program.

The Chief Clerk's office also offers the House Honorary Page Program (HPP), which allows students to actively engage and learn about government. Historically, pages performed clerical tasks to support the House; however, the program has evolved into an instructional program that aligns with Common Core State Standards. During the 2020 legislative session, the Chief Clerk's office also hosted two high school and college interns that were able to receive credit for their participation. Several new civics programs are also in development, including a page program providing students a longer and more in-depth experience than the HPP and an Experiential Learning Program (ELP) designed to ensure equitable access for Oregonians. The ELP program will include an elected Oregon Youth Legislature, providing students an opportunity to develop critical thinking, leadership, and public speaking skills.

Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends acknowledging receipt of the report.

REPORT

**Pursuant to
HB 5016 (2021)**





February 15, 2022

Ways and Means Committee
State Capitol Building
Salem, OR 97301

Members of the Committee,

Pursuant to HB 5016 (2021) and the associated Budget Note, the undersigned herein submit to the Joint Ways and Means Committee the following report on civics education programs under the purview of the Oregon House, the Oregon Senate and the Capitol's Visitor Services office. Where applicable, we identify programs that may be integrated into classroom settings.

/s/ Juliene Poppinga

/s/ Lori Brocker

/s/ Timothy Sekerak

Juliene Poppinga
Visitor Services Manager

Lori Brocker
Secretary of the Senate

Timothy Sekerak
Chief Clerk of the House

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Visitor Services Tour and Educational Resource Overview

Prior to the pandemic, more than 50,000 people participate in a guided onsite tour during a biennium, with more than 40,000 of those being students. Onsite guided tours are offered daily. Tours include building history, history of the legislature, and information on ways to get involved in the legislative process.

Visitor Service staff continue to develop resources as opportunities are identified. Most recently, during the pandemic, staff delivered live virtual tour in the classroom and to remote learners throughout the state. During the pilot project over a period of two months, from March 2021 - April 2021, a total of 2,000 students participated. Based on the feedback received during this time, the pilot project was extended into the 2021-2022 school year.

School tours support lesson plans developed to align with the Oregon Department of Education [Social Study Standards](#). Staff (4) are interpretive tour guides, certified through the [National Association of Interpretation \(NAI\)](#). The tour program delivery also relies heavily on a core group of Capitol Volunteers. Currently more than 50% of volunteer tour guides are retired teachers.

Following is a list of current program options and educational resources.

School Onsite Tour Program: Offered daily, September - June, Monday through Friday. The tour includes a visit to the Rotunda, Senate and House Chamber, Governor's Ceremonial Office, and a trip to the tower platform when open. Legislators are notified when a school is scheduled to be onsite, with an option to meet with the group.

Live Virtual Tour in the Classroom with a Tour Guide: Currently offered daily, February – May. Offered as a pilot project daily with the goal to continue virtual programming once onsite tours return to pre-pandemic numbers. Extending the reach and the virtual tour frequency is subject to staffing consideration.

Public Onsite Tour Program: Offered daily, January – November, Monday through Friday. The tour includes a visit to the Rotunda, Senate and House Chamber, Governor's Ceremonial Office, and a trip to the tower platform when open. Interpretation includes building history, history of the legislature, the legislative process, and ways to get involved.

Educational Resources: Resources are available electronically under the [Educators and Students](#) tab on the legislative website.

Grade School Lesson Plans

- [Legislative Process Vocabulary](#)
- [How an Idea Becomes Law](#)
- [Bottle Bill Fact Sheet](#) and [‘Reader Theater’ Script](#) to recreate a hearing on the bottle bill and [K-W-L Chart](#)

- [During Your Capitol Tour Lesson Plan](#)
- [After Your Capitol Tour Lesson Plan](#)

Other Resources

- [Link to Tribal History Lesson Plans](#)
- [Classroom YouTube Channel](#)
- [Flipgrid](#) (Lessons created for the app. related to the Capitol and legislative process.)
- [Onsite and Electronic Exhibits](#)
- [Become an Honorary Page](#)
- [Recorded Virtual Public and School Tour](#)
- [Oregon State Seal Symbolism](#)
- [Can You Find Me Scavenger Hunt](#)
- [Capitol self-guided walking tour](#)
- [State Capitol State Park walking tour](#)
- [Capitol Quiz](#)

Oregon State Senate Civic Education and Engagement

The following is a summary of the current civic education and engagement opportunities in the Oregon State Senate:

Senate Honorary Page Program

• Program Overview

The Secretary of the Senate's office offers the Senate Honorary Page Program to students ages 12 and older. Participants are invited to experience the legislative process firsthand, gaining unique insight into Oregon's government and history, with a particular focus on the workings and procedures of the Oregon State Senate.

Honorary pages learn about legislative procedures and witness and experience the functions of a democratic government. Many honorary pages reflect on their service as an educational tool and an occupational asset as they continue their education and interact as citizens in their communities. Past honorary pages have gone on to successful careers in public service. Many have also returned to serve the Oregon State Legislature as support staff or even as representatives and senators.

• Itinerary and Educational Components

Honorary pages begin their day with an overview of the workings of the Capitol during a legislative session. An organized tour of the Capitol is interwoven with the day's activities. Students visit their senator's office, often having a chance to meet them or their staff. Lessons on the legislative process are presented prior to hands-on work, such as preparing the Senate chamber for floor session. Students then have an opportunity to work on the Senate floor when it is actively in floor session. Honorary page duties include distributing material to senators' desks, participating in the order of business of "Posting of the Colors" (the US and Oregon flag ceremony), and assisting the sergeant at arms in numerous ways throughout the floor session and in the sergeant's official duties throughout the day.

An honorary page's work and learning continues after floor session and includes visiting committee meetings to experience the hearings in action and interacting with staff and members while experiencing some of the pathways to citizen participation in the legislative process.

Educational civics components focus on teaching the major parts of Oregon's government. Topics covered include: the three branches of government, the elected positions within the

government, and the legislative process and opportunities for interaction with the legislature for Oregon's citizens, media, lobbyists, and other organizations. Historical lesson components tell the story of the diverse people of the state, the evolving forms of governance since the state's founding, and end with a particular focus on those who have served in the Senate since its beginnings.

• **Applicants and Outreach**

Prior to the COVID pandemic, typical long session year statistics have shown as many as 130 students participating in the Senate's honorary page program, representing all Senate districts, 52 individual schools, and five foreign nations (via the AFS exchange student program).

Primary outreach to potential honorary page applicants is done through e-mail invitations to public middle and high schools, charter/home school organizations, and by providing information about the program and application on the legislature's webpage, and through disbursement of recruitment brochures and through individual invitations from Senate members to their constituents.

Civic Engagement – General

While the honorary page program is the more formal civic education and engagement program in the Senate, the secretary frequently speaks and teaches middle school, high school, and college students, and adult groups, both at the Capitol and in other venues, generally focusing on legislative processes, protocols, and parliamentary procedures. The secretary and staff also provide parliamentary consulting and training for other staff, volunteers, organizations, and entities within and outside of the Capitol. Periodically, the secretary and staff develop, distribute, and implement training, orientation, and educational materials for use in presentations or in the classroom. Finally, the secretary and staff are sometimes called upon to speak to business, cultural, and fraternal organizations about issues related to historical and current Senate practices and processes.

Classroom Law Project

This statewide program has frequently engaged with Senate members and Senate staff in CLP's many permutations including constitutional, legal, and legislative educational programs and events.

Kid Governor

For the past several years, the Secretary of the Senate's office has assisted the Secretary of State's office in this program, particularly as it relates to the inauguration of Oregon's Kid Governor.

2022 Oregon House Civics Components

HONORARY PAGE PROGRAM

For more than 100 years, the House Honorary Page Program, operated by the Chief Clerk's office, served the needs of the House by providing critical clerical support during a time before the internet. Honorary Pages worked alongside paid staff to distribute paperwork, control floor access, post committee schedules and information, and facilitate communication between members on the floor and individuals outside the chamber by physically passing notes back and forth. Since 2014 Honorary Page Program has evolved from an office support program to an educationally robust learning opportunity for students seeking to learn about government and civics through an interactive, hands-on approach. Direct instruction, pre- and post-visit homework, and other learning opportunities—aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), replaced the more traditional page duties.

The House Honorary Page Program hosted 27 Honorary Pages during the 2020 short session. Pages came from all over Oregon and the world, as we once again were honored to have a significant percentage of exchange students from North Africa and the Middle East.

HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE INTERNS

The Chief Clerk's Office first hosted a non-partisan internship program for local high school and college students in 2020. Two students participated in this program from local schools. Both of our interns took on additional responsibilities working with our Honorary and Legislative Pages and Clerk's office staff. Both received academic credit from their educational institutions for their work with the Assembly in the 2020 regular session.

House civics programs in development

LEGISLATIVE PAGE PROGRAM (LPP)

Piloted in 2020, the goal of the LPP is to provide students with a more in-depth dive into the Oregon legislative process, as well as Oregon history, American government, and civics in general. The House tested the concept for two weeks of the regular session. This test was conducted in collaboration with local school districts and other students who learned about the LPP program when calling to inquire about the HPP.

There are several key differences between the Legislative Page Program (LPP) and the Honorary Page Program (HPP). The most obvious difference is the length of the program. Whereas the HPP is designed as a single-day experience, students attend LPP for five consecutive days. This

permits students to focus in-depth on important learnings while allowing the program to broaden its educational goals and offerings to include a comprehensive exploration of civics at a local, state, federal and International level.

There is no fee to participate, even though students are provided uniforms which are necessary to ensure all individuals—including those from low-income households—are able to feel confident while on the floor of the House, regardless of their ability to afford clothing. Additionally, students receive lunch and snacks, which is also critical to meet the nutritional requirements for all attendees and remove yet another barrier for low-income families from attending the program. LPP capacity is up to 12 students each week.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAM (ELP)

The Experimental Learning Program (ELP) is being developed specifically to ensure equitable access for all Oregonians. ELP will provide Oregon public, private, and home schoolteachers with an in-depth curriculum that explores the Oregon legislative process, as well as a hands-on lesson plans that offer students an interactive civics experience in alignment with Oregon state instructional standards at the relevant age groups and grade levels.

Unfortunately, school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic did not allow for the program to reach its full potential for in-classroom experiences. During the 2020 educational pivot to online and remote instruction, we partnered with two local school districts to pilot a weekly distribution of civics/leadership packets for migrant families in both English and Spanish during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

OREGON YOUTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (OYLA)

A key part of the ELP will be the Oregon Youth Legislature. This program will allow students develop their abilities in various types of leadership, critical thinking skills, and public speaking that will help them to become active participants in our modern democratic Republic. Additionally, this elected body will allow Oregon's youth to relay the unique ideas, concepts and concerns as seen by the state's youth to the adult legislature.

CITIZEN EDUCATION AND OUTREACH (CEO)

The CEO program will be a tool for members of legislative assembly to reach out to adult groups, organizations, elected bodies and or other groups who might benefit from direct interaction with legislative staff. The CEO program will be available to all Oregonians in any part of the state by request. The staffer can then plan a visit and or presentation, hand out documents or materials as needed on any topics related to civics, history, Oregon governmental functions or general legislative information.