

OSBA Legislative Highlights



the Promise
OF OREGON



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OSBA team hits the road to attend legislative receptions statewide

By Richard Donovan, legislative specialist
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The OSBA legislative team has been traveling around Oregon to attend legislative receptions and listen to community concerns.

Legislative receptions give parents, educators and other members of the community a chance to discuss issues with local legislators in a relaxed and informal setting. OSBA Executive Director Jim Green, Interim Director of Legislative Services Lori Sattenspiel, and Legislative Services Specialist Richard Donovan attended several forums this past week and joined in the conversations.

First was the Central Oregon K-12 Legislative Forum on Jan. 18, held at the High Desert ESD in Redmond. Sen. Tim Knopp (R- Bend), Rep. Gene Whisnant (R-Sunriver) and Rep. Mike McLane (R-Powell Butte) attended. Sen. Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day) and Rep. John Huffman (R-The Dalles) joined by phone.

The conversation focused largely on the impending legislative session, specifically on anticipated budget negotiations. All legislators agreed they expect this session will be difficult. The state faces at least a \$1.8 billion shortfall to fund at current service levels,



Discussion at the Central Oregon K-12 Legislative Forum in Redmond on Jan. 18 focused on anticipated budget negotiations during the upcoming legislative session.



Legislators at the Jan. 24 Eastern Oregon Education Forum in John Day expressed concern that the upcoming session will be challenging.

and the Republican members expect contentious negotiations with the Democratic majority around revenue and Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) reform.

Ferrioli was clear, saying, "PERS reform isn't optional."

McLane agreed, saying he was "ready to make a deal for the greater good" but that deal had to include PERS reform and other cost-control mechanisms. All members also agreed they wanted to see the State School Fund allocation be at least \$8.4 billion and that funding for rural schools and communities would continue to be a priority.

The Oregon Association of School Business Officials has estimated that the state needs to spend at least \$8.4 billion to maintain current service levels. Gov. Kate Brown's budget proposes \$8.0 billion for K-12 education. The legislative co-chairs' budget framework offers even less, \$7.8 billion.

The Eastern Oregon Education Forum at Grant Union Junior/Senior High School in John Day followed on Jan. 24. Ferrioli, Rep. Greg Barreto (R-Pendleton) and Rep. Cliff Bentz (R-Ontario) attended.

The assembled legislators all expressed concern that the upcoming session was going to be contentious, saying that generally the Republicans in both the House and Senate chambers were willing to discuss new revenue sources but that any discussions about revenue had to be paired with specific cost-control proposals.

Bentz discussed the dire need for "bending the cost curve."

Ferrioli talked about the need for specific policy proposals from the Governor, Senate president and speaker of the House. “We need a transportation package ... a PERS reform package ... we need solutions.”

Last on the tour was the regional education legislative meeting hosted by Linn Benton Lincoln ESD on Jan. 25. Sen. Arnie Roblan (D-Coos Bay), Sen. Lee Beyer (D-Springfield), Rep. Phil Barnhart (D-Eugene) and Rep. Dan Rayfield (D-Corvallis) attended the forum. Discussion was lively.

Attendees included a number of school board members and administrators from the region, who wasted no time in asking the legislators about plans to address PERS liability, the projected State School Fund shortfall, and potential for revenue reform. The legislators expressed concern that, due to the restrictions around enacting new tax laws and the potential for ballot referral, they could have real trouble getting adequate funding for the various costs anticipated in the next biennium. The legislators also expressed concern that the upcoming session was going to be challenging.

“Right now we’re in Oregon’s best economy since World War II,” Beyer said, “and the worst budget in that time.” He said that is the basic reason he “expects a hard session.”

Receptions hosted by both Washington County and Clackamas County school board members were canceled by ice and snow. The OSBA team hopes the meetings can be rescheduled and looks forward to attending future meetings.



Ron Gallinat (right), Bend-La Pine School Board member, takes the opportunity to meet with Sen. Tim Knopp at the Jan. 18 legislative forum in Redmond.



Rep. Mike McLane (left) speaks with Dr. Doug Nelson, OSBA past president and High Desert ESD board member, during the Redmond forum Jan. 18.

Find out what your legislators are doing

By Richard Donovan, legislative specialist
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Did you know that you can use the Legislature’s e-subscribe notifications to receive email notifications from your local legislators? It only takes a few minutes to sign up. Here’s how to do it:

- Go to the following link:
<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ORLEG/s/subscriber/new>
- Enter your email address and hit “Submit.” (You may be asked to confirm your email address by entering it a second time.)
- Indicate how often you would like to receive notifications. OSBA recommends “immediately” receiving updates.
- You can also enter an optional password for increased security.
- On the next screen, select the updates you would like to receive. You can select legislators under the “Member News and Press Releases” section. Another important topic of interest: under “General Legislative” is the “Legislative News and Press Releases” section.
- One note: You can sign up for a lot of notifications, but OSBA recommends selecting your local legislators only and a few categories. During session, hundreds of emails go out every day to these notification lists, so choosing only a few at first is probably the best course of action. If you want more information, you can always come back and sign up for more. You can also click off the boxes if you’re getting too many notifications or notifications you don’t think are helpful.
- After you have selected the notifications you are interested in, hit “Submit,” then on the next page hit “Finish.” You’re subscribed!

Advocacy Institute brings Oregon perspective to D.C.

By Lori Sattenspiel, interim director of legislative services
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School board members are heading to Washington, D.C., this weekend to tell the Oregon story. Of course, there isn't just one Oregon story. Every district is unique, with different priorities and challenges. The message for secure rural schools funding sounds different in Douglas County than in Multnomah County.

Members of the OSBA Board of Directors and Legislative Policy Committee will join them to help them tell their stories. We will meet with Oregon's congressional delegation as part of the National School Boards Association's 2017 Advocacy Institute, which runs Jan. 29-31. Board members will have the opportunity to share their districts' triumphs and challenges with Oregon's congressional delegation.

This year's Advocacy Institute includes two days of workshops designed to help school board members from around the nation understand the policy and political climate related to K-12 issues in Congress. Our Advocacy Institute attendees will meet with the Oregon delegation and other members of Congress and ask them to continue using congressional oversight authority to ensure the promise of restoring state and local governance and flexibility in the administration of federal programs.

With the change in presidents, there is tremendous transition going on in and around education. The Donald Trump administration has the potential to change the direction of education policy that the Barack Obama administration had been working on.

Of particular interest will be how this administration plans to move forward with continued implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which replaced the No Child Left Behind Act in December 2015. Oregon is working for added flexibility with ESSA, but so far, there has been nothing specific indicating the president's intentions.

OSBA board members heading to Washington, D.C., for the Advocacy Institute include President **Betty Reynolds** (West Linn-Wilsonville School Board), President-elect **LeeAnn Larsen** (Beaverton SD), Vice President **Tass Morrison** (North Santiam SD), Secretary-treasurer **Don Cruise** (Philomath SD), Past President **Doug Nelson** (High Desert ESD), **Cheri Helt** (Bend-LaPine SD), **Kris Howatt** (Gresham-Barlow SD), **Hank Perry** (Douglas ESD), and **Maureen Wolf** (Tigard-Tualatin SD). Also attending as members of OSBA's Legislative Policy Committee are **Andrew Bryan** (Baker SD), **Kim Strelchun** (Hillsboro SD) and **Dawn Watson** (Phoenix-Talent SD).

Jim Green, OSBA's executive director, said the occasion gives participants insight into education policy at the federal level.

"It's important for our local school board members to meet with members of Congress to advocate for Oregon students," he said.

More information about the NSBA Advocacy Institute program can be found on the NSBA website:
www.nsba.org/EVENTS/ADVOCACY-INSTITUTE

Save the date!



Agenda and registration details coming soon