Legislative Webinar

Wednesday, May 18, 8:30-9:30 a.m.

Rep. Greg Smith joins OSBA legislative update

On Wednesday, May 18, 8:30-9:30 a.m., OSBA’s Legislative and Public Affairs team hosts its second webinar to update you on the legislative session. Hear first hand about key issues at the Capitol that will affect schools. Submit your questions during the webinar and get the answers you need.

Joint Ways and Means Committee member, Representative Greg Smith (R-Hepner) will provide a briefing on the state revenue forecast, 2011-13 state budget for education and potential additional reserve fund investment in K-12.

The state revenue forecast was released on May 12 (see article, right). Smith has a track record as a supporter of education investment.

To participate, sign up now at the OSBA website, www.osba.org – look under events. The webinar is FREE but you must register to participate. Log-in information and a link to test your system will be emailed to you.

Governor’s budget summit; 2011-13 revenue forecast up

Governor John Kitzhaber, legislative leaders, and legislative budget writers from both political parties met on Monday, May 9, at the Governor’s official residence, Mahonia Hall, to discuss a final spending plan for the 2011-13 budget. While details of the meeting are limited, the Governor and legislative participants did issue a statement indicating that restoring funding to human service programs was their first priority if state coffers showed an increase in revenue.

On Thursday, the state economic and revenue forecast showed that funds available for the 2009-11 biennium were down $40.2 million dollars, but there was good news for the upcoming biennium. Oregon’s chief economist Tom Potiowsky reported that general fund and lottery resources for the 2011-13 biennium are projected to be up $128.8 million dollars. He also noted that job growth is positive and that economic indicators show that Oregon is in a period of economic recovery.

With a June 30 deadline for adjournment, the additional funds are welcome news to legislative leaders attempting to hammer out final budgets for education, human services and public safety. However, the new revenue falls far short of addressing the state’s budget shortfall and advocates for a wide range of interests will be vying for these scarce dollars.

State economists presented the forecast to a joint meeting of the House Revenue Committee and Senate Finance and Revenue Committee Thursday morning at the State Capitol. For more information, click on the links below (or access through news story at www.osba.org):

- Mahonia Hall Summit statement from governor and legislative leadership
- Oregon Economic and Revenue Forecast, June 2011
- Governor Kitzhaber statement in response to revenue forecast

For additional information or questions, please contact Tricia Yates (tyates@osba.org) or Morgan Allen (mallen@osba.org).
OSBA’s Reid testifies at budget hearing

The Ways and Means Committee concluded its series of public hearings on the state budget last Friday night at the Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport, with a video link to Coos Bay.

OSBA board member Liisa Reid (Greater Albany Public Schools) testified on behalf of her district and school board members across Oregon. Reid thanked the Committee and Legislature for increasing the K-12 allocation from the Governor’s original proposal, but reminded them that school districts across Oregon will still be closing schools, cutting days from the calendar, laying off teachers and staff and eliminating academic programs and extracurricular activities.

“Children have only one shot at being six, twelve or sixteen. There are no ‘do-overs’,” she said.

The K-12 budget signed by the governor leaves approximately $192 million dollars in the Education Stability Fund (ESF) during the 2011-13 biennium. Reid reminded the Committee that the ESF was created to help stabilize K-12 funding in times of severe economic crisis and urged the Committee to access another $100 million from the fund. For Albany, the $100 million would mean $1.6 million — about 6 days of school. Or, Albany could put back some of these other items that the district is considering cutting:

• About $800,000 would pay for a year of athletics and activities, which Albany is considering eliminating for the second year of the biennium.

You still have the opportunity to make your voice heard. Let legislators know the budget’s impact on your students.

Mandate relief bills heard in House Rules

Two bills from OSBA’s Mandate Relief Project received a public hearing before the House Rules Committee on Monday, May 9. SB 800 eliminates or revises 28 outdated or redundant state laws affecting school districts and the Oregon Department of Education. SB 560 reduces the paperwork burden on district continuous improvement plans, requiring districts to only submit significant changes to their plans. Both previously passed the Senate, SB 560 unanimously and SB 800 on a 29-1 vote.

OSBA Associate Executive Director Tricia Yates urged the Committee to pass these measures. “These bills will reduce paperwork and redundant or obsolete laws, and while they won’t save significant dollars statewide, any time-savings can be redirected toward activities that better support student achievement,” she said.

The third product of the Mandate Relief Project, House Bill 3370, would have required the Legislative Fiscal Office to prepare fiscal impact statements for a bill if it imposes a new duty or increased level of service on a school district or ESD. The bill died in the House Education Committee due to internal deadlines but may be considered in the interim.

SB 800 and SB 560 await further action by the House Rules Committee.

The Mandate Relief Project, brought together OSBA, COSA, OEA, the Oregon School Employees Association, AFT-Oregon, the Oregon Association of Education Service Districts and the Oregon Department of Education.

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