

SB 981 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

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Meeting Dates: 3/5, 3/19

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure modifies the upper age limit of eligibility for public education for students with disabilities to include students who are 21 years old. The measure makes conforming amendments. It declares an emergency and takes effect July 1, 2025.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Provisions of federal law
- Experiences of Oregon students
- The number of students in Oregon for whom the bill would apply

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The rights of students with disabilities are enshrined in the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#), [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), and the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#). IDEA codifies state and local responsibility for educating children with specific disabilities from birth through age 21 by requiring that schools provide a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) to all students with those disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE), usually interpreted as mainstream classrooms whenever possible. IDEA also establishes requirements for identification and evaluation of children with disabilities. Additionally, the law grants parents significant influence over the educational programs for their children. Currently, Oregon law only requires school districts to provide a free, appropriate public education to a student until the school year in which they turn 21. This does not align with the requirements of Federal law.