



League of Women Voters State Ballot Measure Review 2016 Measure 98 Oregonians for High School Success

Requires state funding for dropout prevention, career and college readiness programs in Oregon high schools.

Initiative: This measure is a statutory amendment placed on the ballot by initiative petition with 101,302 valid signatures.

Financial Impact: The measure would require at least \$147 million (which is 1.4% of the state budget) be spent annually on career and technical education, accelerated learning and high school graduation improvement programs. As no additional revenue source is provided, funding would come from growth in the General Fund.

Probable results of a YES VOTE: If this measure passes, the legislature would be expected to commit an additional \$147 million per year to fund career and technical programs, college-level education, and dropout prevention programs. The legislature would determine funding.

Probable results of a NO VOTE: If this measure fails, the legislature would not be required to commit additional funds to career and technical programs, college-level education, and dropout prevention programs.

Background: Currently, the legislature provides General Fund revenues to the State School Fund based on constitutionally required quality goals; funds are distributed directly to school districts under a specified formula. In the last biennium 51.6% of Oregon's 2015-17 General Fund and Lottery Funds were budgeted for education. Oregon's 72 percent graduation rate for the class of 2014 ranked fourth-worst in the nation according to the U.S. Department of Education. In Oregon per pupil spending has dropped 5% since 2010 and ranks near the middle of the 50 states.

Access to CTE (career technical education), such as auto shop, wood and metal shop, culinary arts, robotics, has been significantly reduced over the last 20 years. Data from the Oregon Department of Education show that the four-year graduation rate for students who have earned at least one credit of CTE is 15.5 percentage points higher than the statewide average. The difference tends to be more dramatic for low income and minority students who have taken CTE.

Proposal: Ballot Measure 98 requires state funds to be distributed to public school districts for three specific purposes: 1) establish or expand career and technical education programs in high schools, 2) establish or expand college-level educational opportunities for students in high schools and 3) establish or expand dropout-prevention strategies in high schools.

The measure directs the Legislature to appropriate at least \$800 per enrolled high school student per school year for these three purposes. School districts may choose whether to apply for these additional funds, but in order to receive them, school districts must submit grant proposals showing how its funds would be used for the three programs. If a district's grant application did not qualify, the Department of Education would assist the district in preparing a qualified plan.

The measure creates no new revenue sources and relies initially on growth of state General Fund revenue. If the state General Fund does not increase by at least \$1.5 billion in the next two-year budget period, initial funding for the measure would be reduced and phased in over four years.

The Department of Education will monitor districts receiving funds. The Department may retain up to 1.5 percent of the funds for oversight of the program for the first two years and 1.25 percent thereafter. School districts may retain up to 5 percent of the funds for implementation of the new programs for the first two years and 4 percent thereafter. The Secretary of State will conduct audits on the programs' success.

Supporters Say:

- Measure 98 would expand and create new vocational and career technical educational opportunities, as well as college-level courses, in Oregon high schools. Such courses could improve graduation rates.
- Measure 98 could provide funding for guidance counselors and tutors with the intent to reduce drop out rates.
- Measure 98 funding amounts to 1.4 percent of the upcoming state budget, well within the range of feasibility and similar to the size of investment for full-day kindergarten.

Opponents Say:



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- There is no new source of revenue for these programs mandated to be funded from the state General Fund, thus reducing allocations for other essential services such as public safety, social services, and other education expenses.
- Budgeting for the three areas should be budgeted within K-12 funding, not outside of that budget process.
- The measure would reduce funding for other essential services, such as public safety and economic development.

[How We Researched the Ballot Measures](#)

League of Women Voters members have researched and written these ballot measure reports. Researchers try to verify all factual information. We work diligently to ensure that our reports are balanced, accurate, and fair. We strive to provide the information you need to make an informed VOTE! Our sources include:

- Financial Impact and Explanatory Statements from the Secretary of State
- Measure supporters and opponents
- State agencies and economists
- Reports and published information, including current press coverage