

Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify. For the record, my name is Miles Larson, and I am here on behalf of the Oregon School Employees Association, representing 25,000 classified school employees across Oregon. We strongly support House Bill 4154 as amended.

For our members, attendance is not an abstract metric. It is daily operations. When students are absent, it affects everything our members do. Nutrition staff are planning meals with shifting counts. Office professionals are making calls and tracking down information. Instructional assistants manage disrupted learning and student needs that can grow when attendance is inconsistent. Attendance affects student learning, and it also affects working conditions for the adults who keep schools running.

House Bill 4154 helps Oregon take a clearer, more consistent approach to understanding attendance patterns. The bill defines what it means to be absent, including excused absences, unexcused absences, and disciplinary exclusions. It defines chronic absence as missing 10 percent or more of enrolled school days, and a regular attender as missing less than 10 percent.

Those definitions matter because we cannot solve a problem we are measuring differently from district to district. Collection of data does not necessarily equate to the comparison of data.

House Bill 4154 also requires school districts to report attendance data in a way that allows the Department of Education to determine regular attendance and chronic absence, and to disaggregate the data by student group, including a clearer breakdown for students with disabilities, separating 504 plans and Individual Education Programs.

Then, four times per year, the department must compile the data, give districts and charter schools an opportunity to review it and request adjustments, and publish it on the department website in an easy-to-use format.

This is a practical, pro-student, pro-school bill. Transparent, disaggregated attendance data helps communities target support where they are needed, and it helps districts plan staffing and resources in ways that make schools work better for students and for the classified employees who serve them every day. As already mentioned, this framework first applies to the current 2026 to 2027 school year, and the bill would take effect July 1st of this year.

OSEA urges your support for House Bill 4154. Thank you.