



Representative Lamar Wise
Oregon House District 48

HB 4154 - Regular Attendance

House Education Committee | February 9th 2026

Chair Hudson, Vice Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and Members of the House Education Committee, for the record, I am Representative Lamar Wise of House District 48, serving Southeast Portland and North Clackamas, and I urge your support for HB 4154 as amended.

This bill grew out of the 2024 Chronic Absenteeism Workgroup led by the late Representative Hoa Nguyen and Senator Suzanne Weber, both educators who saw firsthand how chronic absenteeism disrupts learning, stability, and long-term opportunity for students.

Chronic absenteeism is not just a statistic. It represents thousands of Oregon students slowly losing connection to school. Behind every missed day is a child falling further behind in reading, math, and confidence. It is families navigating transportation barriers, housing instability, illness, and work schedules. It is classrooms doing their best while quietly losing students in front of our eyes.

Oregon is facing one of the most severe chronic absenteeism challenges in the nation. In some communities, nearly one in three students is missing a significant portion of the school year. And too often, we are identifying the problem only after the school year is over, when the opportunity to intervene early has already passed. HB 4154 changes that.

As amended, this bill directs the Department of Education to use attendance data already collected from school districts to calculate and publicly report, four times per year, the number and percentage of students who are regular attenders and who are chronically absent. Importantly, this reporting applies only to students enrolled for at least 10 days during the reporting period, ensuring the data accurately reflects student participation.

Quarterly reporting allows schools, districts, families, and policymakers to see trends as they emerge rather than months later. With more timely information, districts can deploy supports sooner, communities can respond faster, and the state can better understand where resources are most urgently needed.

The amendment also prioritizes accuracy, transparency, and responsible use of data. Before any information is made public, districts are given at least 15 business days to review the compiled data and request adjustments. When the data is released, the Department must clearly explain how regular attendance and chronic absenteeism are defined, disclose any changes in methodology, and provide guidance on how the data should, and should not, be interpreted, including limitations when making comparisons across schools, districts, or reporting periods.

This ensures transparency without creating confusion, accountability without blame, and clarity without burden.

HB 4154 is intentionally designed as a companion to the long-term solutions advanced in HB 3199 from the 2025 session, the chronic absenteeism omnibus bill carried by the late Representative Hoa Nguyen. HB 3199 focused on coordinated supports, community partnerships, and systemic interventions. HB 4154 ensures we have the timely, consistent data needed to make those strategies effective.

Together, these efforts move Oregon from reacting late to acting early.

I want to be clear: this bill does not create a new mandate on schools. It makes smarter use of data we already collect and organizes it in a way that allows for early intervention and better decision-making. The reporting requirements do not take effect until the 2026–2027 school year, and the Department and State Board are given time to prepare for implementation.

If we are serious about closing achievement gaps, improving graduation rates, and supporting the whole child, we must start with something fundamental, making sure students are in school and responding quickly when they are not.

HB 4154 gives Oregon the tools to act sooner, support students better, and prevent children from quietly falling through the cracks.

Thank you for your time and consideration.