



To: Members of the Senate Committee on Education

Re: OEA Support for SB 1552 (2024)

Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Education Association represents over 40,000 educators, from kindergarten through community colleges, and from every community in our state. OEA supports SB 1552 as amended by the -1 amendment.

Some of the critical components in SB 1552-1 for OEA members are:

- **Student Information and Direct Admission:** Applying for colleges can be complex and time consuming. Often – especially for potential first-generation students – these barriers can feel insurmountable. Making it possible for all eligible students to automatically be accepted to their local community college would remove that barrier, making it easier for folks to access higher education. These components of SB 1552 are critical first steps to making Direct Admission a reality.
- **Financial Aid Distributions:** Financial aid decisions are some of the most, if not the most, critical decisions in the lives of higher education students. These decisions should be made with the upmost care and consideration, and Oregon’s current system for determining who should and should not receive aid falls woefully short of care and consideration. By putting the power to make those changes in the hands of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, the legislature would be ensuring that there is a public and accountable decision-making process.
- **Funding for Youth Education Programs:** Built on equity, our states school funding system built on ADMwights falls short of equitably supporting our critical programs that are there to support students in their most critical hours. This change to the funding structure for JDEP and YCEP is critical to ensure that these programs receive the funds they need to better serve our students.
- **Educator Advancement Council:** Student educators are the future of our education system. They bring a bright perspective to the work and are full of innovative ideas. Having students as EAC members will help bridge tthe gap between education prep programs and the classroom.
- **Corequisite Student Support:** We recommend that Line 29 or Page 53 be changed to “One representative of a statewide community college faculty association.” Otherwise, OEA is grateful that there will be heavy inclusion of faculty who do the work in the conversation around corequisite modeling.



- **Faculty Health Care Benefits:** The health care program for part time faculty is one of the most critical programs the legislature has done in higher education in years. These changes help clarify who qualifies for benefits.

OEA's concerns in SB 1552-1 are:

- **State Fund of Education (QEM Modernization):** The Quality Education Model is a critical metric for Oregon, and Oregon's students, parents, and educators. Simply put, the QEM takes best practice around class size, staffing, student support, and all the other critical things that help students learn and aggregates it across Oregon so that we can know what meeting best practices for our students would look like. The QEM gives us critical information for Oregonians and our legislators to know and understand. OEA's concern is not modernization in and of itself, we believe in a continuous reworking of the QEM as new data and best practices come to light, our concern is only in ensuring the the QEM maintains is spirit of giving Oregonians a picture of what it would take to meet best practices for our students.
- **Short-acting Opioid Antagonist School Policies:** Naloxone should be mandated in schools as we are experiencing a fentanyl crisis in our state, increasing this life saving antagonist is critical. Students and staff need little training for administering, and could act quickly to save a colleague, a student, and even a community member.

With all this in mind, OEA supports SB 1552 as amended by the –1 amendments.