



OSBA EVENTS

www.osba.org

Spring Legislative Update WEBINARS

Wednesday, March 30 – 8:30-9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, May 18 – 8:30-9:30 a.m.

Summer Board Conference

July 15-17, 2011 – Bend

Annual Convention

November 10-13, 2011

Portland

Classified Employees Week

March 7-11, 2011



OSBA members lobbied in D.C.

Oregon school board members met with the state's Congressional delegation in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 8, to advocate for education priorities. Board members included **David Beeson**, Silver Falls; **Beth Gerot**, Eugene; **Kris Howatt**, Gresham-Barlow; **Dave Krumbein**, Pendleton; **Patti McLeod**, Hillsboro; and **Laurie Adams**, Springfield.

Their message to Congress and a video is [online](http://www.osba.org/news) at www.osba.org/news – "Video – Board members talk funding."



PRESIDENT'S POST

Congress must act to help Oregon schools

Dear members:

As education leaders, Oregon school board members are paying close attention to events at our state Capitol. But we also need to keep an eye on that other Capitol, the one in Washington, D.C. Big things are brewing there.

I was one of six board members who traveled to Washington earlier this month to advocate for public education with the Oregon Congressional delegation. OSBA arranged our meetings and underwrote our trip as part of a National School Boards Association conference. Based on my Washington experiences, I believe there are three aspects of federal education policy which deserve our closest attention. All are up for debate this year.

One issue involves what I'll call tough-love for schools. Nine years of this, under the policy called No Child Left Behind, isn't working. Schools are labeled failures based on the performance of different groups of students – this year's third-graders compared with last year's, for example. Once labeled, schools face stigma and penalties that drive motivated families away and leave fewer resources to help struggling kids.

What we need is a testing system that measures the growth of each student and a funding system that uses rewards, not penalties, to boost performance. We need more time for real teaching, not excessive and redundant testing, if federal policy is going to be serious about increasing student achievement.

Another issue that could affect our schools is competition. The current administration wants more federal funding for education to be competitive. This might encourage innovation, but few Oregon school districts have the wherewithal to pursue competitive federal funding. Moreover, this type of competition flies in the face of long held concepts of education equity.

Like others across our nation, Oregon districts need a stable base of federal funding tied to an objective formula such as enrollment. Competitive education funds should come from another account, not be taken away from schools that already are strapped for cash.

A third Washington issue that needs our attention is payments to counties to offset the loss of harvests on federal timberland. These payments help maintain roads and fund schools in rural America. In the 2010 fiscal year, 33 (out of 36) Oregon counties received \$200 million in these so-called timber payments. However, unless Congress acts, this critical funding stream will run dry.

The impact of this loss will be painful for Oregon. Poverty rates are high in timber country. Federal payments help rural schools provide services necessary to help lift children out of the poverty cycle and into prosperity, and county support services are vital to schools and communities.

We need to keep at least one eye on what's happening inside the Beltway. Maintain contact with our Congressional delegation and encourage them to do the right thing for Oregon youngsters on these three major issues.

Sincerely,

David Beeson
OSBA president



David Beeson
OSBA president

Join in interactive legislative updates

OSBA's Legislative and Public Affairs team has scheduled webinars to update you on the current legislative session. These replace the Spring regional meetings we have conducted in past years. We are trying to provide you with the information you need and find ways to reduce costs so that everyone can participate.

WEBINAR SCHEDULE

Wednesday, March 30 – 8:30-9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, May 18 – 8:30-9:30 a.m.

In each session you will hear first hand from your OSBA team at the Capitol. You

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KEEPING YOU IN THE LOOP

Expectations are high for Kitzhaber's Education Investment Team



Kevin McCann
OSBA executive
director

Dear members,

This week, Governor Kitzhaber announced the members of his Education Investment Team which includes teachers, superintendents, business leaders, key education advocates – and one current and one former school board member. Nori

Juba, managing partner of Bend Capital Partners, is a board member for the Bend-La Pine SD and Ron Saxton, executive vice-president of Jeld-Wen and former candidate for governor, served several years on the school board in Portland. The governor will chair the team which is a key part of his goal of providing performance-based education from early childhood through college.

As outlined by the governor (www.oregon.gov/Gov/docs/executive_orders/eo_1102.pdf), the team's assignment will be the creation of a new investment and budget process for education in Oregon. Early Learning Design and Performance-based Budget Design working groups will develop key issues and report to the team by May 31, 2011. Those reports will then be vetted by

the public and stakeholder groups prior to the February 2012 legislative session.

At the OSBA/COSA joint legislative conference, Feb. 21, Kitzhaber's education policy advisor, Nancy Golden, spoke to a crowd of about 100 school board members and superintendents. Golden, the superintendent of Springfield Public Schools, outlined the governor's plans for an education system that focuses on key "leverage points," including first, second, ninth and twelfth grades. Golden also said the state needs to expand online learning options.

Meanwhile, momentum is building in Congress to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (recently known as No Child Left Behind) with significant modifications. The administration wants punitive components of the law changed to provide additional resources to the lowest performing schools and reward success. OSBA will keep you informed and advocate for Oregon as this process moves forward.

Sincerely,

Kevin McCann, OSBA executive director

Leadership class met with senators

OSBA's Leadership Oregon class met with Senator Suzanne Bonamici (D-Beaverton) and Senator Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day) as part of their advocacy training.

Both senators addressed the tough realities of state revenues and stressed the important role school board members and other education advocates play in explaining district concerns to legislators. Board members need to talk to representatives from across the state and communicate with their communities to counter misconceptions about public education and funding.



Sen. Suzanne
Bonamici

OSBA's Leadership Institute has some precious metals for nearly 150 school board members. These are the folks who are just one or two courses away from earning their Bronze Awards for leadership training.

There are several ways to complete the missing coursework. OSBA's Online Learning Center offers most of the Bronze level courses. This July, OSBA's Summer Board Conference will offer all the Bronze level courses and several Silver and Gold level courses as well.

If you have questions about what courses you may be lacking, or other alternatives such as in-district workshops that will satisfy requirements, contact Steve Lamb, slamb@osba.org, or Jennifer Saldivar, jsaldivar@osba.org, or call 800-578-6722 or 503-588-2800.

The Leadership Institute bases individual learning requirements on established best practices and research from the latest Light-house Project. This initiative has identified

Webinars – continued from page 1

can ask questions directly while online so you get the answers you need in real-time. Registration information will be in next month's newsletter.

Key issues are taking shape that will impact schools in the next biennium. First and foremost, of course, is the budget – and we are all waiting to find out how much money will be available for schools and where we will have to make cuts. A number of finance bills are under consideration that will also affect the bottom line for districts, including:

- Revisions to relationships between ESDs and districts that are designed to give more discretion to the district in contracting services
- Kicker reform that could help stabilize funding in the future
- Changes in public contracting law
- Revisions in calculations of transportation grants
- Changes to State School Fund distributions

There are bills on the horizon that will affect school programs, governance and operations, as well as PERS reform discussions, collective bargaining issues and much more.

We will also focus on federal issues that are of great concern for education in Oregon. (See article, page 1.)

Research and training align to improve student achievement

what school boards can do to support student achievement – and what training board members need to be able to do this well.

The Bronze, Silver and Gold achievement levels recognize participation in a learning path that is focused on leading districts, working successfully with superintendents, creating positive learning environments and increasing student success.

For example, one of the best ways for board members to meet the training requirement in data-based decision-making is to arrange an in-district workshop with OSBA staff. "A Systems Approach to Student Achievement" is funded through a grant from the Oregon Department of Education, so there is no cost to the district. Understanding how student performance results can help close the achievement gap is an essential tool for good district leadership. Contact Peggy Holstedt, pholstedt@osba.org, or Rick Stucky, rstucky@osba.org, to arrange training for your board.

USDOE website gives easy access to state and national education data

The U.S. Department of Education launched a new website which provides convenient and transparent access to key education data in one location.

Data is accessed through a “dashboard” that tracks 16 indicators ranging from participation in early childhood education, completion of postsecondary education, teacher education and evaluation, equity in spending and student performance – that can all be sorted by state or for the nation. Data can be viewed in several ways and levels of detail and in comparison to other states. Reports can be downloaded for analysis and comparison with our own state education indicators.

According to the USDOE introduction, the Education Dashboard is “meant to spur and inform conversations about how to improve educational results . . . among families, teachers, administrators, policy-

makers, the business community and other stakeholders.”

President Obama has set a goal for the nation of having the highest proportion of college graduates in the world. The Dashboard presents information in four areas that are critical to achieving the President’s goal and tracks progress in each of these areas in the nation’s public schools.

This is a powerful tool for examining our education system and we recommend you take some time to explore the site. As national education reforms like Common Core State Standards go into effect, this kind of access to information will be invaluable.

Read more about the Dashboard (<http://dashboard.ed.gov/about.aspx>), explore the data (<http://dashboard.ed.gov/dashboard.aspx>), and use it in your discussions of how to improve Oregon’s schools.

OSBA is soliciting convention workshops

Mark your calendars and plan to participate in OSBA’s 65th Annual Convention, November 11-13, in Portland. On Friday and Saturday, the convention will feature two full days of informative and stimulating workshops for board members and superintendents.

OSBA is soliciting workshops focusing on successful programs in your district and we invite you to submit your proposals online now.

Topics of particular interest include those centered on the successful implementation of technology in schools, ESDs and community colleges, such as:

- Interactive technologies in curriculum and instruction
- Using technology for higher student achievement
- Technology in the boardroom
- Technology and special needs students
- Virtual education in Oregon schools
- Social media and community engagement

We are also looking for non-technology themed topics as well, particularly programs that have been successful in advancing student achievement and promoting equity in education.

This year’s Convention format provides for both 75-minute and 30-minute workshop presentations. Please contact Steve Lamb at slamb@osba.org or 800-578-6722 if you have questions.

Proposals can be submitted online at www.osba.org/AC. The deadline for submissions is May 13, 2011.

Budget committee prep

OSBA provides customized, in-district training for budget committees. This will be a difficult year to manage budgets and it is essential for budget committees, boards and superintendents to understand the responsibilities and authority of the budget committee. For information and to schedule a training session, contact Betsy Miller-Jones, bmillerjones@osba.org.

OSBA’s publication, *The Budget Committee Handbook*, is currently in the final stages of being revised and should be available by mid-March. It is a concise and indispensable guide to the work of budget committees. To order, go to www.osba.org/pubs or contact Diane Efseaff, defseaff@osba.org. Cost: \$2.50 each plus shipping.

BEST PRACTICES: *Limiting liability*

BOLI/civil rights complaints on the rise



In the past few months, PACE pre-loss attorneys have received a number of calls relating to complaints of gender discrimination, retaliation, civil rights violations and special education issues. In the midst of uncertainties about employment stability, these issues signal increased stress in the workplace.

PACE coverage includes free legal consultation and help with response to complaints. As a PACE member, you are entitled to **\$1,000 in free legal consultation per incident**. PACE offers legal help to guide you in situations that could become lawsuits and helps cover defense costs. Call PACE as soon as you receive notice of a complaint. PACE can assist with investigations and follow up to minimize liability and resolve disputes. In situations that may lead to employee discipline or termination, PACE waives the deductible when you consult one of its attorneys *before you take action*.

To help avoid situations that lead to complaints, PACE offers free training for superintendents and managers. To schedule a skill-building session for your district, contact Lisa Freiley, lfreiley@osba.org, 503-588-2800.

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PACE matching funds distributed



Scott Neufeld
PACE loss-control manager

The PACE Partners in Prevention Matching Safety Fund presented \$55,705 in matching grants distributed among 34 school districts, ESDs, community colleges and charter schools.

“We’re pleased we could assist with so many projects that make students and school employees safer – especially when school budgets are so

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Kevin McCann, executive director
Dori Brattain, deputy executive director, editor

Judy Bennett, graphic designer, copywriter
Bill Dixon, copywriter
Diane Efseaff, assistant
Dan Peterson, printing manager



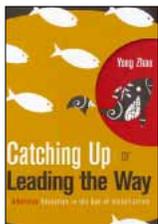
1201 Court St. NE, Ste. 400, Salem, OR 97301
PO Box 1068, Salem, OR 97308
503-588-2800 | 800-578-OSBA | www.osba.org
info@osba.org | facebook.com/osba.org

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Recommended Reading

Catching Up or Leading the Way



Yong Zhao was born in China and is now a professor at the College of Education, Michigan State University. His book, *Catching Up or Leading the Way, American Education in the Age of Globalization*, draws on his firsthand experience as a student in China and as a parent of children attending school in the United States.

Zhao begins with a discussion of the education reforms that have taken place in the U.S. in the last decade, which he sums up as: “1) excellence equals good test scores in math and reading, and 2) standards- and test-based accountability is the tool to achieve such excellence.”

The ultimate goal of the reforms, to close the achievement gap between majority and minority students AND the learning gap between U.S. students and those in other countries, is not being achieved.

Zhao maintains that this so-called learn-

ing gap is largely a myth that has resulted in an increasingly authoritarian national education system. According to Zhao, what have been considered weaknesses in American education are precisely its strengths.

As strengths, he includes diversity, placing value on creative thinking, belief that every child can learn and a conviction that every individual matters. These attributes sharply distinguish American education from its counterparts in China, Korea, Japan, Germany and most of the world.

But Zhao sees these positive aspects of our education system under attack in this country – and increasingly emulated in foreign schools. Globalization and the free movement of people, ideas and goods are helping to level the playing field worldwide.

Our schools must focus on teaching the knowledge that is valued in a global and digital economy. That is much more than the core subjects we are so intent on measuring.

Yong Zhao will be a keynote speaker at the OSBA Convention this November.

Safety funds – *continued from page 3*

strained,” said Scott Neufeld, PACE loss control manager.

The largest grants were for \$2,000 (the maximum) and the smallest came to just over \$500 – for a fireproof storage cabinet. Security topped the list of requests, with 15 districts upgrading or installing security or surveillance cameras in buildings or on buses. Seven districts were making purchases for fall protection such as rubber mats, material for playgrounds, special signage and asphalt pathways. Other safety measures, assistance with replacing an old gas stove and building an ADA compliant ramp complete the list.

Partners in Prevention matching safety funds help fund new safety-related projects for their districts. Routine maintenance to existing facilities and normal business expenses are not eligible expenses.

All Property and Casualty Coverage for Education (PACE) members are eligible to apply for the Partners in Prevention matching grants. Applications are distributed in the fall. For additional information, contact PACE loss control staff or Melissa High, mhigh@sdao.com.