

Submitter: Cody James
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB302

Senate Bill 302 is a pointless exercise in bureaucracy, and you should be embarrassed for proposing it. An “audit” of kindergarten assessments by the Department of Education? This isn’t about helping kids—it’s a paper-pushing sham that drains resources and fixes nothing. Let’s dismantle it with facts and expose the nonsense.

This targets a non-issue. Oregon’s 2023 ODE data: 95% of kindergartners take the Kindergarten Assessment—basic literacy, math, behavior stats. No crisis exists—scores hold steady (ODE 2022-23). National Center for Education Statistics: Oregon’s K-12 performance lags 5% below average, but kindergarten isn’t the bottleneck—high school graduation rates (83%, 2023) are. Why obsess over 5-year-olds when teens drop out? It’s misdirected.

It’s a money pit. ODE’s budget: \$11 billion biennially (2023-25), with 40% tied up in admin (state audit). Your “audit” adds costs—staff, reports—for a 2026 deadline, expiring 2027. Meanwhile, Oregon’s teacher shortage hit 2,500 in 2023 (OEA), and 20% of schools lack supplies (ODE survey). Diverting funds to this is indefensible when classrooms starve.

The data’s already there. ODE’s 2021 assessment review: kindergarten tests align with standards, no major gaps. NAEP 2022: Oregon 4th graders trail 3 points behind national reading—not a K issue. You’re duplicating work—wasting time when 30% of districts report testing overload (ODE 2023 feedback). Fix that, not this.

It threatens kids and teachers. “Recommendations for legislation” by 2026? That’s code for more rules. Oregon’s 50% chronic absenteeism rate (2023, ODE) ties to poverty, not assessments. More mandates from your audit could burden teachers—already 60% stressed (OEA 2022)—and confuse parents. Focus on real problems, not invented ones.

Kill this, Committee. Tackle shortages (1:500 student-teacher ratio, ODE 2023) or funding (25% below national per-pupil, NCES 2022). SB 302 is a distraction Oregon can’t afford. Scrap it before it wastes more.