

Education

4/26/2021

By Anne Nesse, Education Policy Portfolio

Education Updates

Education for living wage jobs, and looking through an increased diversity and equity lens (DEI), was a fundamental focus this week in the [Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education](#).

[SB 5528](#) has provisions (POP202) that include spending \$11.77M of the General Fund for youth employment training, particularly looking through the lens of training diverse populations. This new funding (legislated in the distant past, but ironically never funded), is targeted at underserved populations as listed in [HB 2092](#). Sen. Dembrow and others commented on the value of work as a valuable teaching tool of education.

In addition, a [federal grant application](#) process for \$4M was unanimously approved by the committee to send to Full Ways and Means, to be used for an apprenticeship program that includes businesses in an educational partnership.

One testified later about the importance of funding Community College programs that lead to needed occupations, that earn living wage jobs. She stated that she was a student with a master's degree from a prestigious university, yet required additional education later in life for more practical instruction, in order to earn a living wage.

Senate Education holds a controversial courtesy public hearing on virtual charter schools.

[SB 240](#) concerns lifting the 3% cap (by districts) on virtual charter schools. Many strong voices were [heard](#) (at 1:00 hr.) in this controversy. Parents, foster parents, teachers, students, and public school representatives [testified](#). Some of those testifying had experienced seeing or feeling the increased trauma and anxiety problems that are currently within, or outside of the public school system. An increased need for virtual charter schools was both supported and opposed. The argument that a legislative cap of 3% was established 10 years ago and needed revision, was made. Sen. Robinson noted that graduation rates from high school should not be the sole indicator of success for a method of schooling when comparing public to virtual education. He stated that the Oregon Dept. of Education (ODE) had denied 839 students this year, when appealing to enter a virtual charter school above the 3% cap. Sen. Robinson suggested we should at least allow for a debate on the Senate floor this year, but the bill did not meet the official timelines for a work session. It is dead this session, yet a study was hinted by the Senate Education chair.

Volunteer?

We are seeking 3-4 more volunteers. Early Learning, Child Care, K-12, Higher Education, Career Technical Education, and Youth Development are within this portfolio's responsibility.

Contact Chris Vogel, or Anne

Nesse annenessevolunteerlwvor@gmail.com