



**COALITION OF
OREGON SCHOOL
ADMINISTRATORS**

Coalition of Oregon School Administrators
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Date: February 5, 2024
To: House Education Committee
From: Morgan Allen, COSA
Subject: House Bill 4079 and House Bill 4068

Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Hudson and Wright, and Members of the House Education Committee

On behalf of the Coalition of Oregon School Administrators (COSA) and our almost 3,000 members statewide, we write to share feedback on House Bill 4079 and House Bill 4068 with the -1 amendment.

Background

First, we want to thank and commend Chair Neron and the House Education Committee for raising important questions and policy discussions regarding our State School Fund (SSF) Formula. For the past 30 years, the SSF has changed very little and it is clear that the formula needs to be scrutinized to answer the following question: What changes need to be made to ensure that our State School Fund is more equitably meeting the needs of every student in Oregon? Especially in today's post-pandemic world, it is clear that the formula falls short in a few key areas.

House Bill 4068, -1 amendment

Each biennium, \$110 million is set aside, or "carved out," to reimburse the costs school districts incur to provide educational services to students with the most severe or complex disabilities. Specifically, expenditures over \$30,000 are eligible for reimbursement from these funds. Expenditures available for reimbursement far outstrip dollars available. For example, projected reimbursement for the 2022-23 school year is expected to be less than \$.50 for every eligible dollar. Put another way, the general funds of school districts will have to absorb these costs.

We support adding additional funds to the High Cost Disability grant to cover the full costs of providing services and supports for our students. We also support the addition of a funding mechanism to recognize that some districts, particularly our small, rural districts, do not have the financial resources or economies of scale to cover these extra costs. Our members believe it is a state responsibility to fully cover the educational expenses needed to provide a high quality education for these students and we support the bill with the -1 amendment.



House Bill 4079

As the number of students in Oregon schools who are eligible for special education services continues to grow, it is clear that one of the most antiquated components of the SSF is the 11% cap on funding for special education.

The percentage of special education students in our state is approaching 15% and it is clear that we need to add hundreds of millions of dollars to the State School Fund to truly meet the charge of serving every student equitably. Absent this change, school districts will continue to move money from their general fund to cover the shortfall in funds for these critical services and supports.

Please note that COSA's support for removing the cap is contingent on additional funds being added to the State School Fund to pay for these weights. There is precedent for this - when the formula was changed to allow for full-day kindergarten, the Legislature added more than \$200 million dollars to the SSF to cover the costs of the new additional weights.

Similarly, COSA supports the addition of a 1.0 weight for homeless students with additional funds added to the SSF to pay for the costs of the additional weights. Our McKinney-Vento identified students need more wraparound services, mental health services, and social supports to help meet the challenges they face in their daily lives.

Summary

The federal government has long provided a fraction of the funding needed to provide educational services to our students with disabilities. Similarly, federal funds to serve homeless youth are limited. The changes proposed in House Bills 4068 and HB 4079 would provide permanent and meaningful funding for many of the students in our K-12 schools that need our support and help the most.