Senate Ed hears mandate relief bill

**Senate Bill 800.** sponsored by Sen. Suzanne Bonamici (D-Beaverton) at the request of State Superintendent Susan Castillo and education coalition members, was heard by the Senate Education Committee this week. Committee members have all signed on as sponsors of the bill. SB 800, one of three key mandate relief bills, eliminates or revises 28 outdated or redundant state laws, including:

- Simplifying statewide, school and district report cards by putting some information on the Internet and allowing e-mailing of reports
- Repealing community service guideline requirements
- Eliminating state mandates relating to local school committees
- Eliminating duplicate report on race and ethnicity of high school graduates
- Eliminating curriculum requirements for the Irish Potato Famine, arms race and conflict resolution
- Eliminating requirement that districts record student dental certificates
- Eliminating requirement that districts withhold grade reports, diplomas and records of students who owe more than $50
- Eliminating redundant and outdated requirements that superintendent distribute and prepare education laws

SB 800 builds on the work of the Mandate Relief Project (initiated by OSBA, in partnership with the Confederation of School Administrators, Oregon Education Association, Oregon School Employees Association, AFT-Oregon, Oregon Association of Education Service Districts and Oregon Department of Education) which met last summer to review recent and prospective state and federal mandates and identify those from which we would seek legislative relief this session. The group focused on state mandates, and reached consensus on three products: SB 800, SB 560 and HB 3370.

**SB 560.** sponsored by Sen. Betsy Johnson (D-Scappoose), reduces the paperwork burden on district continuous improvement plans, requiring only significant changes be submitted. This bill is currently in the Senate Education Committee; Sen. Mark Hass (D-Beaverton), chair, has indicated there will be a hearing but no date has been scheduled.

**HB 3370.** sponsored by Rep. Jeff Barker (D-Aloha) at the request of OSBA and other partners, is in the House Education Committee. This critical bill requires the Legislative Fiscal Office to prepare fiscal impact statements setting forth the effect of a bill on expenditures if the bill imposes a new duty or increased level of service on a school district or ESD. This gives the Legislature and school districts accurate, necessary information on which to base decisions and shares accountability. A hearing date has not been scheduled.

COSA and ODE continue to lead efforts on streamlining data systems and reporting and are currently conducting a separate review of Division 22 requirements.

OSBA Associate Executive Director Tricia Yates praised committee members for sponsoring the bill. “SB 800 has provisions to eliminate redundant or outdated laws; 12 save money or time for districts, and 18 do the same for ODE. While this may not result in large savings, every reduction in unnecessary reporting helps our district leaders redirect that valuable increment of staff time to a higher priority. Passage of SB 800 is the first of many steps to assist districts and ESDs in refocusing our collective, scarce resources to support student achievement.” She urged the committee and the Legislature to advance all three bills in the mandate relief package.

Budget Advocacy Alert

Your legislators need to hear from you about the budget being considered for your schools! OSBA, the Oregon Association of School Business Officials and the Confederation of School Administrators created a template for districts to fill in with your specific budget information. The template is designed to give the legislature information about budget impacts to districts across the state at various funding levels being discussed.

Access templates at [www.oasbo.com](http://www.oasbo.com); click on “Budget Scenarios Template.” If you do not have a completed template, you can get the information required from your business official/superintendent. Use the completed template to talk with state legislators about your district’s budget scenarios. For questions, contact Lori Sattenspiel, l.sattenspiel@osba.org.

Senate passes unfunded full-day K

The Senate on Thursday passed **Senate Bill 248.** the full-day kindergarten bill, on a vote of 27 to 3, with Senators Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day), Brian Boquist (R-Dallas) and Chip Shields (D-Portland) voting no. The bill extends the applicability of current law that requires school districts to offer half-day kindergarten and allows school districts and public charter schools to offer supplemental kindergarten. **SB 248 requires school districts to offer full-day kindergarten beginning with the 2015-16 school year, but adds no money** to the State School Fund to pay for the additional half-day program.

Senate Republican Leader Ferrioli spoke of the incontrovertible benefit of kindergarten, but told his Senate colleagues, “We’re not paying for it; we are just kicking an unfunded mandate down the road.” He referenced districts being forced to close schools due to budget cuts, and schools’ struggles to provide a basic education to their students. “There is nothing wrong with SB 248 that $100 million won’t cure. Citizens will wonder why the Legislature didn’t put the people’s money where our mouth is,” Ferrioli said.

Earlier this session, OSBA Associate Executive Director Tricia Yates told the Senate Education Committee of OSBA’s support for full-day kindergarten, when accompanied by a separate, distinct appropriation and implemented at the district’s option. She also shared OSBA members’ concerns about pushing another unfunded mandate out into the future in the midst of budget cuts. This position, and a call for the Legislature to fund full-day kindergarten if passed, was previously shared by OSBA board member and Hillsboro school board member Patti McLeod, in her role as a member of the state Full-Day Kindergarten Advisory Committee. In that forum, McLeod discussed the additional operational costs that would be incurred at a time when districts are already cutting budgets, as well as potential facility costs for districts that do not currently have space for full-day kindergarten.

While SB 248 was originally slated to go to the Ways and Means Committee for additional deliberation, that referral was

Continued
Kindergarten – Continued

removed by Senate leadership and instead
the bill passed the Senate Education Com-
mittee and went directly to the Senate floor
for a vote.

Yates and Confederation of School Ad-
ministrators Government Relations Direc-
tor Chuck Bennett sent the following letter
to senators prior to the floor vote:

The Oregon School Boards Association
(OSBA) and the Confederation of School
Administrators (COSA) support full-day
kindergarten when accompanied by a sep-
arate and distinct state appropriation and
implemented at the school district’s option.
Unfortunately, Senate Bill 248, the full-day
kindergarten bill, does not include any fund-
ing to support this new program, essentially
imposing an unfunded, estimated $100 mil-
lion per year mandate on school districts.

SB 248 requires school districts to offer
full-day kindergarten beginning with the
2015-16 school year. Passing and pushing
an unfunded mandate into the future when
schools are already $1 billion short of
funds required to pay for existing program
levels would be unwise in the current bud-
get environment. Currently, there are ap-
proximately 40,000 kindergartners in the
state, funded through the school funding
formula at .5 weight. By bringing these stu-
dents to a full-time weight, SB 248 adds the
equivalent of 20,000 students while adding
zero to support their costs. This spreads the
already insufficient state school fund even
thinner, providing less money for the stu-
dents already in the system.

As state General Fund and Lottery sup-
port of K-12 education has declined from
44.8% in 2003-05 to 38.2% in the Gov-
ernor’s recommended budget, school dis-
tricts have cut their programs, staff and
school days under existing mandates, and
anticipate cutting more.

We appreciate that the Legislature’s edu-
cation committees are hearing mandate re-
lief bills to attempt to help districts target
resources away from mandate compliance
paperwork and toward support of student
achievement. While these bills, if passed,
are an important step, they do not provide
the substantial funds necessary to imple-
dent full-day kindergarten.

SB 248 advances a goal we all support,
but without additional funding, it is a bur-
den school districts cannot bear without
carving out another area of a student’s
school experience.

Senators Suzanne Bonamici (D-Beaver-
ton) and Jeff Kruse (R-Roseburg) pledged
that the Senate will monitor funding be-
tween now and the 2015-16 implementa-
tion date of the mandate. “We have set a bar
we have to hit. We meet annually and can
review this every year,” Kruse said. Kruse
also referenced the issue of infrastructure
needs in school districts related to kinder-
garten. “I trust they [school districts] will
let us know,” he said.

The bill now moves to the House.

CC budget inadequate
to meet demand

Community college budget hearings took
place this week in the Ways and Means Ed-
ucation Subcommittee.

Community Colleges and Workforce
Development (CCWD) Commissioner
Camille Preus presented information high-
lighting the department’s mission, goals
and performance measurers. Community
colleges and related workforce training
programs continue to grow, and currently
face a tremendous increase in demand as a
result of the prolonged poor economy and
high unemployment rates.

Governor Kitzhaber’s proposed budget
provides only $410 million to the commu-
nity college support fund, a
reduction
from
the $416.1 million allocated for community
colleges in the 2009-11 budget.

Rep. Betty Komp, Ways and Means Edu-
cation Subcommittee co-chair, commented,
“Commissioner Preus gave us a stark real-
ization of the many unemployed workers
who don’t have the work skills to reenter
the workforce. We’re not even close to
meeting demand with the current level of
support for our community colleges.”

Charter bill
passes Senate

Senate Bill 255, the consensus prod-
uct of OSBA’s 10-Year Charter Review
Committee, cleared the Senate floor with
a unanimous vote and now heads to the
House. Read more at www.leg.state.or.us/
press_releases/sdo_032111_2.html.