

Submitter: Melissa Goff
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB324

February 18, 2025

The Honorable Senator Lew Frederick, Chair
The Honorable Representative Suzanne Weber, Vice-Chair
Senate Education Committee
900 Court Street NE
HR-B State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

RE: SB 324

Good morning, Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, and Education Committee members,

For the record, my name is Melissa Goff, and I currently serve as the interim executive director of the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission. I am speaking to you today to provide neutral testimony emphasizing key considerations for the Committee as you review this proposed legislation.

The 2023 passage of SB 275 directed TSPC, ODE, and the Educator Advancement Council to collaboratively examine the potential impacts of a merger and to report their findings to the Legislature by September 15, 2024. This completed report identified potential impacts, including operational integration advantages, challenges and possibilities regarding investigations related to educator misconduct, and perceived policy alignment opportunities juxtaposed against unanticipated ongoing financial impacts.

In summary, the SB 275 Report outlined the advantages and disadvantages to two scenarios: TSPC remaining independent or TSPC merging as an Office into the Oregon Department of Education (slides 2-5).

Several benefits and drawbacks were outlined for each proposal, as seen in these first two slides. Given these analyses, steps have been taken by each agency to increase collaboration and decrease siloing. Priorities for agency leadership include planning meetings related to the implementation of our educator data systems, discussions related to statewide education initiatives, and sharing of information related to potentially interdependent agency budget or legislative requests. TSPC

has improved their licensing turnaround times for educators, while also advancing the work on procurement of a new educator license and investigations data system.

As SB 324 is considered, please note the marked increase in the number of complaints of misconduct by licensed educators that TSPC has recently received as compared to previous years (slide 6).

- In 2024, the agency received 463 new cases and completed 175 investigations.
- In 2024, the average time to complete investigations: 13.2 months (from date of complaint to completion of investigation).
- In each of the 4 preceding years, the average number of cases opened was 211.
- As of January 28, 2025, the agency has 515 cases pending investigation.

The SB 275 Report analysis around maintaining TSPC as an independent agency or merging with ODE was built based on previous case numbers.

As interim executive director of TSPC, I request this committee review the key findings of the SB 275 Report, including the anticipated costs. I also request the committee specifically consider this Bill's possible impact to licensed educator misconduct reporting and investigations.

Sincerely,

Melissa Goff
Interim Executive Director