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Student Success Act Clears House, Landmark Investments Advance

Reforms Oregon's revenue system to invest \$1 billion per year in students

SALEM – Following 15 months of public input and a statewide tour that brought legislators to every corner of Oregon, today the Oregon House of Representatives voted to advance the landmark Student Success Act.

[House Bill 3427](#) seeks to build a model public education system in Oregon through a dedicated, sustainable investment that will improve student outcomes, require ongoing accountability and close opportunity gaps for historically underserved students.

“The Student Success Act is an unprecedented opportunity to give our children the well-rounded education they deserve,” said Joint Committee on Student Success Co-Chair Rep. Barbara Smith Warner (D-Portland). “Today marks a turning point for our state. After decades of disinvestment in our schools, we took a huge step toward fulfilling an overdue promise to our children.”

The Student Success Act establishes the Student Success Fund which will be strictly dedicated to supporting Oregon's public early childhood education and kindergarten through 12 system.

The Student Success Act will create unprecedented investment in early childhood education, make accountable investments for all school districts, build a more equitable education system and provide additional services that students need to succeed. Among the specific initiatives targeted by the legislation are smaller class sizes, full funding of career and technical education (Measure 98), increased access to high quality preschool and early childhood programs, universal access to meals and mental and behavioral health supports.

“Teachers give the very best of themselves to their students day after day. They are strong, compassionate, capable and extremely challenged by our lack of resources,” said Rep. Courtney Neron (D-Wilsonville). “For the educators and education advocates who are demoralized and feel unheard, I believe the Student Success Act will provide much needed relief. For the students who are at the mercy of our vote, I believe this will provide hope, and opportunity for a better future.”

The entire proposal will be funded through a Modified Corporate Activities Tax (MCAT), developed in consultation with businesses large and small across the state. The MCAT is expected to yield \$2 billion dedicated to education per biennium beginning in 2021. The legislation also includes a personal income tax cut for all Oregonians.

“This bill is the product of negotiation and compromise,” said Rep. Nancy Nathanson (D-Eugene). “This is what we strive for and what our constituents expect of us. We listened to each other throughout this process, finding common ground between the business and labor communities in the interest of a dedicated revenue source for our children’s education.”

Accountability and transparency are central components of the Act. Schools will have performance targets to improve student outcomes including improving graduation rates, third grade reading levels, the rate of ninth grade students on track to graduate, and student attendance. Schools that do not meet their performance targets will receive coaching and enhanced oversight. The lowest performing schools will get additional funding and Student Success Teams will help redirect their investments toward proven strategies. These schools will be regularly audited to ensure strategic investments are going into the classroom and money is being spent to improve outcomes.

Equity is a central component of the Student Success Act. The Act will make unprecedented targeted statewide investments in culturally specific supports for historically underserved students, special education services, and funding universal access to nutrition. Schools will also have performance targets to reduce opportunity gaps for historically underserved students to ensure that all new investments are building the equitable education system that Oregon’s students deserve.

“One common theme we heard on the Student Success tour was that we needed to build a more equitable public education system,” said Rep. Diego Hernandez (D-Portland). “The reality is, some communities have been historically marginalized and we see the outcomes and disparities. We must address these inequities so that every student has the opportunity to succeed.”

The bipartisan, bicameral Joint Committee on Student Success was formed in early 2018 by Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek and Oregon Senate President Peter Courtney to explore the best practices employed in Oregon’s most successful schools and address the gaps that are limiting student success.

The Student Success Act fulfills a key piece of Oregon House Democrats’ Pledge to Every Oregonian by investing in the highest quality public education system.

The legislation, which passed 37 to 21, now goes to the Oregon Senate for consideration.

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