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Dr. Charlene Williams
Director of the Department of Education

TO: Co-Chair Sollman, Co-Chair Ruiz, & Members of the Joint Subcommittee On Ways and Means On Education

DATE: May 28, 2025

FROM: Kai Turner, Assistant Superintendent Office of Finance & Information Technology

RE: Questions posed of the Oregon Department of Education's Presentation on May 27th

Co-Chair Sollman, Co-Chair Ruiz, and Members of the Joint Subcommittee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to provide information regarding the Department of Education's report on Fiscal Transparency to the Joint Subcommittee On Ways and Means on Education. We are more than happy to continue providing information to you on our work and look forward to our continued partnership on behalf of all Oregon students. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you need further clarification.

With gratitude,
Kai Turner

Questions & Answers

Question: Please explain the mechanics around the poverty rate in the State School Fund formula. Specifically the modeling of how it is determined the number of children in poverty in a given district.

Response:

The poverty weight in the State School Fund formula is defined in ORS 327.013(1)(c)(A)(v)(I), which directs ODE to use "poverty data published by the United States Census Bureau, student data provided by school districts and other data identified by the board." The specific formula to determine the poverty weight for each school district was adopted by the State Board of Education in rule under OAR 581-023-0102.

In short, ODE uses the Small Area Income Poverty Estimate (SAIPE) report, which is a complex statistical model that uses data from multiple sources to estimate poverty by region. The SAIPE report estimates the total number of school age children in a given region, as well as the number of children who are in families experiencing poverty. ODE determines the proportion of children who are in public schools in that region using school districts' resident average daily membership (ADMr), divided by the total estimated number of school age children from the SAIPE report. ODE uses the assumption that the same proportion of children experiencing poverty are attending public schools. For example, if 70% of the children in a region attend public schools, it is assumed that 70% of the children experiencing poverty (as identified by the SAIPE statistical model) are attending public schools. This number is used as the "poverty number" to which the 0.25 poverty weight is applied.

For a more detailed explanation, view this brief [primer on the State School Fund Poverty Weight](#). The reports describing the poverty weight calculation for each school district are available on the [K-12 School Funding Information web page](#) under the Poverty Transparency Reports section.