



OSBA EVENTS

www.osba.org

Labor and Employment

Regional Conferences

February 7 – The Dalles

February 8 – Redmond

February 8 – Roseburg

February 9 – Medford

February 10 – Hillsboro

February 10 – La Grande

OSBA/COSA Legislative Day

February 21, 2011 – Salem

Summer Board Conference

July 15-17, 2011 – Bend

OSBA Labor & Employment Conference

February 7-10, 2011, in six locations across the state

Labor and employment issues all come down to allocating resources efficiently and effectively to achieve the best results for students.

OSBA recognizes your need for timely and cost-effective bargaining resources so, this year, our labor and employment staff is conducting six regional conferences with hands-on and practical approaches to the hottest labor topics.

Save on travel and hotel expenses and get the critical information you need.

See the list of events above for dates and locations. Register online at www.osba.org/LE2011.



Boards meeting with area legislators make case for education priorities



Many school boards have met with their legislators, community education advocates and other education coalition partners to work on building the relationships and understanding that could benefit schools as education issues come up in the 2011 Legislative session. OSBA's Legislative and Public Affairs staff has participated in several of these local meetings to assist local boards in building advocacy skills and providing background information on issues.

Tricia Yates, associate executive director for Legislative and Public Affairs, recently attended a meeting with the Springfield School Board that brought together a roomful of education stakeholders and legislators. "I couldn't have been more impressed with the relationships the board is building. This is exactly the kind of advocacy we have focused on for the last few years at OSBA. Strong grassroots support for education and informed board members who can articulate the needs in their schools

have a real impact in Salem," she says.

A sampling of the boards who have been active in local advocacy efforts over the past several months include Winston-Dillard, Eugene, Springfield, Lake Oswego, Warrenton-Hammond, Klamath County and boards from several neighboring districts working together in Multnomah County and North Marion County. We encourage all board members to meet with their legislators and to involve as many community partners in the dialog as possible.

Coming to Salem for the OSBA/COSA Legislative Day on February 21 to learn more about what is happening at the Legislature and meet with your representatives is a great opportunity to lend your voice for public education. Find out more at www.osba.org/legday.

January is School Board Recognition Month. Thank you, members, for all you do to support public education.

CURRENT ISSUES:

Preparing for Common Core Standards

In a span of less than two years, 41 states have signed on to an effort to adopt national standards in math and language arts – a development that has big implications for how those subjects are taught and assessed.

The Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI), led by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, aims at having "fewer, clearer, [and] higher" standards that will enable all high school students to succeed in postsecondary education and the workplace and help America compete in the growing global economy. In both math and language arts, the standards ask students to do more analysis and critical thinking than currently required by many state tests.

The initiative was adopted by Oregon's

State Board of Education last October. To prepare, local boards should be participating in discussions with the Oregon Department of Education and setting aside time to review CCSS and its implications. Involve parents, teachers and administrators in discussions on the subject, reach out to businesses and communities for their input and develop partnerships with local colleges and universities to work on professional development and curriculum alignment.

A recent report from the National School Boards Association's Center on Education Policy finds most states say they will not be able to fully implement the standards until 2013 or later – still a relatively short time-frame for such a far-reaching initiative.

According to the Oregon Department
Continued on page 2

PRESIDENT'S POST

Opportunity can be found midst crisis



David Beeson
OSBA president

Dear OSBA members,

There's a renewal going on. I can see it in the occasional sunny day and the faster pace of work on my ranch near Silverton. I also see it in my growing appointment calendar as I start my second term as your OSBA president.

I am honored to be the first two-term president of our association, and I am excited about the coming year. We certainly face challenges, but I believe that adversity often presents opportunity.

Throughout its history, OSBA has been a tireless advocate for school boards at the Capitol. In the past two decades, much of that work has focused on providing stable and adequate funding for education. In our era, as a result of property tax limitations, the state now provides the lion's share of school funding. Adequate – and stable – funding is a critical issue for school board members who see firsthand the damage to programs and services resulting from sudden swings in state support.

While Oregon's current funding crisis threatens more "whipsaw" funding to come, it also provides an opportunity for school board members and other education advocates. In my view, this may be the ideal time to renew the push for a new education funding mechanism, or for a new stabilization fund to mitigate the extreme ups and downs.

One of the highest responsibilities of any society is the education of its citizens, and we must find a way to provide the resources necessary for this task. During my childhood, the small town of Lakeview provided me with the finest teachers, strongest programs and best facilities. I want our state to provide that same level of service and opportunity to all generations of Oregon students.

OSBA's previous president, Beth Gerot, stressed the vital role and responsibility of local school governance in improving student achievement. This is an enormous challenge. We struggle with unfunded achievement mandates from various levels of government and many students who struggle in school because of disabilities, lack of family support, poverty, or historic barriers of race or ethnicity. We can't let

these obstacles stand in our way.

With spring just over the horizon, let us unite, renew and reaffirm two of our highest and oldest priorities: stable and adequate funding for the investment in educating our people, and assuring high levels of learning and achievement for every Oregon student.

Sincerely,

David Beeson, OSBA President

Common core – continued from page 1

of Education, students may begin seeing the new standards as soon as the 2011-12 school year. Along with 30 other states, Oregon is a member of the SMARTER Balanced Assessment consortium which is developing the assessments needed to test students on the new standards. These assessments are anticipated to be ready as early as the 2013-14 school year.

Find additional information on CCSS at www.corestandards.org/the-standards and about implementation of the new standards at www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2860. ODE invites comments and questions via email odecommonstandards@state.or.us.

OSBA/COSA Legislative Day

Keep education front & center!

Lend your voice for schools! Meet with your legislators
to discuss education priorities in an energy-packed day.

February 21, 2011 – 8 a.m.-3 p.m., Salem

The cost is \$50 per person and includes breakfast and lunch.

Register online at www.osba.org/legday.

OLN institute: focusing on equity

The Oregon Leadership Network 2010 Fall Leadership Institute was held in Portland on December 10. Several OSBA board members and the districts they serve have been active in OLN. School board members who participated in the conference include **Karen Cunningham** from Beaverton SD, **Trudy Sargent** from Portland Public Schools and **Anna Travera-Weller** from Forest Grove SD.

The roots of the Oregon Leadership Network go back to 2000 and efforts to improve student achievement by enhancing the quality of school and district leadership. The Wallace Foundation provided funding and in 2004, seven school districts were selected as models for school and district leadership development. Currently, OLN's 20 member districts serve almost 50 percent of Oregon's students, teachers and administrators.

Wallace Foundation support sunset in 2010 and the Department of Education and Oregon education organizations, including OSBA, stepped up to keep the work moving forward. Each participating district also contributes based on student enrollment.

OLN has developed pre-service preparation programs for teachers, mentoring and coaching for administrators and sustained

leadership development strategies. The goal is to put an end to the achievement gap in Oregon by increasing the cultural competence of school leaders and linking them directly to research, best practices and a strong peer network.

Joe Wehrli, OSBA associate executive director for Board Development and Policy Services, attended the conference and agrees with the keynote speaker, Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, from Stanford University, who discussed the overwhelming role effective teaching has in closing the achievement gap and *how school leadership can support teachers*. Research shows student learning gains are related more to the strength, preparation and experience of teachers than to race and parent education combined.

In addition to the racial/socio-economic based achievement gap, Darling-Hammond identified a gap between U.S. students and those in other high-achieving nations and points out that America's commitment to equity will determine our nation's future.

Link to Darling-Hammond's presentation at <http://oln.educationnorthwest.org/event/242/resources> or contact Joe Wehrli, jwehrli@osba.org, 503-588-2800 or 800-578-6722, for more information.

SUCCESS STORIES from Oregon schools

St. Helens raises student awareness

The St. Helens School district is increasing understanding and acceptance of diverse cultures and differing abilities by encouraging student-led projects to enlighten their peers.

This year, 11th grader Annika Barnett (below) painted a mural at the high school to raise autism awareness. Last year she participated in an elective class called Exceptional Child which focused on autism. She is also a member of the SHINE club (Students Helping Inspire Nonjudgmental Equality) which helps students meet and befriend students with differing abilities.



St. Helens Middle School created a “pledge not to bully” day and dedicated a wall for students to write public pledges. By the end of the day, the wall was completely covered and students had discussed what constitutes bullying and its consequences in class.

In conjunction with National Mix-It-Up Day last November, middle school students were randomly assigned to sit at lunch tables where they did not know the person sitting next to them. The idea was to encourage kids to cross barriers and meet students outside their usual circle of friends. Classroom activities included exercises to define clichés and discuss stereotypes.

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KEEPING YOU IN THE LOOP

How far can education dollars stretch?

Dear OSBA members,

When cost increases to the state budget are considered, the Legislature will have to cut spending by \$3.5 billion for 2011-13. That translates into a cut of more than \$1 billion for K-12 schools. The governor will release his budget next week, and the Legislature begins its work in earnest starting February 1. But as we all know, it will be up to school boards to find most of the savings.

Balancing a local budget will require unprecedented creativity at a time when expectations for student achievement are expanding. For some help in unlocking your creative juices, check out a new book titled *Stretching the School Dollar*. It provides insights about how to best maintain the educational experience with even fewer resources.

Published in September by Harvard Education Press, *Stretching the School Dollar* is provocative. Among the suggestions:

- Be skeptical of spending that is designed just to reduce class size.
- Invest in core academics before electives and extracurricular activities.
- Change state laws and contract provisions that drive up the cost of teachers.
- Make greater use of technology to expand the reach of strong teachers and

provide better information about student performance.

The book is a collection of articles assembled by two executives from two conservative think-tanks, the American Enterprise Institute and the Hoover Institution. Not surprisingly, the book has attracted some partisan critiques. That’s probably inevitable for any worthwhile writing these days. On the other hand, studying challenging ideas, with suggestions for implementation attached, is good preparation for the task ahead.

You can find more information about the book online at <http://www.hepg.org>. Additional learning opportunities are available on OSBA’s website, in our workshops and through our Leadership Institute. I invite you to explore these resources to strengthen your position as a board member on the financial front line.

Sincerely,

Kevin McCann, OSBA executive director



Kevin McCann
OSBA executive director

BEST PRACTICES: *Limiting liability*

ADA definition of service animal changes



Recent changes to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) revised the legal definition of a service animal. Now, only dogs that have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability are considered service animals. Other species of animals are not service animals under Title II.

Dogs that are not trained to perform tasks that mitigate the effects of a disability, i.e., dogs used for emotional support, are not service animals. The work or tasks the dog performs must be directly related to the handler’s disabilities; providing comfort or companionship are not recognized tasks.

Oregon law still defines “assistance ani-

mal” as any animal trained to assist a person with a *physical impairment* in one or more *daily life activities*.

Other factors may determine whether an assistance animal must be allowed in a school or classroom. If the animal is necessary to provide a student a free and appropriate education (FAPE) under IDEA or Section 504, it must be allowed. The individual education plan (IEP) or Section 504 team should make this decision in accordance with law. Consulting legal counsel before adding a service animal to an IEP or 504 plan is highly recommended.

For more information on service animals in schools, PACE attorneys have prepared a series of questions and answers which are online at pace.osba.org. For legal assistance, contact Tom Lenox, PACE pre-loss attorney, 503-588-2800, tlenox@osba.org.



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Recommended Reading

Book presents practical tips for boards

The Secrets of School Board Success: Practical Tips for Board Members, by Lynn Hamilton, is full of lessons gleaned from 15 years serving on the school board in North Little Rock, Arkansas. Hamilton uses his experiences to provide a guide to school governance and practical recommendations for boards.

When Hamilton joined the school board, he remembers an unproductive board that was unable to reach consensus and was often criticized in the local news. Years later, the board had transformed into a cohesive unit working for the good of the schools – and was occasionally criticized in the newspaper for not having enough debate. Hamilton learned that effective boards spend time building positive relationships – with each other, with the superintendent and other administrators and with the community.

Board members are mandated a certain amount of formal authority over a school district, but their true impact in helping students succeed comes from the informal

authority gained by inspiring respect and trust. Much of the book focuses on building the relationships that foster respect and trust – from the simple thank you or apology, to the support that can help create a successful superintendent.

Hamilton also discusses the importance of continual growth and learning. Education is not static; what is considered best practice today is not necessarily the same as it was 10 years ago. Laws, regulations, expectations and resources change. Board members need to read widely and participate broadly in opportunities to learn.

The second half of Hamilton’s book is an account of his progression as a board member, from the trials and tribulations of replacing a superintendent, to resolving conflicts with the teacher’s union and, finally, deciding to step down from the board.

You can order *The Secrets of School Board Success* from amazon.com or find it at your bookstore.

New OSBA board members welcomed

At their meeting in January, five newly-elected board members plus one new appointment to the board were welcomed and, as part of their orientation, each was assigned an experienced member of the board as a mentor.

Tim Cook (Centennial SD), **Karen Cunningham** (Beaverton SD), **Samuel Lee** (Winston-Dillard SD), **Craig Prewitt** (Phoenix-Talent SD) and **James Woods** (Parkrose SD) were all newly elected in December. The board appointed **Greg Jackle** (John Day SD) to fill a vacant seat for the Eastern Region, Position 1.

One vacant position still remains for the Central Region which will be filled at the next board meeting scheduled for April.

Also on the board’s agenda were presentations from the Chalkboard Project and the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators on their legislative goals and a discussion with Tony Albert from the Oregon Department of Education on common core achievement standards for Oregon students.

