

SB 604 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/19, 3/12

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure establishes the Strong Start Program at the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to provide academic support and support services to first-year and underrepresented students at public universities. It requires HECC to adopt rules that outline the services provided by the program and establish a distribution formula for funds. The measure creates the Strong Start Program Fund, administered by HECC, and appropriates an unspecified amount of money from the General Fund to the program fund. It declares an emergency and takes effect July 1, 2025.

Fiscal impact: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued.

Revenue impact: Revenue issued.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Impact on students
- Access to higher education

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 The amendment appropriates \$700,000 to HECC, with \$100,000 distributed to each public university to cover the costs of administrating the Strong Start Program.

BACKGROUND:

In 2021 and 2022, the Legislative Assembly appropriated funds to the seven public universities in Oregon to fund Strong Start programs with the purpose of assisting students in the transition from high school to college. [Senate Bill 5528 \(2021\)](#) appropriated \$4.7 million for this purpose, outlined in the [budget report](#) prepared by the Legislative Fiscal Office. [House Bill 5202 \(2022\)](#) appropriated an additional \$7.5 million to the programs for the 2022-2023 academic year.

On [January 19, 2023](#), the House Committee on Higher Education held an informational meeting on transitions to higher education that included testimony about Strong Start programs, and on [April 20, 2023](#), the committee held an informational meeting on the Strong Start Grant, during which university representatives presented information on the [outcomes](#) for students who received services from Strong Start and Summer Bridge programs.