

SB 756 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

Prepared By: Lisa Gezelter, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 3/21

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires that school districts provide employees who work with students who have individualized education program or 504 plan to have access to specified parts of students' education records and to be consulted when education plan is being reviewed or revised. Requires specified employees to be scheduled to start work no less than 15 minutes before starting contact with the student, to be provided by the school district with minimum training, and to be paid at a rate that is at least five percent more than school district employees who are performing similar work with students who are not experiencing disability. Requires Oregon Department of Education (ODE), Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC), and Educator Advancement Council (EAC) to identify minimum training requirements for school district employees who work with students with specialized needs and a career pathway for those school district employees. Takes effect on the 91st day after sine die.

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued.

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Replaces the measure. Requires that school districts provide employees who work with students who have individualized education program or 504 plan to have access to specified parts of students' education records and to be consulted when education plan is being reviewed or revised. Requires districts to include specified staff in meetings and compensate them for attending. Requires school districts to provide adequate training for employees to safely carry out specialized duties. Takes effect on the 91st day after adjournment sine die.

BACKGROUND:

During 2021, legislators created a work group to review issues relating to labor shortages in Oregon schools. According to the Oregon Employment Department (OED), schools compete for workers with a variety of other industries that may provide lower-stress or lower-risk environments. As other industries raise wages, Oregon's schools are finding it difficult to compete. During the summer of 2021, Oregon's school districts reported over 1,820 job vacancies to OED, 85 percent of which required education beyond a high school diploma. Oregon has an overall three-year attrition rate for teachers of approximately 36 percent, with higher rates for teachers of color. The Teacher Standards and Practices Commission reported a total of approximately 66,000 active teaching licenses in its system. However, only about 34,000 teachers were working in Oregon's schools in 2022. In work group meetings, participants discussed pay, teachers spoke about the difficulty of meeting professional development requirements during the current workforce shortage, teachers described the challenges of lost planning time, and both substitute teachers and classified staff reported being charged by districts for training required for their jobs.

Work group participants identified special education as a particularly acute area of need in terms of staffing shortages. Work group participants who work directly with students reported not having access to students' records, not being paid to report prior to school start times, and not having sufficient training. Districts reported difficulties in hiring staff for special education due to low pay and challenging working conditions.

SB 756 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Bill 756 requires that school district employees who work with students experiencing disability have access to students' records, be paid to start work prior to start of contact with student, be paid a five percent differential, and be provided with sufficient training.