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Date: February 10, 2026  
To: Senate Committee on Education  
From: Morgan Allen, COSA  
Subject: SB 1555 with the -5 amendment

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Chair Frederick, Vice Chair Weber, and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

On behalf of 3,000 COSA members across the state we want to thank Senator Sollman and Representative Ruiz for the work they have put into drafting Senate Bill 1555 and the -5 amendments. We appreciate their continued leadership in championing Oregon's students and advocating for sustainable funding for K-12 public education.

We also want to thank Acting Chair Tricia Mooney and the members of the Quality Education Commission (QEC), who serve as unpaid volunteer commissioners. Just like members of the Legislature, these Commissioners often have full-time jobs and other high-level responsibilities. They are committing significant time out of their busy schedules in service to students in Oregon's K-12 public schools.

COSA believes Senate Bill 1555 is a strong beginning to a framework for creating the next generation of fiscal analysis to better understand the true costs and inputs needed for our students to achieve the academic and career readiness skills we are asking them to attain during their K through 12 careers.

While in agreement with the ultimate goals of SB 1555, we urge the Legislature to spend additional time convening education partners in the interim with a plan to return during the 2027 Session with a fully developed, and funded. plan to create the successor to the Quality Education Model (QEM).

### **After 25 Years, It's Time to Make Updates and Changes to Cost Modeling**

After 25 years, there is broad consensus that the Quality Education Model is in need of a reboot in order to be the appropriate tool to project costs to attain K-12 educational outcomes. SB 1555 is a bold step and a big idea in addressing this key question: how much does it really cost for school districts to ensure all students leave Oregon's K-12 system thriving and ready for their next steps beyond high school?

While we appreciate the removal of language making significant changes to what it means for a public school in Oregon to be a "standard school," we believe this proposal would benefit from further work and engagement.

### **Moving Forward Collaboratively - COSA Recommendations**

During the 2024 interim, Governor Kotek convened key K-12 partners, ODE, DAS, and the Legislative Revenue Office to create a new “Current Service Level” model that resulted in a much more accurate calculation of K-12 inflationary costs. We believe that all the partners in the K-12 system need to work together collaboratively on the QEM 2.0 improvements. We recommend the following:

1. Convene a workgroup of K-12 partners during the 2026 interim. This should include ODE, DAS, LFO, LPRO, LRO, legislators, the Governor’s Office, K-12 associations, QEC members, current educators, and organizations representing parent and student voices and perspectives.
2. Give clear guidance to the workgroup to discuss the next iteration of K-12 financial modeling with SB 1555 as the starting point for deliberations. Provide a clear scope for considering cost estimates, funding formulas, and student outcomes.
3. Based on the recommendations of this workgroup, prepare legislation for the 2027 Session that sets out clear next steps, cost model requirements, responsible agencies and parties, and includes an appropriation to pay for necessary costs to ensure there are adequate resources and staff to produce the model.

Given the looming budget challenges during the 2027-29 biennium due to the passage of HR 1, we have time to develop a consensus product. If we are committed to this work for the next 25 years, the additional investment of time and deliberation will produce a better, trusted product. We can’t afford to have lingering questions about inaccurate or inconsistent calculations that risk obscuring the real needs of our students in the coming years.

Our next tool must focus on all costs incurred to meet the academic and social emotional needs of our students, improve student outcomes, and most importantly, better understand what investments are needed to meet all of Oregon’s educational goals. There needs to be a clear alignment between CSL, outcomes, accountability, and the new cost model moving forward. We stand ready to collaborate with you to address all of these complex challenges.