

HB 2378 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Prepared By: Tim Walker, Fiscal Analyst

Meeting Dates: 6/3

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure requires the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to establish a competency-based pilot program to assist public post-secondary institutions with expanding competency-based education. HECC is required to issue at least one grant to fund start up costs, encourage institutions to market to out-of-state individuals and adopt necessary rules. The measure also appropriates \$200,000 General Fund to HECC for the purposes of the bill.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Competency-based education (CBE) is an alternative to traditional educational methods which emphasizes learning based on students' proficiency or mastery of skills for assessing knowledge progressions and student advancement, rather than based on the passage of time. In other words, under this method, students are encouraged to learn at their own pace and to produce projects that demonstrate their proficiency and knowledge in a variety of ways, rather than adhering to a strict time schedule. This method has gained popularity in recent years, particularly at the all-online Western Governors University where it is the standard.

The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, the regional accrediting body for higher education, issued guidance for CBE programs in 2016. In 2017, the Legislative Assembly passed House Bill 3289, requiring the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to submit an annual report on the current state of CBE at institutions of higher education in Oregon. HECC's 2018 report noted that, although some CBE programs existed at Southern Oregon University, Oregon Health and Science University, Central Oregon Community College, and certain private career schools, there were regulatory and statutory barriers to wider implementation in the state.