

OSBA Legislative Highlights



the Promise
OF OREGON

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Budget town halls need to hear voices for education spending

By Richard Donovan, legislative specialist
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The Legislature's Joint Ways and Means Committee has announced the final dates and locations for town hall meetings, creating an opportunity for school board members statewide.

"The upcoming budget-focused town halls are a chance for every school board member to tell legislators that they need to fully fund K-12 education in Oregon," said OSBA Interim Director of Legislative Services Lori Sattenspiel.

A \$1.8 billion shortfall in the state budget means tough decisions will have to be made, whether that's figuring out how to raise tax revenue or picking which programs and departments get the ax.

The committee co-chairs, Sen. Richard Devlin and Rep. Nancy Nathanson, released a budget framework (www.oregonlegislature.gov/lfo/Documents/2017%20Co-Chair%20Document.pdf) Jan. 19 to begin the discussion. That budget allots \$7.8 billion to K-12 education. School business officials have calculated that schools need \$8.4 billion to maintain current service, and the Oregon Rising campaign (Oregon-rising.org) is focusing efforts on ensuring that funding does not dip below that level.

"Allocating \$7.8 billion to the State School Fund means a cuts budget for almost every district in the state," Sattenspiel said. "Legislators need to hear that from school board members. They need to hear that Oregon can't take another cuts budget for the upcoming biennium."

The committee is offering the public a chance to weigh in without having to come to the Capitol. Starting Feb. 10, town halls will be held in seven cities: Salem, Portland, Hermiston, Madras, Ashland, Eugene and Tillamook.

"A \$7.8 billion state school fund allocation will hurt Oregon schools and Oregon students," said OSBA Executive Director Jim Green. "To avoid punishing cuts to district budgets, the conversation about K-12 funding should begin at \$8.4 billion. Legislators need to hear that, and these town meetings are when we can make sure school board member voices are heard."

Members of the 23-person committee will attend each session. Local legislators and officials will likely attend too.

Sign-up sheets before the meetings will include a request for topic, and each speaker gets three minutes. The chairperson will mostly call people in order, but if several speakers address the same topic, the chairperson may skip ahead to include more issues.

"If you want to testify, the best thing to do is to get there early," said Lynn Buchanan, administrative support for the Legislative Fiscal Office.

Testimony can also be submitted by email at waysandmeans.budget@oregonlegislature.gov.

The town hall schedule

Feb. 10 – Salem

5-7 p.m.
Hearing Room F
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE

Feb. 11 – Portland

12-2 p.m.
Main Mall, Amo DeBernardis CC Building
PCC, Sylvania campus
12000 SW 49th Avenue

Feb. 17 – Hermiston

5-7 p.m.
Main Commons
Hermiston High School
600 S First Street

Feb. 18 – Madras

1-3 p.m.
Performing Arts Center
Madras High School
390 SE 10th Street

Feb. 24 – Ashland

5-7 p.m.
Rogue River Room
Southern Oregon University
1250 Siskiyou Blvd.

Feb. 25 – Eugene

1-3 p.m.
Rooms 308-309 Building 17 (The Forum)
Lane Community College
4000 E 30th Avenue

March 3 – Tillamook

6-8 p.m.
Officer's Mess
Port of Tillamook Bay
6825 Officers Row

School board members deliver Oregon message to Congress

By Lori Sattenspiel, interim director of legislative services
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Members of the OSBA board of directors and legislative policy committee visited Washington, D.C., this week to meet with Oregon's congressional delegation as part of the National School Boards Association's 2017 Advocacy Institute.



OSBA members visit with U.S. Rep. Kurt Schrader (center) on Capitol Hill. (From left: Dr. Doug Nelson, Tass Morrison, Betty Reynolds and Andrew Bryan)

OSBA members covered a broad range of important issues in meetings held Jan. 31. Members urged Oregon's senators and representatives to continue refining the Every Student Succeeds Act while also adding flexibility for the state and local school districts. Also on members' minds was finding a long-term solution to ensure that county timber payments continue to support public schools. Additionally, members expressed concerns about flexibility for districts as they consider changes to the Child Nutrition Act and the need for increased funding for programs that help children living in poverty (Title I) and children with special education needs (IDEA).

The Advocacy Institute included two days of workshops to help more than 600 school board members from around the nation understand the policy and political climate related to K-12 education issues in Congress. Attendees heard informative and passionate keynote addresses from high-ranking members of Congress, including Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.), chair of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and Rep. Bobby Scott (D-Va.) and Rep. Tim Walberg (R-MI), both members of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Doris Kearns Goodwin, presidential historian, author and commentator on CNN and "Meet the Press," gripped attendees with an hour of inspiring comments on the history of several former presidents. She compared former

presidents' challenges before taking office through their time in the White House to the current administration's lead-up to taking office. She then challenged the new administration to step up to the plate.

A common theme surfaced as each speaker and panel encouraged the attendees to advocate on behalf of their students. It is vitally important for our elected officials in Congress to hear from school board members about all the challenges our students and schools are facing. Face-to-face meetings with our congressional delegation in Washington, D.C., are critical to their understanding of what is happening back home in schools.

A similar underlying theme surfaced during the day on Capitol Hill. Congressional members appreciated the important role that locally elected school board members play in determining how children in their communities are educated. Oregon has a strong tradition of board members leading at the district level that contrasts with the growing role the federal government is asserting over education through increased mandates and conditions for federal funding. OSBA's delegation made it clear: Our districts need federal mandate relief and flexibility so scarce resources can be focused on increasing student achievement.

OSBA board members in Washington, D.C., for NSBA's Advocacy Institute included President **Betty Reynolds** (West Linn-Wilsonville SD), President-elect **LeeAnn Larsen** (Beaverton SD), Past President **Dr. Doug Nelson** (High Desert ESD), Vice President **Tass Morrison** (North Santiam SD), Secretary-treasurer **Don Cruise** (Philomath SD), **Maureen Wolf** (Tigard-Tualatin SD), **Kris Howatt** (Gresham-Barlow SD), **Cheri Helt** (Bend-La Pine SD) and **Hank Perry** (Douglas ESD). OSBA legislative policy committee members included **Andrew Bryan** (Baker SD), **Kim Strelchun** (Hillsboro SD) and **Dawn Watson** (Phoenix-Talent SD).



The OSBA board of directors and legislative policy committee spent time in the U.S. Capitol to meet with the Oregon congressional delegation and other members of Congress.

The Week Ahead

By Jake Arnold, communications and news specialist
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Feb. 6, 3 p.m. House Education Committee holds public hearing on improving achievement for agricultural education students ([HB 2382](#)), establishing Future Business Leaders Program ([HB 2548](#)) and expanding types of entities that can receive funding for activities related to STEM and CTE programs ([HB 2258](#)). Committee holds a work session on allowing the Department of Education to waive certain fees for textbook publishers and suppliers ([HB 2257](#)).

Feb. 7, 3 p.m. Senate Education Committee holds public hearing on permitting the merger of community colleges and public universities ([SB 8](#)), on requiring colleges and universities to provide credit to students for certain grades on advanced placement tests ([SB 207](#)) and on identifying and communicating backpack safety for schools ([SJR 6](#) and [SB 216](#)).

Feb. 8, 3 p.m. House Education Committee holds informational meeting on Ballot Measure 98, followed by a public hearing on issues related to guidance counseling and the Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Framework ([HB 2528](#), [HB 2529](#), [HB 2530](#) and [HB 2536](#)).

Feb. 9, 3 p.m. Betty Reynolds, a public member of attorney general's Public Records Law Reform Task Force and president of OSBA, testifies before House Committee on Rules about public records.

Feb. 9, 3 p.m. House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development holds public hearing on removing some requirements for veterans to receive a high school diploma ([HB 2220](#)) and prioritizing Oregon Promise grants for Oregon National Guard members ([HB 2488](#)).

Feb. 9, 3 p.m. Senate Education Committee holds public hearing on developing a curriculum related to the Native American experience in Oregon ([SB 13](#)), establishing an Educator Advancement Council ([SB 182](#)) and establishing an Early Indicator and Intervention System ([SB 183](#)).

Feb. 10, 5 p.m. Members of the Joint Ways and Means Committee attend budget-focused town hall at Capitol.

Items may be added to committee agendas during the week. The Oregon Legislature keeps an updated page of committee agendas at:

olis.leg.state.or.us/LIZ/Committees/Meeting/List

Make your voice heard in Salem

Now is the time to urge your legislators to invest in public education.

OSBA and the Confederation of School Administrators (COSA) will host a Legislative Day in Salem on March 13 to advocate for reinvestment in public education that will support student achievement. Receive training, then meet with your legislators to discuss education priorities and share stories from your organization's perspective.

Registration information is on the OSBA website:
www.osba.org/Calendar/Events/Legislative_Day-2017.aspx



Contact your legislator

Find your legislators' contact information on the Oregon Legislature's website:

- House – www.oregonlegislature.gov/house
- Senate – www.oregonlegislature.gov/senate

To contact your legislator by phone, call the Capitol Switchboard at 1-800-332-2313.