

**Oregon State School Funding Task Force
ESL Subcommittee
Recommendations for full Task Force**

Issues Raised

Through public testimony and discussions among the full State School Fund Task Force, the following issues were raised:

1. Whether there should be a minimum amount distributed to school districts with small ELL populations;
2. Whether the weight was too small;
3. Whether the weight creates incentives for school districts to keep students in ELL programs even after they can no longer benefit from the services;
4. Whether the lack of accountability in spending harms the provision of ELL services;
5. Whether districts should be required to spend all of the funds they receive for ELL students on ELL services.

An additional issue that was raised was a proposal submitted by Deputy Superintendent Rob Saxton. The key elements of this proposal are:

- The ELL weight is increased from 0.5 to 0.6
- The funding will be for 7 years to students identified as a 1 or a 2 on the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA)
- The funding will be for 4 years for students identified as a 3 or higher on the ELPA
- 90% of the ELL funds received by a district must be spent on ELL services
- A district will gain a bonus of \$250 for every ever-ELL student who graduates from that district.

Recommendations

The subcommittee reviewed the data and addressed the issues raised. Accordingly, the Subcommittee makes the following recommendations regarding the current funding formula for ELL students:

1. Increase the weight for ELL students to 0.6. This will provide additional funding for those districts with small ELL populations. Additionally, this will help provide additional services to many ELL students who are also economically disadvantaged.
2. Give the additional ELL weight for 7 years for students who test at 1 or a 2 on the ELPA and 4 years for students who test at 3 or above. These timeframes are consistent with information provided to the committee related to research on the mastery of English as a primary language. This proposal will eliminate the incentive for districts to keep ELL students in ELL programs beyond their ability to benefit from the services. This will also give districts more stable funding as they will be given set amounts for specific periods of time.

- a. The subcommittee recommends further research and discussion on this proposal to work out the details. Concerns raised include tracking requirements, how to handle students who change districts, when the funding would start, and when the students would be tested on the ELPA to determine funding level.
3. Increase accountability for ELL spending. The subcommittee does not embrace the any set spending requirement. Further, the subcommittee is very sensitive to the significant resources it would take at the local and state level to implement an accountability system. However, the subcommittee recommends that ELL funding be spent on ELL services to assist those students.

The subcommittee recommends that additional research and study is conducted on how to increase accountability. Further, the subcommittee recommends that a pilot project be implemented based on that study.