

Senate Bill 322

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SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**. The statement includes a measure digest written in compliance with applicable readability standards.

Digest: The Act would change the law in several ways to support substitute teachers in this state. (Flesch Readability Score: 74.2).

Directs the Department of Education to enter into a contract with a third party to develop and offer online professional development opportunities for substitute teachers in this state.

Directs the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission to establish by rule a substitute teaching license and a restricted substitute teaching license. Requires the commission to establish by rule an expedited process for persons with a restricted substitute teaching license to obtain a substitute teaching license.

Provides that certain substitute teachers are eligible to enroll in a health benefit plan offered by the Oregon Educators Benefit Board. Requires the substitute teacher to pay 10 percent of the premiums for the plan. Requires the substitute teacher's chosen home district to administer the plan for the substitute teacher and pay the remaining premiums, subject to reimbursement by the board.

Requires a district to maintain legacy health care benefits for substitute teachers who are not eligible to enroll in a health benefit plan offered by the board.

Establishes the Office of Substitute Teachers in the Department of Education to develop, communicate and coordinate best practices and supports for substitute teachers.

Declares an emergency, effective July 1, 2025.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

1
2 Relating to substitute teachers; creating new provisions; amending ORS 342.125; and declaring an
3 emergency.

4 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

7
8 **SECTION 1.** (1) **The Department of Education shall enter into a contract with a training**
9 **provider experienced in online educator training to develop and offer annually online profes-**
10 **sional development modules for all substitute teachers in Oregon. The modules must address**
11 **but need not be limited to:**

12 (a) **Technology and educational tools.**

13 (b) **Classroom and behavior management.**

14 (c) **Special education.**

15 (d) **Equity, diversity and inclusion.**

16 (e) **Trauma-informed practices.**

17 (2) **The modules must be designed to provide tailored professional development for sub-**
18 **stitute teachers in Oregon with different levels of experience, including but not limited to:**

19 (a) **Zero to three years of classroom experience.**

20 (b) **Four to eight years of classroom experience.**

21 (c) **Nine or more years of classroom experience.**

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 thority of this subsection is required for a regular classroom teaching position in the public schools.

2 **(b) The commission shall by rule establish a substitute teaching license and a restricted**
 3 **substitute teaching license. The rules must provide:**

4 **(A) Eligibility criteria, application procedures and other requirements for issuance of a**
 5 **substitute teaching license or a restricted substitute teaching license.**

6 **(B) An expedited process for persons with a restricted substitute teaching license to ob-**
 7 **tain a substitute teaching license, based upon training, mentorship, classroom experience or**
 8 **other work experience.**

9 (5) Notwithstanding ORS 342.127, any person who has held a teaching license identified in sub-
 10 section (3) of this section or established as provided by subsection (4)(a) of this section may, within
 11 three years of retirement and without payment of any fees or any other additional requirements,
 12 convert the teaching license into a substitute teaching license.

13 (6)(a) The Teacher Standards and Practices Commission shall establish a public charter school
 14 teacher and administrator registry. The commission shall require the applicant and the public
 15 charter school to jointly submit an application requesting registration as a public charter school
 16 teacher or administrator. The application shall include:

17 (A) A description of the specific teaching or administrator position the applicant will fill;

18 (B) A description of the background of the applicant that is relevant to the teaching or admin-
 19 istrator position, including any post-secondary education or other experience; and

20 (C) Documentation as required by the commission for the purposes of conducting a criminal re-
 21 cords check as provided in ORS 181A.195 and a background check through an interstate clearing-
 22 house of revoked and suspended licenses.

23 (b) Subject to the results of the criminal records check and background check and to informa-
 24 tion received under ORS 342.143 (2), the commission shall approve the application for registration.
 25 The commission may deny a request for registration only on the basis of the criminal records check,
 26 the background check through an interstate clearinghouse of revoked and suspended licenses or the
 27 information received under ORS 342.143 (2). The registration is valid for a term established by the
 28 commission and, subject to information received under ORS 342.143 (2), may be renewed upon joint
 29 application from the teacher or administrator and the public charter school.

30 (c) A registration as a public charter school teacher qualifies its holder to accept the teaching
 31 position described in the application in the public charter school that submitted the application with
 32 the holder of the registration.

33 (d) A registration as a public charter school administrator qualifies its holder to accept the ad-
 34 ministrator position described in the application in the public charter school that submitted the
 35 application with the holder of the registration.

36 (7)(a) The Teacher Standards and Practices Commission shall adopt an expedited process for the
 37 issuance of any license established pursuant to this section. The expedited process **adopted under**
 38 **this subsection** may require the following:

39 (A) The showing of an urgent situation; and

40 (B) The joint request for the expedited process from the applicant for the license and:

41 (i) The school district superintendent or school district board;

42 (ii) The public charter school governing body; or

43 (iii) The education service district superintendent or board of directors of the education service
 44 district.

45 (b) Except as provided by paragraph (c) of this subsection, the commission shall issue a license

1 as provided by this subsection within two working days after receiving a completed application.

2 (c) The commission may limit the number of applications the commission will accept under this
 3 subsection from a school district or an education service district to not more than 100 applications
 4 in a period of two working days.

5 (d) For purposes of this subsection, the commission may not distinguish between a school district
 6 or an education service district involved in a labor dispute and any other school district or educa-
 7 tion service district.

8 **SECTION 4. The Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, in consultation with the**
 9 **Oregon Substitute Teachers Association, shall submit a report on the implementation of the**
 10 **amendments to ORS 342.125 by section 3 of this 2025 Act in the manner provided by ORS**
 11 **192.245, and may include recommendations for legislation, to the interim committees of the**
 12 **Legislative Assembly related to education no later than December 15, 2025.**

13
 14 **HEALTH BENEFIT PLAN FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS**

15
 16 **SECTION 5. Sections 6 to 8 of this 2025 Act are added to and made a part of ORS 243.860**
 17 **to 243.886.**

18 **SECTION 6. (1)(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this subsection, a substitute**
 19 **teacher employed by a common school district, union high school district or education ser-**
 20 **vice district is eligible to enroll in a health benefit plan offered by the Oregon Educators**
 21 **Benefit Board if the substitute teacher worked at least half-time at either a single common**
 22 **school district, union high school district or education service district, or in aggregate at**
 23 **multiple common school districts, union high school districts and education service districts**
 24 **during the previous school year.**

25 (b) The total cost of providing any health benefit plan offered by a district to a substitute
 26 teacher under this section may not increase annually by more than the annual increase in
 27 premium amounts paid for contracted health benefit plans that is permitted under ORS
 28 243.866 (9)(b).

29 (2)(a) In order to enroll in a health benefit plan under this section, a substitute teacher
 30 must select a home district for the duration of the benefit year under a process established
 31 by each district. A home district selected under this subsection:

32 (A) Must be one at which the substitute teacher worked as a substitute teacher at:

33 (i) The time of the application; or

34 (ii) Any time during the previous benefit year, if the substitute teacher is not currently
 35 working at a district but otherwise is eligible under this section; and

36 (B) Is responsible for:

37 (i) Determining whether the substitute teacher is eligible to enroll in a health benefit
 38 plan under this section;

39 (ii) Determining, on an annual basis, whether a substitute teacher who was found to be
 40 eligible to enroll in a health benefit plan under sub-subparagraph (i) of this subparagraph
 41 continues to be eligible to enroll in a health benefit plan under this section;

42 (iii) Collecting the premiums for health benefit plans that must be paid by the substitute
 43 teacher under subsection (3) of this section;

44 (iv) Paying the full cost of the insurance premiums for providing health benefit plans to
 45 the substitute teacher, subject to reimbursement as described in subsection (4) of this sec-

1 **tion; and**

2 **(v) Administering and providing health benefit plans to the substitute teacher in the**
 3 **manner described in this section.**

4 **(b) In order to enroll in a health benefit plan under this section, a substitute teacher**
 5 **must provide the home district with all information necessary for the district to determine**
 6 **the eligibility of the substitute teacher to enroll in the health benefit plan under this section.**

7 **(c) No later than 30 days before the deadline to submit an application to enroll in a health**
 8 **benefit plan under this section, each district must notify all substitute teachers who have**
 9 **worked for the district during the current academic year and the previous academic year of:**

10 **(A) The eligibility requirements to enroll in a health benefit plan under this section;**

11 **(B) The health care benefits and associated costs available to eligible substitute teachers;**
 12 **and**

13 **(C) Instructions on how substitute teachers may apply to enroll in a health benefit plan**
 14 **under this section.**

15 **(3)(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this subsection, a substitute teacher shall**
 16 **pay 10 percent of all insurance premiums for health benefit plans.**

17 **(b) A district may provide by collective bargaining to pay for some or all of the insurance**
 18 **premiums that must otherwise be paid by a substitute teacher under paragraph (a) of this**
 19 **subsection. The district may not be reimbursed under subsection (4) of this section for the**
 20 **costs the district incurs to provide health benefit plans under this paragraph.**

21 **(4)(a) Every three months a district may request reimbursement from the board for the**
 22 **cost of paying insurance premiums for providing health benefit plans to each substitute**
 23 **teacher who has selected the district as the substitute teacher's home district under sub-**
 24 **section (2) of this section.**

25 **(b) The board shall use moneys from the Substitute Teacher Insurance Fund established**
 26 **under section 8 of this 2025 Act to fully reimburse each district for all documented costs**
 27 **requested by the district under this subsection, except for any costs described in subsection**
 28 **(3) of this section.**

29 **(5) Unless otherwise provided for by collective bargaining, a substitute teacher who is**
 30 **eligible to enroll in a health benefit plan under subsection (1) of this section may receive**
 31 **health care benefits only in the manner provided by this section.**

32 **(6) The board may adopt rules necessary to implement this section, including but not**
 33 **limited to rules for:**

34 **(a) Determining a substitute teacher's eligibility to enroll in a health benefit plan under**
 35 **this section;**

36 **(b) The aggregation of hours worked at multiple districts; and**

37 **(c) The payment of premiums when a substitute teacher works at multiple districts.**

38 **SECTION 7. A common school district, union high school district or education service**
 39 **district that, on the effective date of this 2025 Act, provided health care benefits to substi-**
 40 **tute teachers who are not eligible for health care benefits under section 6 of this 2025 Act:**

41 **(1) May not increase the eligibility requirements that must be met by a substitute**
 42 **teacher who is not eligible for health care benefits under section 6 of this 2025 Act in order**
 43 **for the substitute teacher to qualify for health care benefits from the district; and**

44 **(2) Must continue to provide comparable health care benefits to substitute teachers who**
 45 **are not eligible for health care benefits under section 6 of this 2025 Act.**

SECTION 8. The Substitute Teacher Insurance Fund is established in the State Treasury, separate and distinct from the General Fund. Interest earned by the Substitute Teacher Insurance Fund must be credited to the fund. The fund consists of moneys appropriated, allocated, deposited or transferred to the fund by the Legislative Assembly or otherwise and interest earned on moneys in the fund. The moneys in the fund are continuously appropriated to the Oregon Educators Benefit Board for the purpose of reimbursing districts for the cost of paying premiums for health benefit plans for substitute teachers under section 6 of this 2025 Act.

SECTION 9. In addition to and not in lieu of any other appropriation, there is appropriated to the Oregon Educators Benefit Board, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, out of the General Fund, the amount of \$_____, for deposit in the Substitute Teacher Insurance Fund established under section 8 of this 2025 Act, for the purposes specified in section 6 of this 2025 Act.

SECTION 10. (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, section 6 of this 2025 Act applies to health benefit plans offered to substitute teachers on or after October 1, 2025.

(2) To the extent that a conflict exists, the terms of collective bargaining agreements and other contracts entered into before the effective date of this 2025 Act shall prevail over section 6 of this 2025 Act.

OFFICE OF SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

SECTION 11. (1) The Office of Substitute Teachers is established in the Department of Education.

(2) The office shall:

(a) Develop, communicate and coordinate best practices for the recruitment, licensure, professional development and retention of substitute teachers.

(b) Provide resources and support to school districts for the recruitment, retention and engagement of substitute teachers.

REPEALS

SECTION 12. (1) Section 2 of this 2025 Act is repealed on January 2, 2027.

(2) Section 4 of this 2025 Act is repealed on January 2, 2026.

CAPTIONS

SECTION 13. The unit captions used in this 2025 Act are provided only for the convenience of the reader and do not become part of the statutory law of this state or express any legislative intent in the enactment of this 2025 Act.

EFFECTIVE DATE

SECTION 14. This 2025 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2025 Act takes effect July 1, 2025.

