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Senate votes to reorganize Oregon education leadership, dismantle Oregon Education Investment Board

SB 215 is the consensus result of extensive stakeholder group process

SALEM – The Senate approved a major overhaul of the Oregon Education Investment Board this morning. Senate Bill 215 dissolves the appointed OEIB Board and transfers many of the Board’s duties to the Chief Education Officer, and creates the Chief Education Office to execute its duties. The bill further specifies the purpose, powers, and duties of the agency and CEO.

“The arrangement reached in Senate Bill 215 will help us make progress toward our shared goal of improving educational outcomes for Oregon students,” said Senator Arnie Roblan, (D-Coos Bay), chair of the Senate Education Committee. “I am very pleased that we have a compromised proposal that will continue the best parts of the OEIB and lay to rest those elements that aren’t serving Oregon students.”

Key pieces of SB 215 include:

- The OEIB *board* is dissolved, and the terms of office for members will expire on the effective date of SB 215.
- The OEIB *agency* and Chief Education Officer position will extend through 2019 under the newly named “Chief Education Office,” which will assume the staff, duties, and roles of the OEIB agency.
- The Chief Education Office is characterized by an explicit focus on coordinating with educational stakeholders to forge a unified public education system that eliminates student barriers, provides equity in opportunity, and facilitates seamless transitions.

- Toward these aims, the Chief Education Office is directed to collaborate with the Early Learning Council, the State Board of Education, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, and the Youth Development Council.

SB 215 was the product of a diverse work group of stakeholders in the education community. The group, which met throughout the 2015 Session, included over 25 participants, including parent advocacy organizations, education unions, representatives from the Executive branch and state education agencies, Oregon tribes, and other education advocacy groups. The group has committed to continuing to meet in the interim to deliberate on further recommendations prior to the next legislative session.

“Senate Democrats have a deep-seeded, ongoing commitment to education excellence. Each session, improving the quality of our schools is at the top of legislative agenda and 2015 is no exception,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). “I applaud the hard work of Senator Roblan in bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders and taking the next step in improving Oregon’s education system.”

The 2011 Legislative Assembly approved Senate Bill 909, establishing the OEIB and creating the position of Chief Education Officer (CEO). The OEIB was established “for the purpose of ensuring that all public school students in this state reach the education outcomes established for the state,” and the original legislation stated that the OEIB would “accomplish this goal by overseeing a unified public education system that begins with early childhood services and continues throughout public education from kindergarten to post-secondary education.”

SB 215 will now go to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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