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JOINT COMMITTEE ON STUDENT SUCCESS

High Quality Classrooms Work Group

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

PROBLEM 1: Oregon faces a shortage of teachers; in particular, a shortage of racially or linguistically diverse teachers. Many potential teachers do not finish their educator preparation program, and many teachers leave the profession after only a few years.

GOAL: Make the teaching profession more appealing by recruiting, retaining, and supporting qualified teachers in every classroom.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Establish \$20.7 million in new funding for grow-your-own programs in which districts partner with educator preparation programs to fill gaps in the educator work force. Ensure that these programs meet the following requirements:**
 - a. Needs-based;**
 - b. Require recipients to remain in public schools in Oregon for a period of time or repay the scholarship amount;**
 - c. Limit the first 1,000 slots to those seeking to become teachers, with remaining slots available to those who are candidates in other licensure categories**

Currently, districts that partner with educator preparation programs at higher education institutions fund these programs out of their State School Fund allocations. There are at least 13 grow-your-own and teacher residency programs operating within the state.

2. Support the goal of creating networks for professional learning, establishing the Educator Advancement Council inside ODE to maximize funds for teacher training.

The Educator Advancement Council, currently housed within the Chief Education Office, is working toward the creation of local educator networks, aligning early learning professional development efforts with those in K-12, and researching and addressing issues related to the educator workforce. The Council is made up of teachers, administrators, and other stakeholder groups.

3. Align collective bargaining agreements to the length of the biennium.

There is currently no state policy aligning school districts' collective bargaining authority with the legislature's biennial budget cycle, allowing districts to allocate funds in future years without knowing the amount they will receive from the State School Fund.

4. Establish a comprehensive mentorship and professional development system among Oregon's teachers, examining Iowa's Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) statute (Iowa Rev. Stat. 284.15) as a possible model.

Several Oregon school districts have established mentorship programs upon receipt of grant funding, only to discontinue those programs when the grants ran out. Currently, Oregon allocates \$11.5 million for mentorship grants to districts out of statewide funding for the Network for Quality Teaching and Learning.

5. Establish a needs-based loan forgiveness or scholarship program for individuals who commit to teach in Oregon's public schools for 10 years.

The Chief Education Office reports that the cost of higher education is a major barrier for many individuals who wish to become teachers. Requiring recipients to teach in Oregon's public schools for 10 years ensures that Oregon schools will benefit from the state's investment.

GOAL: Oregon's educators and administrators are prepared to teach to changing demographics and should reflect their local communities.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Support the Oregon Teacher Scholars Program

Currently, the Office of Student Access and Completion within the Higher Education Coordinating Commission funds scholarships for 68 racially and

linguistically diverse teacher candidates at a cost of \$340,000 for the 2017-2019 biennium.

Problem 2: Oregon's schools and school buildings are not sufficient in quality or quantity to meet the needs of the state's growing student population.

GOAL: Schools have facilities that are accessible, safe, healthy, secure, and meet the comprehensive educational needs of students.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increase funding for the OSCIM grant matching program.

The Office of School Facilities and Oregon School Capital Improvement Matching (OSCIM) grant program were established in 2015. Since its establishment, the program has been accessed by 40 districts that have used the matching funds to help pass bonds.

2. Increase funding for the Seismic Rehabilitation Grant Program.

The Seismic Rehabilitation Grant Program, run by Business Oregon, will award \$75 million for school projects in its current grant cycle. School districts access technical assistance from the Oregon Department of Education to assist in obtaining the needed assessments of their buildings, which they then use to apply for the Seismic Rehabilitation Grant funds.

3. Implement the recommendations of the School Safety Task Force, establishing a statewide school safety and prevention system with four elements: 1) effective bullying and harassment prevention programs; 2) effective youth suicide prevention; 3) multi-disciplinary statewide student safety net system; and 4) promote use of the SafeOregon tip line.

The 16-member School Safety Task Force was established to ensure the safety of Oregon's students. In 2015, the Task Force recommended standardized terminology for response to school-based incidents and creation of the SafeOregon tip line. The Task Force's current recommendation builds on the nationally-recognized school safety efforts underway in the Salem-Keizer school district.

Problem 3: Many of Oregon’s schools and classrooms are overcrowded and do not provide sufficient learning opportunities for students.

GOAL: Implement the policy goals of the Quality Education Model.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide funding to limit class sizes as recommended in the Quality Education Model and include these limits in ODE’s Division 22 standards as long as funding is provided at the level recommended by the Quality Education Commission, and allowing some flexibility for districts in the rule-making process:

- a. 20 students in kindergarten and grade 1;**
- b. 23 students in grades 2 and 3;**
- c. 24 students in grades 4 and 5; and**
- d. 29 students in core academic classes in grades 6 to 12.**

Large class sizes pose significant challenges to students and to teachers. The Quality Education Commission recommended in its 2018 report that the legislature fund districts at a level that would allow for class sizes to be reduced to the figures listed above. The report estimates that lowering class sizes in elementary schools would cost \$454 million and lowering class sizes in middle and high schools would cost \$273 million, for a total of \$727 million. This amount does not include costs for capital construction or the addition of portable classrooms.

2. Provide funding to support specialists in every elementary school:

- a. Art teacher;**
- b. Music teacher;**
- c. Physical Education teacher;**
- d. Talented and Gifted teacher;**
- e. Teacher Librarian;**
- f. English Language Learning teacher; and**
- g. School Counselor or Psychologist.**

The Quality Education Commission’s 2018 report recommends that 4.5 FTE for specialists be in place elementary schools containing 340 students.

3. Provide sufficient funding for alternative programs for special needs and at-risk students in every middle and high school

The Quality Education Commission’s 2018 report recommends allocation of an additional \$242 million for special education and alternative education.

GOAL: Implement effective programs and interventions in order to create high-quality educational experiences for Oregon’s students.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Require ODE to develop a list of evidence-based and promising practices, strategies, and programs that districts can select from for their school improvement efforts**

The Oregon Department of Education’s Safe and Effective Schools for All Advisory Committee recommended that ODE be tasked with developing a list of evidence-based interventions that districts can choose from, similar to the way textbooks are approved for use in Oregon schools.

- 2. Require ODE to establish a separate accountability system for alternative schools.**
 - a. Require ODE to provide targeted assistance and interventions to all alternative schools and programs.**
 - b. Require ODE to change the standard for identifying schools as Comprehensive Support and Improvement or Targeted Support and Improvement to include more non-alternative schools.**

Under Oregon’s accountability system, for the 2017-2018 school year, nearly all the high schools identified in the Comprehensive Support and Intervention (CSI) and Targeted Support and Intervention (TSI) categories were alternative schools. While the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires states to have a single accountability system, it would not prohibit Oregon from establishing an additional accountability system for alternative schools or changing the way resources are allocated.

- 3. Establish categorical funding and require schools to establish before- or after-school tutoring and supports for struggling students.**

Thirty-three states require or recommend that school districts offer some type of intervention or remediation for struggling readers in kindergarten through third grade.

- 4. Establish categorical funding and require the following elements of a statewide Talented and Gifted (TAG) program:**
 - a. Universal screening prior to 3rd grade using the potential-to-perform eligibility standard, identifying TAG students at every school with consideration of the state’s equity lens;**
 - b. Periodic ODE evaluation of TAG identification disparities in each school district with recommendations to remedy those disparities;**

c. Program requirements for schools and districts, including teacher training requirements and consideration of school schedules.

In the 2016-2017 school year, 70 percent of the Talented and Gifted (TAG)-identified students in Oregon were white, while white students made up only 63 percent of the statewide student population. Additionally, identification standards vary from district to district and Oregon does not currently require districts to provide any specified interventions to students who have been identified as Talented and Gifted.

5. Identify students early in high school that should be placed in honors, Advanced Placement, or International Baccalaureate classes.

Students who have not been tracked into high-level classes in middle school may have an aptitude for those higher-level classes in high school.

6. Add sufficient funding to raise the cap on funding for students identified as special needs to 14 percent, and add funding to the high-needs disability account.

The formula for distributing State School Fund monies currently caps the number of students with disabilities for which a district can claim added weights at 11 percent. Districts are obligated under federal law to provide services to all students who qualify. The legislature established a carve-out in the state school fund for district reimbursement for high-needs disability students of \$70 million for the 2017-2019 biennium.

7. Add a 1.75 FTE to ODE for Title IX Coordinator positions.

Currently, ODE has one .25 FTE position to coordinate Title IX issues in Oregon.