

Education

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2/22/2021

By Chris Vogel, Education Policy Portfolio

Education bills recently heard

Ice, snow, and substantial power outages postponed many legislative Public hearings the week of 2-15. [LWVOR submitted testimony](#) on HB 2051 - Refinements to the Youth Development Division included in the policy bill will help youth disengaged from traditional education by:

- increasing eligible age up from 21 to 24
- adding consulted partners for rulemaking—school districts and tribes
- adding youth not on track to graduate on time, removing the requirement that the youth is a “drop-out”
- adding youth that are referred by the Department of Human Services, a juvenile court, the Oregon Youth Authority, a county juvenile department, a federally recognized Indian tribe, a school district, an education service district or any other entity identified by the Youth Development Council by rule

The valuable work of the Youth Development Division and YDD grants are cost effective (YDD data): each disconnected youth costs state and local governments about \$9,600 annually; this cost includes lost tax

revenue, costs associated with crime, healthcare, and public assistance. The total cost of youth disconnection to Oregon in 2019 was an estimated \$508 million.

Looking ahead

LWVOR has submitted testimony on these education-related bills the week of 2-22.

- [HB 3073](#) changes the name of Early Learning Division to Early Learning Authority; establishes the Early Learning Authority as state agency separate from Department of Education (as it already is in many operational aspects) functioning under, and coordinated by, the Early Learning Council; prescribes expanded duties, functions, and powers of the Early Learning Authority, including administration of Employment Related Day Care and Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education Services; directs the Early Learning Division, Department of Education and Department of Human Services to develop and implement plans for seamless transfer of relevant duties, functions and powers, and to report on plans to appropriate interim committees of Legislative Assembly; revises the goals of the statewide early learning system; and modifies membership and duties of State Interagency Coordinating Council. Oregon has done a fairly comprehensive job of breaking down silos between agencies in education, social services and health care to provide more of an “any door” approach for early identification of children needing early intervention as well as those qualifying for reduced out-of-pocket costs for childcare and early learning preschool programs. [League testimony](#) notes that [HB 3073](#) is yet another positive legislative step in providing comprehensive services for young children.
- [HB 2381](#) changes the statute relating to youth suicide to include all young people below the age of 24, rather than limiting it to ages 10 to 24. [LWVOR testimony](#) says this will ensure that suicide

prevention planning and intervention in Oregon will address the needs of children under 10 who will benefit from upstream prevention efforts to build resilience and social emotional skills that can prevent suicide. The bill also ensures that suicides of children under age 10 are reported to OHA and included in statewide data. This will help mental health professionals understand the scope of this issue.

- [SB 236](#) eliminates expulsion of toddlers and children in early childhood programs and childcare. [League testimony](#) notes national data shows that Black children, Native children, and children who experience disabilities are asked to leave at disproportionately higher rates than other children. These are the same cohorts that often have higher rates of suicide and greater difficulty staying in school and graduating. Early identification and early intervention are critical. Behavioral issues are frequently the result of adverse childhood experiences or family systems stressed beyond coping. Rather than expulsion in early childhood care and education programs, these behaviors should be seen as a loud cry for help from a young child who may not have verbal or coping skills to do much more than “act out” asking for safety and security. Early childhood educators are in a position to observe and assist young children in need.
- [League testimony](#) on [HB 3037](#) directs a medical examiner to report suspected suicides involving decedents 24 years of age or younger to the local mental health authority; directs Oregon Health Authority to develop statewide suicide post-intervention protocol; authorizes cross-reporting between local mental health authorities. We direct your attention to compelling testimony from [Multnomah County](#) and [Lane County](#) home of the University of Oregon. The majority (~75%) of suicide deaths that occur in this population in Oregon are 19-24. Nineteen to twenty-four-year-olds often do not live at their home of record and may die away from home. It is important Community Mental Health Program Directors have the legislative authority to contact the local mental health authority in other areas when a student dies so

they can be informed, care for the bereaved, and limit additional suicides.

Date, time and scheduled bills can be found here: [House Committee on Education](#), [Senate Committee on Education](#), [House Committee on Early Childhood](#), and [Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education](#)

[Education System Funding Overview](#)

We focus this week on an [Education System Funding Overview](#) presented Feb 17 2021 in the [Joint Committee on W&M Subcommittee on Education](#) by Doug Wilson, Legislative Fiscal Office. In a “short” hour and 45 minutes [video](#) this primer contains almost everything one might want to know about how Early Learning, K-12, Youth Development, Community Colleges and Universities are funded. Additional long weeks of even more detailed presentations will follow to place the programs and budgets “on the record” with transparency. Frequently, in before-Covid-times, the LWVOR was often the only member of the “public” attending these hearings populated by agency staff and higher education senior administrators.

There is always a push-pull dynamic in discussions about school district funding that is again present in this funding cycle. Not all education advocates agree with the stated numbers used to develop the K-12 budget. The “Current Service Level” (CSL) is used to develop funding guidelines. School administrators submitted [this letter](#) to the W&Ms Co-chairs stating in part, “For years, we have tried to work as partners to ensure that the CSL number is derived accurately. For the last two biennia we have expressed concern with calculations we believe drive down that number by excluding some expenses or relying on old or inaccurate estimates of both revenue projections and actual costs associated with running our public education system. We have worked in collaboration with administrators, school boards, and most importantly, the Oregon Association of School Business Officials to develop inputs for

CSL and make those available to policymakers. One example of this is how the state normally allocates the State School Fund to districts year over year. In the current biennium, 49 percent of the total two-year State School Fund was distributed in the first year of the biennium, and 51 percent is being allocated in the second year. This is the same distribution as community college and university funds. In developing the CSL for 2021-23, rollup was calculated by starting with a second-year number of just 50 percent, which results in an initial shortfall of \$163 million in the CSL, but which grows to a roughly \$200 million underestimation of inflationary costs when compounded for the full biennium using our inputs.”

The [Quality Education Commission 2020 Summary](#) and full [Report](#) states, “The funding gap is the difference in the State School Fund amount needed for the Current Service Level of funding and the amount needed for full funding, as estimated using the Quality Education Model. We estimate that the funding gap will fall from \$1.77 billion in the 2019-21 biennium to \$833.6 million in 2021-23. The reduction in the gap is a result of the added revenue for schools coming from the Corporate Activities Tax passed as part of the Student Success Act.”

Volunteer on the LWVOR Education Portfolio Legislative Team.

Contact Chris Vogel Note: Chris is taking a sabbatical for international travel after the 2021 session. Without volunteers, LWVOR input on Education issues and Bills will be diminished.

In addition to watching hearings on OLIS and writing weekly Legislative Reports, we reach out (even during Covid isolation) to allies and coalitions also working on education improvements. If you have a passion for children, you may wish to research these links: [Our Children Oregon](#), [The Early Childhood Coalition](#), [Coalition of School Administrators](#), [Oregon School Board Administrators](#), [Oregon Education](#)



[Association](#), Oregon [Department of Education](#), [Early Learning](#), [Higher Education HECC](#).