



Coalition of Oregon School Administrators
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Date: May 5, 2025
To: Senate Committee on Education
From: Morgan Allen, COSA
Subject: House Bill 2453-A - Equity Advisory Committees

Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education.

My name is Morgan Allen and I am here today on behalf of the Coalition of Oregon School Administrators and our 3,000 members across Oregon. We are asking the House Education Committee to support House Bill 2453-A.

This Bill makes school district Educational Equity Advisory Committees, created during the 2021 Session, advisory to the school district Superintendent to ensure Committee members can engage in challenging conversations and school districts, particularly small, rural school districts can better manage this legislative mandate.

Background - Senate Bill 732 (2021 Session) Adds Required Advisory Committees

During the 2021 Session, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 732. The bill required each school district to create "Educational Equity Advisory Committees" The duties of an educational equity advisory committee include:

- Advising the school district board about the educational equity impacts of policy decisions;
- Advising the school district superintendent about the educational equity impacts of policy decisions;
- Informing the school district board and school district superintendent when a situation arises in a school of the school district that negatively impacts underrepresented students and advising the board and superintendent on how best to handle that situation.

The bill required school districts with more than 10,000 students to have these Committees in place by September 15, 2022; this is currently ten school districts. All 187 school districts with fewer than 10,000 students must first convene their Committee by September 15, 2025.

The Committee may prepare an annual report describing the “successes and challenges” in meeting the educational equity needs of students in the school district and make recommendations to the school board and superintendent.

Membership of the Committees must be “composed of parents, employees, students and community members from the school district” and “must ensure that membership is primarily representative of underserved student groups.”

Changes Are Needed To SB 732 - There Is Legislative Precedent

Much has changed in the four years since the passage of Senate Bill 732 in 2021. It has become clear that the way the bill was written makes Educational Equity Advisory Committees public bodies that are subject to all of the laws and rules related to public meetings. And as we approach the September 15th deadline for implementation, both COSA and OSBA are concerned that without legislative action to remove the requirement that the Committees act as a public body, there will be two significant unintended consequences:

- First, school districts are voicing significant concern about being able to recruit members, particularly parents and students, who are willing to serve on a committee that may be subject to intense public scrutiny. It is clear that the legislative intent was to give a voice to community members and we need to be able to facilitate a space where members will feel comfortable sharing candid feedback about issues related to bullying, mental health, racism, and the consequences of educational policy decisions, and
- Second, school districts, particularly our small, rural districts, are concerned about their ability to meet all the requirements that must be in place to comply with Senate Bill 732 and public meetings law. Having Committees in place is a Division 22 requirement and if school districts are unable to recruit students, families, and staff from underrepresented groups due to concerns about the public visibility of the work, then they will not be able to comply with the law and will be considered a non-standard school.

There is clear legislative precedent to exempt some K-12 committees from the requirement that they meet as a public body subject to public meetings laws. During the 2023 Session, the Legislature passed the final version of Senate Bill 215 with only two “No” votes. The bill included a provision that made Student Success Teams, which are part of the Intensive Program under the Student Success Act(SSA), exempt from the laws and rules governing public bodies when it was discovered that the way the SSA was written made the Teams public bodies.



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Please Support House Bill 2453-A

Educational Equity Advisory Committees were intended to elevate the input of our students, staff, and community members. Our school districts want to honor student voices and allow members of our school district communities the opportunity to candidly and meaningfully voice their feedback and concerns on school district policies. And we must continuously evaluate the unintended consequences of administrative requirements and laws on school districts.

We have consulted with the Executive Director of the Oregon Government Ethics Commission on the language in this bill to make sure it is clear. Please support House Bill 2453-A make the Committees advisory to the Superintendent, and therefore not public bodies. This will ensure that the intent of SB 732 continues in a manner that is both responsible to the needs of our students and implementable for school districts of all sizes.

Thank you for your time today.