



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor



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Colt Gill

Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction

GOOD GOVERNANCE

HB 2057: Grant Making Authority
House Education Committee
February 2, 2021

Chair Alonso Leon, Vice Chairs Neron and Weber, and members of the committee, I am Jessica Ventura, Government Relations Director for the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2057.

Through the leadership of the Governor's office and the Legislature, the work ODE performs has grown in breadth and complexity over time, transforming with the way we serve students in this state. This is especially apparent when you consider ODE now administers over 100 different Grant-In-Aid programs. As the agency overseeing Oregon's public K-12 education system, ODE isn't in the classroom directly providing services; one of our core functions is to effectively and efficiently administer numerous state and federal grants.

Most of these Grant-In-Aid programs are directed or guided by statutory law or budget notes; however, in many older programs or new federally funded programs, there is a lack of directive. Sometimes there is not specific guidance on how the program should be administered – as grants or contracts. When there isn't guidance, ODE must spend staff time and effort working with the Department of Justice to establish what legislative intent was, often delaying the execution of funding awards due to the increased legal review required. This can mean delays on implementation of programs and extensions of timeline on actual delivery of services to students.

HB 2057 would resolve this issue by giving ODE more specific and flexible authority with respect to using a grant or a contract to carry out its programs. However, as proposed, this bill does not take any power away from the Legislature to determine what a program might look like. The proposed language would become the general guidance to follow only if there is no guidance on program administration provided by the Legislature. Overall, the aim of this bill is to better function in our role in the educational system by acknowledging the volume of grant making we do. This will allow us to more quickly and efficiently get state and federal resources to our school districts who directly serve students across the state.

There is minimal fiscal impact to ODE with the proposed bill, but we do anticipate at least minor savings due to using less staff time and effort to document legislative intent as well as DOJ costs to conduct research.

Thank you for your time, and we welcome any questions you may have.

Jessica Ventura

Government Relations Director