HB 2508: Standardized Student Data
House Education Committee
March 10, 2025

To: Chair Courtney Neron
Vice-Chair April Dobson and Vice-Chair Emily McIntire
Members of the House Committee on Education

From: Rachel Wente-Chaney
CIO, High Desert Education Service District
[Remarks prepared for testimony in person, plus related materials]

In this document:

1. Amended remarks delivered in person on March 10, 2025.
2. Prepared remarks.
3. Briefing created in September 2024 for the working group on what is now HB2508.

1. Amended remarks delivered in person on March 10, 2025.

Earlier this afternoon, Governor Kotek mentioned the 9th grade on-track indicators as part of accountability; I had included this report specifically in my remarks for today and, as I listened, I realized I needed to switch up the order of my prepared remarks.

And then, Dr. Williams noted that one example of process improvement is when differing questions or duplicate information requests might come from different groups within ODE to districts and stakeholders. So I shifted my order again a bit.

Dr. Williams also mentioned that this work is incredibly complex. And Duncan Wise mentioned the importance of the clarity of data. If I had paper notes, you would have seen me rip them up, like happy confetti.

Building on the leaders who spoke before me, the efficiency of **how we gather, compile, and share** data and reports is where I believe I fit in here today. And there is still work ahead.

2. Original prepared remarks

Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs McIntire and Dobson, and members of the committee. For the record, my name is Rachel Wente-Chaney. I am the Chief Information Officer at High Desert Education Service District in Central Oregon.

I'm honored to be here today to continue the conversation on modernizing our student data systems, with the goals of (1) improving student and family experience as they move through their educational journeys in Oregon and (2) supporting improved outcomes and efficiencies across the state, for districts, state agencies, and policymakers.

I want to start by talking briefly about modern data structures and databases.

Rather than talk about the atomic nature and normalization of data structures, I brought a visual aid. I have some Legos with me. The districts in Oregon—as I was able to share last fall during Legislative Days—largely use one of two different modern student information systems. These two student information systems house information for over 98% of Oregon students: contact and demographic information, attendance, grades, course histories, and additional services like language access and special education. The Oregon Student Information System (OSIS) is the group that coordinates the Edupoint Synergy contract and operations (representing 87% of Oregon students). I am on the steering committee of that group. PowerSchool is the second of the two systems.

These two modern student information systems allow us to capture data in the smallest elements appropriate, like single-dot Lego blocks. Examples of this include: a first name, last name, grade level, attendance checkmark for either present or absent, or a flag for 9th-grade on-track.

What's nice about capturing little pieces of data and storing them appropriately in modern data systems is that when we need to answer a specific question or create a specific report—like a screen of grades and attendance for parents when they log into their parent communication app—we can grab the individual blocks needed and snap them together. When we start with a large Lego block (for illustration purposes), it reduces flexibility (and causes additional work) to reuse that data to answer another question.

Education Nexus is the second group I am proud to represent here today. We are a small non-profit formed by several large districts and ESDs, as we began to wrangle with the need for data standards and system modernization at scale, without a state-mandated

reporting system that we were building to, like many other states already had in place. These data standards, in addition to easing reporting processes, also support identity, access, security, and other operational software and processes that blossomed as school districts moved more systems online during the pandemic years. Ed Nexus is currently grant-funded.

These two groups converged on Friday, in Beaverton, at our annual Pacific Northwest Synergy conference. Education Nexus demonstrated moving a student record between two Oregon school districts, with a transcript full of course information and credit history. It took minutes. The session room included both school registrars and technical staff. This process is currently paper-based and takes days or weeks to complete, regularly causing delays in access to services for students and families.

Everyone in the room was excited. Why? We have a ~14% student mobility rate in Oregon; that represents approximately 70,000 students per year. School district and ESD technical leaders saw the impacts of this student mobility up-close during the pandemic. It was a narrow, specific problem, one we started thinking about solving. The defining early moment in that project was centering the child and family on the project map, not systems and reports. We wanted to improve their experience. Halfway through our project plan, we realized that focusing on the student and family experience would also create benefits for the registrars, our higher education partners, and also promising pathways for data transfer in state reporting. The Education Nexus project is now in a six-district pilot; we expect to grow in the months ahead.

I am going to go back to my Legos for this part. I talked about the single Lego dots that we collect in the student information systems. When it is time for us to report on ninth-graders who are on-track to graduate, school districts compile the single Lego bricks into a report that we send, and that ODE receives, as a larger, molded brick. This approach limits efficiency and flexibility for ODE to ask follow-up questions, if you will. Follow-up questions—or curiosity—about the data in that report often require designing and requesting a new report from districts.

Modern data systems exist that allow districts to improve data flow to ODE, navigate local and state standards, increase security, and contribute to more timely relevant data for districts, state agencies, and policymakers. And this is one small part of improving student outcomes and their experience in our K-12 system. Thank you for your time today.

3. Briefing created in September 2024 for the working group on what is now HB2508.

Statewide SIS Legislative Concept 2024 (HB 4078)

Issue Brief: September 2024

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House Bill 4078 Workgroup

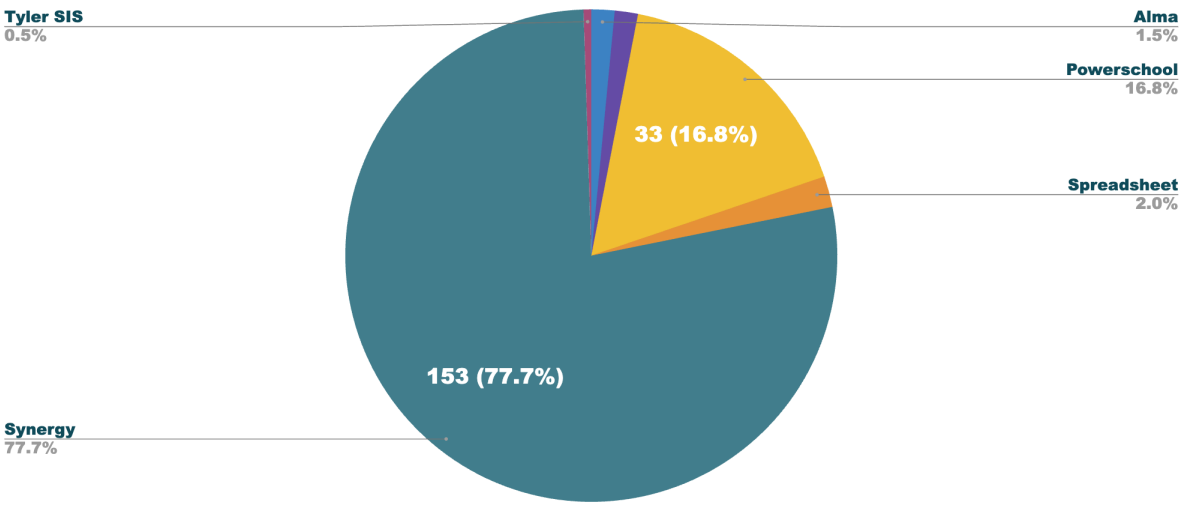
Introduction: Oregon's K-12 ecosystem has a student records and data problem to solve. Representative Neron first introduced House Bill 4078 in last year's short session and is preparing for next year's full session. The current legislative concept begins with whereas clauses that echo the problem statements guiding work in this domain by K-12 CIOs, in support of Oregon's districts, students, and families. We have information and experience to share.

This brief includes the workgroup presentation and additional analysis.

In this document:

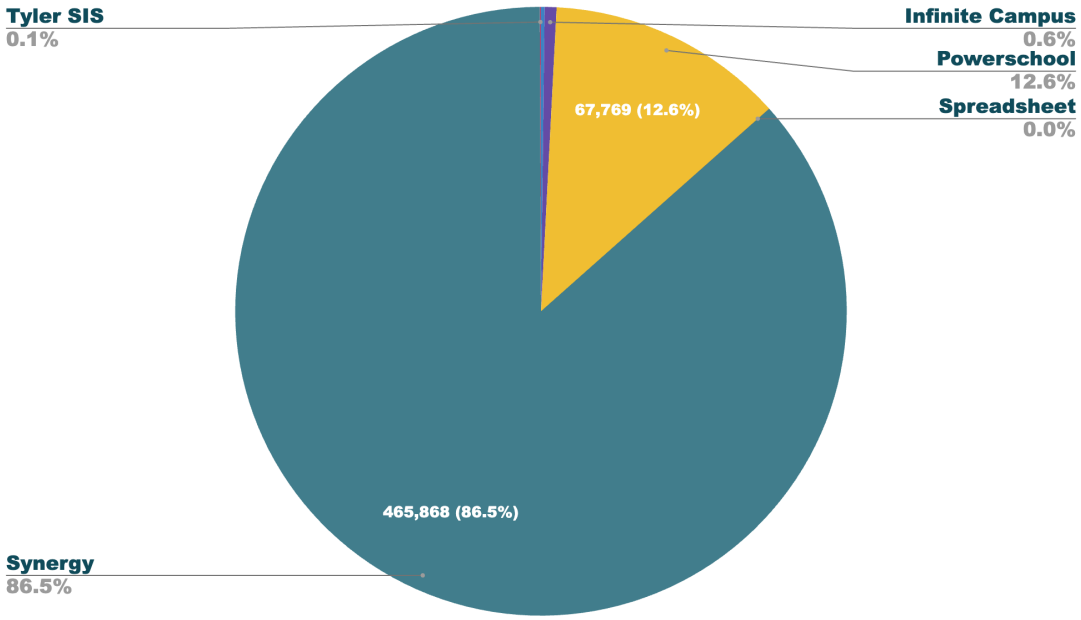
1—Oregon's Current Landscape

1.1: Oregon Student Information Systems (SIS) by Districts



SIS	Districts
Alma	3
Infinite Campus	3
PowerSchool	33
Spreadsheet	4
Synergy	153
Tyler SIS	1
Total	**197**

1.2: Oregon Student Information Systems (SIS) by Students



SIS	Students
Alma	1,020
Infinite Campus	3,377
PowerSchool	67,769
Spreadsheet	50
Synergy	465,868
Tyler SIS	361
Total*	**538,445**

*ODE ADMr Estimated on June 20, 2024

2—OSIS and the Steering Committee

2.1: OSIS People

Groups and Meetings

- **Workgroups:** Dozens, by topic, hundreds of district and ESD staff
- **Steering Committee:** 56 individuals who meet weekly on Monday afternoons, with Edupoint (Synergy) leadership
- **Executive Council:** 5-8 CIOs who meet monthly to focus on contract management and future planning
- **Executive Council+Edupoint Leadership:** quarterly, on strategy

Annual Events

- **Fall Edupoint Conference:** The group of 56 meets with Edupoint leadership team
- **Spring OSIS PNW Synergy Conference:** Annual learning event hosted by OSIS Steering Committee, ~400 attendees, dozens of sessions and talks, Edupoint staff present several sessions

2.2: OSIS Timeline

- **2010-2011**
    - Prior SIS (eSIS) sold to Powerschool
    - Collaborative RFP released (Salem-Keizer procurement)
    - Contract awarded to Edupoint
- **2012**
    - Contract signed by Michael Wolfe, then COO at SK on 2/17/2012
    - Steering Committee formed
    - First implementations go live in September 2012

- **2018:** successful five year contract renewal, notable additions included information security requirements that were ahead of the national effort on cybersecurity
- **2023:** successful five year contract renewal

2.3: OSIS Contract Details and Pricing

- **Cost Examples**
    - Core SIS license pricing (round numbers)
        - perpetual (pay once): $10/student
        - subscription (pay each year): $4/student
    - Maintenance (annual updates, support): $1-3/per student
- **Popular Additional Modules**
    - Online Registration
    - Analytics/MTSS
    - Waitlist/Lottery (for large district registration/school choice)
- **Comparison to Other State and Large District Pricing**
    - OSIS pricing is lower than the response to a recent Miami-Dade Schools RFP (700k students)
    - Contract on par with large district/state pricing across the country, for Edupoint and other SIS vendors

3—Our (CIO) Goals and Problem Statements

3.1 The Story

Much of the work by our group of district and ESD CIOs on this persistent problem started with this story of a grandmother and her grandchildren:

> One day, after the start of a recent school year, a grandmother received a call asking her to take her two young grandchildren into her home for emergency custody. She said yes and started the process to get them enrolled at the elementary school in her town. She gave the new school the old school's contact information, but had little specific information, aside from her grandchildren's grade levels. The new school contacted the old school and requested the records…yes, they would be sent.
>
> The grandchildren started attending their new school, but struggled to follow along with their peers. It was six weeks before their records were received by the new school. With the records in hand, the staff discovered that both students were in an ELL program and that the younger child was also receiving special education services.
>
> Just as the new support for these children was being set up, the custody of the children changed to another family for longer-term temporary custody, in yet another (third) school district. The second district also needed weeks to forward records to the newest school district. And, the children experienced another delay in receiving the services they needed to catch up to grade level performance.

We heard this story directly from the grandmother and were able to capture a transcript of it, but it is not a unique story. We often pass registrars' desks in Oregon with stacks of paper transfer folders (like the one in the slide deck). There is a problem to solve for both the children and adults in our system.

3.2 Our (CIO) Problem Statements

- **Data security:** student transfer records are most regularly sent by non-registered USPS mail or by fax
- **Operational efficiency:** we interviewed dozens of registrars the past three years and estimate that:
    - each incoming student requires a minimum of 60 minutes for demographic and program enrollment data entry;
    - secondary students (course history) require 90 minutes or more
- **Family experience:** every family does not wait over a month for their child's full record to transfer, but enough do that it's a problem to solve. Language access and special education service delays of weeks in early elementary ages are avoidable, significant gaps. We also note—anecdotally from the registrars' interviews—that middle-class families have time and knowledge of the system that allow them to be more persistent and present in the requests for the transfer "ASAP" and that is often not true with working parents and those with language barriers.

3.3 Our (CIO) Goals

Family experience is listed third in our problem statements, **but it is at the heart of our work.** Using ODE's June 2024 total of 538,445 students—with an approximate mobility rate of 14% for Oregon's students—we believe that if we get this right, we:

1. support improved outcomes for ~75,000 Oregon students (and thousands of families) a year
2. increase efficiency and data accuracy AND save significant hours of manual data entry per district
3. increase student data privacy

4—Our (Shared) Goals with the Workgroup

Whereas		Our Alignment
1	the **security** of student data must be a priority	Agree.
2	the **data reporting burden** on Oregon's school administrators and staff has grown unbearable and could be significantly decreased with a unified, statewide student information system	Agree with the burden. Through conversations with peers in states using a statewide student information system, we understand that the burden is still very heavy, especially in those who do not have a strictly-enforced (and few do) data standard.
3	to best serve students' learning needs, Oregon's public education workforce needs timely access to information about **highly mobile students** and students with disabilities who move across school district lines; and	Agree. In fact, we have spent weekends and evening hours the past three years to secure funding and develop a pilot method for student data transfer. We expect to pilot with six Oregon school districts this year: • Coos Bay and North Bend • North Clackamas and Gladstone • Redmond and Sisters
4	fragmented data and...cause **delays in data transfers** from school district to school district and make it difficult for policymakers and analysts to compile comprehensive	Agree.

	information to assess the needs of Oregon's students;	
5	the potential for reimbursement to school districts for rendered Medicaid-eligible services increases with the **use of electronic health records**	Agree.
6	Oregon's public education system can **improve delivery of educational services** by unifying the currently fragmented data system	Agree. With further questions about the method, based on years of research on promising practices and conversations with other states.

5—Additional Analysis

As noted above, I believe the six whereas clauses in the current legislative concept are accurate. For this analysis, I want to focus on two: (1) the state reporting burden and (2) our highly mobile students.

1—State Data Reporting Burden

Our current state reporting infrastructure is in need of modernization and efficiency investments.

An example of the current challenges:

- If you visit the ODE state reporting webpage and expand the July 2024 collections section, you'll notice that the student data reports generally contain a .csv upload template. Two examples (csv download links):
    1. Ninth Grade On Track File Upload Template
    2. Discipline Header Row Template

- If you open those files, you'll see that the first 50 columns (A-AX) are the same data fields for each student:
    1. the Ninth Grade On Track template has **just one** additional column (AY): OnTrackFg, or "On Track Flag"
    2. the Discipline Incidents template has **16 additional** columns (AY-BN) that collect data on each incident

- For the 2024-25 school year, there are 319 reports on the submissions calendar (link to sortable Excel file).

- There are **31 formats/software types** for submitting (list from file)**:**
    1. Achievement Data Insight
    2. ADI (Calculated by ODE)
    3. ADI (Submission Required)
    4. ARUA
    5. CIP BN
    6. CNPWeb Form/File
    7. Consolidated Collections
    8. CTE System
    9. EGMS
    10. Excel
    11. Excel for Facility Assessment & PDF for Long Range Facility Plans
    12. Excel for Reimbursement Form & EGMS for Claim
    13. Excel if Submitting Multiple Students. If submitting only one student, use Smartsheet Form Only
    14. Google Form
    15. Google Sheet
    16. Google Sheets
    17. IDEA Data Manager
    18. Individual District Google Sheet
    19. Microsoft Form
    20. Ordering Software Application
    21. PDF
    22. PDF copy of Federal Application
    23. PDF or Paper Copy
    24. Smarsheet Form (unless using the inteview option) [sic]
    25. Smartsheet Application
    26. Smartsheet Dashboard
    27. Smartsheet Form
    28. Special Ed - Post School Outcomes 2.0
    29. survey
    30. Survey (google)
    31. Word Doc

I don't offer this data duplication example and list of disparate reporting vehicles in criticism of ODE or its staff, but simply as evidence of the scope and need for strategic investment and data leadership at the state level.

There is significant foundational work at the state reporting layer before new investments in student information systems pay dividends.

2—Highly Mobile Students

Our current student record transfer process is in need of modernization and efficiency investments.

An example of the current challenges (also highlighted on page 7):

- Most districts send paper packets by postal mail (non-certified) or by fax. Registrars and school staff enter data by hand, with both timeliness and data accuracy implications.
- In conversations with stakeholders the past three years, we know that many families wait weeks for their child's complete record to be entered into the receiving school's information system.
- This lag causes delays in services like language access and special education support.
- With the mobility rate for most of Oregon's districts between 10-20% per year, that means these delays impact tens of thousands of students.

For this challenge, we are farther along in the modernization and efficiency improvements to the current system, but are still just at the initial pilot stage and have depended on grant funding (see Endnotes).

6—Conclusion

This bill addresses generational change that is needed in our Oregon K-12 data systems. In the August 15 workgroup, Rep. Neron asked if the current bill language would slow things down or reverse progress. I've thought

about that question a lot in the two weeks since. Here are my uncertainties and worries:

1. The student information system (SIS) in 2024 has a daily transactional role that is bigger than records and data collection. It is ***the system*** that allows us to open school doors for students each morning. It allows us to prioritize safety, as well as learning. It captures millions of transactions an hour for medium or larger districts. Reliability is required.
2. We have years of Synergy stability in the OSIS distributed governance model. And, many of the PowerSchool districts have professional connections via Willamette ESD's Oregon Data Suite for similar stability.
3. The costs to shift the current distributed structure to a consolidated statewide model would be significant. And...if it were the obvious solution to the whereas/problem statements, I would be in favor of it.
4. I believe, however, the data standard and transport layer is the solution that best partners the current landscape with the whereas clauses.
5. The work we have completed on student record exchange between districts has two additional phases:
    a. transfer of transcript and college admission files digitally to HECC (We started conversations with their data team in 2020 and will revisit the conversation after this year's pilot.)
    b. transfer of reporting data to ODE (We have been in conversation on this in prior years, but do not currently have an ODE CIO peer.)

Thank you. I look forward to this work and continued conversation.

7—Endnotes

Districts and CIO colleagues leading this work:

- Beaverton School District, Steve Langford
- Clackamas ESD, Jeremy Pietzold
- High Desert ESD, Rachel Wente-Chaney
- InterMountain ESD, Nick Lapp
- Lane ESD, Brandon Webb
- Northwest Regional ESD, Stuart Long
- Portland Public Schools, Don Wolff
- Willamette ESD, Kari Laizure

We established a non-profit organization to qualify for grant funds that are often unavailable to government agencies, and to govern our collaborative work.

- We have met our targets on unpacking how modern, efficient student records exchange can work (no faxes or PDFs).
- We are ahead of schedule by a full year on our commitment to having a pilot ready for schools to test.
- We are ahead of the nation in figuring this out, which we have been startled to learn the past two years as we shared our work with national and state education leadership groups. We have commitments—from Texas, South Carolina, Michigan, and two of California's County Offices of Education—to share and share-alike on further development as we hand over our method and code base for their use. (In fact, the Texas Education Agency used our pilot system as the base of its 2023 RFP for the Texas Student Passport, which is in use for the 2024-25 school year.)