

OSBA Legislative Highlights



the Promise
OF OREGON

April 10, 2015

OSBA Action Alert: OSBA members urged to testify at Ways and Means Committee field hearings

On April 7, the Oregon Senate passed **House Bill 5017A**, funding K-12 education at \$7.255 billion for the 2015-17 biennium (see accompanying story). During the next 90 days, OSBA will work with the Legislature to increase this funding level. **We need your continued advocacy!**

The Oregon Legislature's Joint Ways and Means Committee will kick off a series of public hearings on the state budget **starting April 10**. We urge OSBA members to:

1. **Attend a hearing in your area and testify** on the recently passed 2015-17 K-12 budget (HB 5017A, funded at \$7.255 billion), which is inadequate if schools are to meet the state 40-20-20 goal. For the vast majority of school districts, this is a cuts budget, and we need to urge the Legislature and governor to keep "The Promise of Oregon" by investing additional resources in schools as promised.
2. In concert with your superintendent, please also **communicate with your legislators, local media, staff and parents** each week throughout

your budget process about what \$7.255 billion means for students in your district. Share any staff, days or program cuts you are considering. Compare your anticipated 2015-16 staffing and program levels to pre-recession levels. Discuss how you would use the additional funding provided by a state school fund budget of \$7.5 billion (or more). The Confederation of Oregon School Administrators (COSA) is coordinating superintendents' efforts.

3. **Work with your ESDs to develop collective messages** describing the impact of a \$7.255 billion budget in your regions, as well as what you could accomplish with \$7.5 billion or more. The Oregon Association of Education Service Districts (OAESD) is coordinating this effort.

Questions? Contact Executive Director Betsy Miller-Jones (bmillerjones@osba.org) or Deputy Executive Director Jim Green (jgreen@osba.org).

Ways and Means Committee hearing sites and times can be found at:
www.osba.org/News%20Center/Announcements/2015-04-09_LH_ActionAlert_SSF_FieldHearings.aspx

View HB 5017A:
www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Legislative/BillTracking.aspx?s=15&t=&r=&q=5017&c=50&key=HB%2050170&ptad=:%20HB%205017%20Details

WAYS AND MEANS PUBLIC HEARING SITES AND TIMES

Date	Time	City	Location
Friday, April 10	5:30-7:00 p.m.	La Grande	Eastern Oregon University – Gilbert Center
Saturday, April 11	12:30-2:00 p.m.	Boardman	Port of Morrow – S.A.G.E. Center
Tuesday, April 14	6:30-8:00 p.m.	Lincoln City	Lincoln City Cultural Center
Thursday, April 16	7:00-8:30 p.m.	Gresham	Mt. Hood Community College
Tuesday, April 21	7:00-8:30 p.m.	Portland	Portland Community College Rock Creek Campus
Thursday, April 23	6:30-8:00 p.m.	Springfield	<i>To be determined</i>
Friday, April 24	5:30-7:00 p.m.	Klamath Falls	Oregon Institute of Technology
Saturday, April 25	12:30-2:00 p.m.	Grants Pass	Grants Pass High School – Performing Arts Center Lecture Hall

All hearings will be open to the public and members of the press.

Senate approves State School Fund budget

The Oregon Senate this week approved the State School Fund (SSF) Budget for 2015-17. The Senate approved the proposed budget along straight party lines (18-12), with all Democrats supporting and all Republicans opposing the budget. OSBA had asked that the budget either be defeated, or be sent back to the Ways and Means Committee and a minimum amount of \$7.5 billion be appropriated to the SSF.

The total amount appropriated to the SSF is \$7.255 billion, which is slightly higher than the previous amount of \$7.235 billion that the co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means had proposed. The additional \$20 million is realized in two adjustments plus an addition of \$5 million into the SSF.

The first adjustment is a \$12.5 million fund to help school districts and English Language Learner (ELL) students. Within this fund, \$10 million is set aside for the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to help fund low-performing school districts' ELL school improvement coaches, ELL performance improvement strategies and resources, and ODE quarterly reviews of schools' progress. Another \$2.5 million will be used to implement a statewide ELL plan, including technical assistance, best practices support, and assistance in implementing the ELL plan's recommendations statewide.

The second adjustment is a \$2.4 million distribution for school nutritional programs to provide a school lunch at no charge to those students who are currently eligible for a reduced-price lunch.

The additional \$5 million is gained by reducing the school facilities grant from \$20 million to \$15 million. This \$5 million will be run through the SSF formula and distributed to school districts and education service districts.

During the debate on the Senate floor, members of the Senate stated this was a beginning point and that they would look for additional revenue for schools as the session continues. "I know we have to do better," said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). "But this budget is responsible, it's realistic and it's what we have to do."

Sen. Tim Knopp (R-Bend) read aloud 400 names of Oregonians who had signed the OSBA-sponsored Promise of Oregon online petition asking for an additional investment in schools. More than 6,500 individuals have signed the online petition (promiseoregon.org/petition) requesting that the Legislature fund schools adequately and fulfill the promise of a quality public education for Oregon students.

The budget now goes to Governor Kate Brown for her approval. The governor has indicated she will sign the budget. Contact Jim Green (jgreen@osba.org) for more information.

School funding advocacy efforts need to continue

Even though the Oregon Legislature has approved the State School Fund appropriation included in House Bill 5017A, it is **NOT** the end of the debate on the amount of funding for schools for this legislative session. During the floor debate on the bill, almost every member who spoke on the bill, even if he/she voted yes, stated that it was a funding floor and that the Legislature needed to find additional supports for Oregon's schoolchildren.

Advocacy efforts need to continue to remind members of the Legislature that for many school districts across Oregon, the budget they recently approved is a budget that will result in cuts. School districts have reported that under the HB 5017A \$7.2 billion budget, there will be increases to class sizes, the elimination of instructional days, staff lay-offs and the elimination of program and curricular offerings.

While school boards and budget committees across Oregon must begin building their budgets based on this woefully inadequate budget, the work to get more resources must continue. Many individuals are asking: **what are the next steps in our fight to protect our schools and the students of Oregon?**

First and foremost, **tell your story!** Tell your legislators and the public what your budget and your proposed plan for next school year looks like under this budget scenario. If you are going to have to make difficult decisions within your budgets, explain what those decisions are and how they impact the students in your school district. Also explain what could be possible for your students if the Legislature did its job and kept its promise to the students by funding schools at \$7.5 billion!

Just because the Legislature has voted on the school fund budget **DOES NOT** mean our work is complete! There are still over 90 days left in this legislative session and plenty of time for the Legislature to adequately fund schools!

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO ENSURE THE LEGISLATURE FULFILLS THE PROMISE TO OREGON'S SCHOOLCHILDREN:

- **Tell your local budget story** with members of the Legislature and your public;
- **Attend and testify** during the Ways and Means Committee field hearings and demand additional funding for schools;
- Attend legislative townhalls, coffees and gatherings and **remind your legislators** that they ran on a promise to fund schools adequately and they have not yet met that obligation; and
- **Talk to your community** about the impact of this budget and encourage them to reach out to the Legislature to increase school resources.

Contact Jim Green (jgreen@osba.org or 800-578-6722) for more information.

Reynolds’ Bruce McCain honored for leadership, service

Reynolds School Board Chair and OSBA Legislative Policy Committee member **Bruce McCain** was honored by OSBA this week for his service. OSBA Executive Director Betsy Miller-Jones and Deputy Executive Director Jim Green joined the Reynolds School Board in recognizing McCain’s leadership. Miller-Jones, who also represented OSBA President **Dave Krumbein** and the OSBA Board of Directors, presented McCain with a certificate recognizing his four years of dedicated service as a member of the Reynolds School District Board of Directors, including his current position as chairman. She also presented him with a plaque honoring his contribution to public education as a member of OSBA’s Legislative Policy Committee and an ongoing member of Oregon’s education community.

Miller-Jones presented McCain with a letter from Krumbein and herself thanking McCain for his service:

“During your years of service, you have exemplified the quality of commitment that inspires the many elected school board members throughout Oregon who volunteer their personal time and energy to make our public schools work. In 2013, you received OSBA’s Platinum certification, the highest level attainable under the Leadership Institute program.

In awarding you this plaque and Certificate of Appreciation, we acknowledge that you are a living, breathing example of the high standard of hard work and personal dedication that OSBA’s members aspire to achieve. Thank you for all you have done, not only for the students and parents who live in the Reynolds School District, but also for everyone who cares about the future of public schools in Oregon.”

Miller-Jones and Green were joined in honoring McCain by OSBA Board members **Kris Howatt** (Gresham-Barlow School District) and **Betty Reynolds** (West Linn-Wilsonville School District) as well as other members of the Reynolds and Gresham-Barlow boards.



Back Row (L-R): Reynolds School Board Members Diego Hernandez, Dane Nickerson, Joe Teeny, Diane Whitehead, John Lindenthal.

Front Row (L-R): Jim Green, Gresham-Barlow (G-B) School Board member Sharon Garner, G-B School Board member Dan Christenson, G-B and OSBA Board member Kris Howatt, Reynolds School Board Chair and OSBA LPC member Bruce McCain, West Linn-Wilsonville and OSBA Board member Betty Reynolds, Betsy Miller-Jones, Morgan Allen.

Bill to support English Language Learners receives consensus

Over the past six-plus months, a large group of stakeholders, including educators, parents and community-based organizations, was called together by Chief Education Officer Nancy Golden and Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction Rob Saxton to try to reach consensus on strategies to improve educational outcomes for English Language Learners (ELL) in our K-12 public schools.

Former Governor Kitzhaber had offered several significant changes to ELL funding and programs in his proposed K-12 budget. These included changing the ELL weight from .5 to .6, requiring districts to spend at least 90 percent of their ELL funds directly on ELL programs and cutting the .5 weight for students who remained in ELL programs beyond 4 and 7 years.

From these initial proposals and meetings has emerged a group of consensus steps that will be included in **House Bill 3499**, sponsored by Rep. Joe Gallegos (D-Hillsboro). While none of the original proposals will be in the legislation, amendments being drafted for HB 3499 include these key consensus provisions:

- The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) will convene an advisory group to develop uniform budget reporting requirements for ELL funds received by districts. This information will be used to develop transparent, public reporting on how ELL funds are spent in each school district.

6573 SIGNATURES

Show your support for fully funding Oregon’s public schools - Sign the petition!

- \$2.5 million will be included in the State School Fund to implement the Oregon English Learners Statewide Strategic Plan.
- ODE will convene an advisory group to develop criteria for a system of supports and progressive interventions for schools and districts that are struggling to improve outcomes for their ELL students. This will include \$10 million to provide resources for schools, similar to the Focus and Priority School models developed by ODE. The advisory group will also consider best practices and ideas to support the work of districts and the transition of former ELL students into regular education programs.
- ODE will convene a workgroup “that consists of educators, parents and community stakeholders to continue to identify long-term strategies and methods that will successfully support” ELL students, districts and schools. This workgroup must submit its recommendations to the Legislature by Jan. 1, 2017.

OSBA staff involved in this work include Executive Director Betsy Miller-Jones, Deputy Executive Director Jim Green and Legislative Specialist Morgan Allen; OSBA is pleased to have been a part of these discussions and is appreciative of all the efforts to find consensus on supports for our ELL students.

View HB 3499:

www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Legislative/BillTracking.aspx?s=15&t=&r=&q=hb_3499&c=50&key=HB_34990&ptadd=:HB_3499_Details

Senate Education Committee hears charter school bills

The Senate Education Committee heard two charter bills this week, **Senate Bill 819** and **Senate Bill 588**. The two bills, which brought out a large group of charter school proponents, impact school districts and charter schools and range in policy changes from audits, transportation costs and the percentage of dollars passed through to charter schools.

Senate Bill 819 would have a significant impact on school district funding. The bill makes changes to ORS 388.155, modifying the percentages of amounts school districts must pass from the State School Fund (SSF) to public charter schools that are not virtual public charter schools. The bill also directs school districts to forward dollars from federal, state and local moneys to charter schools on the same basis as a non-chartered school district. The bill allows charter school transportation costs to be eligible for reimbursement, mirroring the school districts' reimbursement rate.

Funding for charter school students is broken down in two categories; students enrolled in kindergarten through 8th grade receive a minimum of 80 percent of the amount of the school district's general purpose grant per ADMw as calculated under ORS 327.013. Students enrolled in

grades 9 through 12 receive a minimum of 95 percent of the school district's general purpose grant per ADMw. School districts and charter schools can negotiate a larger percentage of dollars to pass through if both parties agree.

Students, parents, directors and teachers at various charter schools around the state testified in favor of SB 819, sharing experiences about their schools and asking for additional funding for charter schools in order to expand the educational opportunities for students.

Kaaren Heikes, Kairos Charter School, testified in support of the bill and presented two studies to the committee, “Charter School Funding in Oregon” and “Charter School Funding Inequities.” Heikes said she hoped to show the committee the need for SB 819 and the corresponding changes to funding.

Kevin Strong, business manager in the Sweet Home School District, testified in opposition, pointing out that the SSF calculation made for charter schools assumes a charter school has the same percentage of economically disadvantaged students as the school district where it is located and the calculation uses the same teacher experience rating as the district. As a result, the calculations provide additional dollars to the charter school, when in fact the charter school does not mirror the same demographics as the district and historically, teachers in charter schools typically have less experience than the district teachers.

Kristen Miles, program director of charter schools for Portland Public Schools (PPS), testified in opposition and spoke about the monies PPS retains instead of passing through to charter schools. She stated, “All districts must provide oversight of all charter school operations, finances and student performance. This oversight requires resources; it is not free to provide. School districts are required to provide oversight of a charter school's performance, compliance with laws and the contract.”

Miles told the committee about the resources it takes for PPS to adequately provide oversight and guidance for its nine charter schools, and added: “We asked our staff to fill out a survey, to estimate in hours or by percentage how much time staff spent working on tasks related to charter schools. The total estimated value on oversight for the 2013-14 school year was \$1,855,544. The money retained by PPS after passing through the required percentage of funds to charter schools was \$1,784,743.29. In other words, we estimate that PPS spent \$70,801 more on the work of sponsoring charter schools than was retained.”

The committee ran out of time before it could hear all desired testimony on SB 819. No further action on the bill is scheduled.

Senate Bill 588 would amend ORS 338.035. Currently, a school district and a charter school must submit an annual audit. If a school district converts to a charter school, the statute is not clear that the conversion would require only one audit, which has caused confusion for charter districts.

SB 588 puts in statute the specific requirements of a “single school-school district,” also called a charter district, and specifies it could be considered a single legal entity for audit purposes. Specifically, the charter district would be a legal entity and only be required to submit one audit if:

- All of the members of the school district board are voting members of the public charter school governing body;
- The school district and the public charter school share employees; and
- The school district and the public charter school share assets and liabilities.

OSBA drafted the bill to help clarify the statute. OSBA Legislative Services Specialist Lori Sattenspiel testified in favor of the bill saying, “We thought we had fixed this problem in the 2013 session. However, auditors working with these charter districts still needed additional clarification and that is what the bill does.”

The committee heard the bill, completed a work session, and SB 588 now moves to the Senate floor. Contact Lori Sattenspiel (lsattenspiel@osba.org) for more information.

View SB 819:

www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Legislative/BillTracking.aspx?s=15&t=&r=&q=sb 0819&c=50&key=SB 08190&ptadd=: SB 819 Details

View SB 588:

www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Legislative/BillTracking.aspx?s=15&t=&r=&q=sb 0588&c=50&key=SB 05880&ptadd=: SB 588 Details

Questions about legislative issues?

Contact the OSBA Legislative Services Team:
800-578-6722 or 503-588-2800

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Contact your legislator

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www.oregonlegislature.gov/FindYourLegislator/leg-districts.html

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