

HB 2378 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Education

Action Date: 04/13/21

Action: Do pass. Refer to Ways and Means.

Vote: 10-0-0-0

Yeas: 10 - Alonso Leon, Hudson, Neron, Owens, Reardon, Ruiz, Smith DB, Sollman, Weber, Wright

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Matt Perreault, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 3/18, 4/13

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to establish pilot program for competency-based education. Requires that pilot program issue grants to public post-secondary institutions of higher education to fund promotion, expansion, and implementation of competency-based education programs. Allows HECC to adopt rules necessary to administer pilot program and issue grants. Sunsets January 2, 2024. Appropriates \$200,000 to Higher Education Coordinating Commission from General Fund to fund pilot program. Modifies requirement for HECC to annually report on competency-based education to add requirement to analyze student outcomes and identify additional funding strategies. Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2021.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Characteristics of competency-based education (CBE) versus traditional methods
- Funding for innovation in education
- Expansion of CBE from K-12 to higher education
- Which schools currently use CBE instruction
- Current funding restrictions for CBE at the state level
- Future employment trends
- Relationship between time spent in school and student loan debt levels
- Partnerships between schools and employers

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.

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CBE remains a popular alternative educational method particularly for programs centered on career technical education (CTE).

House Bill 2378 directs HECC to create a pilot program that would issue grants to public universities and community colleges for expanding CBE programs, appropriates \$200,000 for this purpose, and expands HECC's responsibilities for reporting on CBE programs.