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Director of the Department of Education

TO: Chair Neron & Members of the House Education Committee

DATE: Jan 25, 2023

FROM: Zoe Larmer, Government Relations Director

RE: Question posed about the Oregon Department of Education's proposals

Chair Neron and Members of the House Education Committee,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to provide information about our bill, House Bill 2281 - District Appointed Civil Rights Coordinators. We are more than happy to continue providing information to you on our work and look forward to our continued partnership on behalf of all Oregon students. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you need further clarification.

With gratitude,
Zoe Larmer

Questions & Answers For HB 2281 (District Appointed Civil Rights Coordinators)

Question: Have districts in Oregon been flagged for civil rights violations by the U.S. Department of Education?

Response:

The Office of Civil Rights does not usually do proactive reviews of schools and districts; they rely on submitted complaints of discrimination, which they then investigate. Any person may submit a civil rights complaint to OCR about an educational program that receives federal financial assistance. Individuals are not required to go through their local complaints process first, but may go directly to OCR. OCR will then screen the complaints according to their Case Processing Manual and associated civil rights regulations, and will then inform the complainant and school district of the complaint and complaint process.

Usually when OCR opens a civil rights investigation with an Oregon public school district, ODE will receive a copy of the notice letter that is served to the district, but this may not happen in every case.



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OCR investigations may take up to a few years to process, so information about recent complaints is hard to access. However, OCR maintains a [Case Resolution Database](#) where they publish their investigation findings and resolution agreements. According to the database, OCR has processed 56 civil rights case resolutions in Oregon public K-12 schools since 2013.