





OREGON COALITION OF COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOLS

2025 Legislative Session Education Wrap Up

As the 2025 Oregon legislative session concludes, public education remained a central focus—yet the outcomes were deeply shaped by a worsening fiscal picture. Between February and May, the state’s general fund forecast declined by over \$400 million, and revenues from the Corporate Activity Tax (CAT)—the funding source for the Student Success Act (SSA)—fell by \$200 million. That shortfall forced significant cuts to SSA-funded programs, including mental health supports, career-connected learning, and early learning services, weakening the state’s capacity to meet rising student needs.

Lawmakers responded by prioritizing stability over expansion. Some key education investments and policy reforms made it through, while others, even with strong grassroots and legislative support, stalled due to limited resources and political hesitations.

Charter School Legislation: Progress, Setbacks, and New Momentum

-  **HB 3953 – Passed:** Allows federally recognized tribes, in Oregon, to apply direct to the State Board of Education for charter school application authorization.
-  **HB 3444 – Did Not Pass (But Made an Impact):** HB 3444 aimed to bring long-overdue equity to charter school funding, ensuring charters receive their fair share of local and state resources. The bill drew a record number of charter advocates, school leaders, teachers, and parents to the public hearing, demonstrating overwhelming support from the charter community. Despite this, the bill stalled due to broader political resistance and budgetary caution. However, legislative leadership committed to forming an **interim work group** tasked with negotiating comprehensive charter school statute reform ahead of the 2026 session, an important step forward!

- **✗ HB 3441 – Did Not Pass:** Would have created a state commission to sponsor and oversee public charter schools in this state, in addition to continuing to allow school districts to authorize.
- **✗ HB 2583 – Did Not Pass:** Sought to give Oregon’s community-based virtual charter school students the same access to SIA resources as traditional publics and brick/mortar charter schools.

✓ Education Legislation That Passed

- **State School Fund (SB 5516):** Allocates \$11.4 billion for K-12 schools—an 11% increase over the previous biennium. While it maintains current service levels, it does not address systemic funding gaps or regional inequities.
- **Summer Learning (HB 2007):** Dedicates \$35 million over the biennium to support summer learning programs, aiming to close opportunity gaps and accelerate academic recovery.
- **Accountability Reform (SB 141):** Establishes a new school accountability system focused on third-grade reading, eighth-grade math, and graduation rates, including interim assessments and targeted state interventions.
- **Inclusive Book Access (SB 1098):** Prohibits school districts from banning books based on protected class characteristics such as race, gender identity, or sexual orientation, ensuring inclusive and representative educational materials remain in schools.

✗ Key Proposals That Did Not Pass

- **Special Education Funding (HB 2953):** Would have lifted the 11% cap on special education reimbursements, but its \$700 million price tag proved prohibitive.

- **Cell Phone Ban (HB 2251):** Proposed a bell-to-bell student cell phone ban in schools but failed amid concerns about enforcement and district autonomy.
- **Reductions of Student Success Act Programs:** Due to the CAT revenue shortfall, lawmakers chose to consolidate and cut several SSA programs, namely the high school success grants, the Student Success Plan grants, and the Charter School Equity Grants.
- **Workforce & Student Support Expansions:** Multiple bills targeting teacher recruitment, retention, and expanded school-based behavioral health services were sidelined due to limited budget capacity.

The 2025 session marked both progress and frustration for Oregon's education system. While lawmakers maintained core investments and passed targeted reforms, critical needs—particularly around charter equity, special education, and post-pandemic learning supports—remain unresolved. For the charter school community, the defeat of HB 3444 was a deep disappointment, but the unprecedented advocacy effort and commitment to an interim work group offer hope for transformative progress in 2027.

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