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Colt Gill

Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction

House Bill 2969 - Oral Health Standards

House Education Committee

April 6, 2021

Chair Alonso Leon, Vice-Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Weber and members of the House Education Committee, I am Jessica Ventura, Government Relations Director for the Oregon Department of Education. I am submitting this written testimony to provide information as you consider HB 2969. We have no position on the bill.

Background:

Health education provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop health literacy, so they are able to access valid information, resources and services in order to develop, maintain and promote healthy behaviors. Health education is built on the foundation of teaching to all dimensions of the whole child. The eight main standards in health education focus on the development of knowledge and skills that students will use throughout their lifetimes – understanding health content and concepts; analyzing influences; interpersonal communication; decision-making; goal setting; self-management; and advocacy. Quality health education requires time for students to develop and practice healthy behaviors, and ensures that students from every background and identity can learn the knowledge and skills to live their best and healthiest lives.

Current health education laws require standards, but there is no law that requires oral health education to be provided. There are also no laws that provide for dental services reimbursements in schools.

The [Health Education standards](#) do call for prevention education in a number of broader categories such as personal health and practices such as “identify/describe/demonstrate healthy practices and behaviors that maintain or improve personal health” (Standard 7; 7.K.1) and “demonstrate ways to prevent common childhood injuries and health problems (Standard 1; 1.4.4). The standards are skills based and are written to fit into any subject area that districts choose. Health standards are taught every year in K-8 and twice in 9-12.

School Dental Screening Requirements

Oral health is an important part of a student's overall health. There are documented connections between overall health and a student's academic performance and attendance. Included below is information used to assist school districts in the implementation of HB 2972, HB 3181, and HB 3353; all which affect dental screening rules. Further information, including forms and certificates, can be found on [ODE's Website](#):

- [HB 2972](#) requires school districts to collect dental screening information for students 7 years of age or younger and who are beginning an educational program (includes prekindergarten) for the first time. Schools may perform dental screenings but are not required to. Schools must provide preventative dental care information to new students. Lastly, school districts shall report the percentage of students who fail to submit a screening certificate to the Oregon Department of Education by October 1 of each year. No later than December 1 each year, the Oregon Department of Education shall submit a summary to the Interim Legislative Committees on Education and to the Dental Director appointed by the Oregon Health Authority.
- [HB 3181](#): Provides that statement from parent or guardian releasing a student seven years of age or younger from requirement to submit certification that student received dental screening within previous 12 months must include explanation of reason that dental screening is a burden for student or parent or guardian of student.
- [HB 3353](#): Provides that when school district or prekindergarten program causes dental screening to be conducted of all students in one or more classrooms or in one or more grades where students are 14 years of age or younger, school district or prekindergarten program must provide students or parents or guardians of students opportunity to request not to participate in dental screening.

House Bill 2969

HB 2969 bill will require current ODE staff to lead the development of new oral health education specifically named in the Health Education Standards K- 12. The bill will require a new OAR and an update to the [Division 22 requirements](#). This will require additional travel for stakeholder engagement (3 trips for roll-out) and support for district implementation, including professional development and technical assistance (3 trips a year). The timeline for adopting the new

standards is in line with the current schedule for revising health standards (standards to be adopted by September 1, 2024, and to be taught in classrooms by the 2025-26 school year).

For OHA, it requires OHA to accept reimbursement claims from coordinated care organizations (CCOs) providing school-based oral health services.

Policy Considerations

- School districts will need to ensure that Health Education, and specifically age-appropriate oral health education is taught each year to students K-12. School districts will need to adopt, develop or purchase materials that include age-appropriate oral health education for each grade level K-12. Because there are 900+ standards in Health Education, this added requirement may decrease the time that educators have to spend on other important health topics (socio-emotional learning, healthy relationships, nutrition, etc.). Similarly, health education is often taught by non-health teachers who may be unprepared to teach to these new standards.
- Broaden reimbursements beyond coordinated care organizations to other community health and non-profit organizations.
- Include support for school districts in the provision of new standards. School districts are already challenged to meet all of Health Education's standards and performance indicators, and will need some support to implement this bill. Consider including funding or a provision for professional development, funding for instructional resources, or support to hire certified health teachers. Health education is often taught by non-health teachers who will need training and support to provide instruction on these new requirements.

Fiscal:

Currently, there is no fiscal to this bill as the standards are not required to be taught until the 2025-2026 school year. However, ODE may return to the legislature to ask for additional funding for instructional materials and funding for professional development.

Thank you,
Jessica Ventura
Government Relations Director