



OSBA Events

Summer Board Conference

July 13-15, 2012

OSBA Board and Committee Meetings

September 21-22, 2012

66th Annual Convention

November 8-11, 2012

www.osba.org

Congress acts to extend federal payments to counties

A federal transportation bill includes money for hard-hit rural school districts in Oregon. The bipartisan deal provides a one-year extension of federal payments to counties where large chunks of federal land deprive local governments of property tax revenue.

Maintaining the payments was a high priority for Oregon's congressional delegation, who argued the time and money were needed so a more permanent solution could be found.

The bill provides about \$100 million to Oregon's financially struggling counties, with millions going to schools across Oregon, the Oregonian newspaper has reported.

In Curry County, for example, federal payments represented about 61 percent of the county's annual general fund revenue and almost two-thirds of its road fund. Without an extension of the timber pay-

ments, expenses would have exceeded revenue by more than \$350,000 in 2012-13. The deficit would have grown to more than \$3 million the following year, according to the Oregonian.

OSBA's leadership role

OSBA has been on the front lines in the effort to restore federal payments to counties. The association's board members met on February 7 with the state's congressional delegation in Washington, D.C., to stress the importance of action to prevent damage to rural schools if federal funding of the Secure Rural Schools Act were to run out. Oregon's counties would have lost \$250 million in income paid by the federal government to compensate for vast tracts of federal land that generate no property taxes, OSBA's board members told Oregon's senators and representatives.

County payments, cont. on pg. 4

Portland Public Schools Board of Directors rejoins Oregon School Boards Association

OSBA has welcomed Portland Public Schools (PPS) back to the ranks of its membership, following a decision to rejoin the association by the PPS board at its meeting on June 25.

"This is a great day for public education in Portland and throughout Oregon," said **Kris Howatt**, president of OSBA. "The Portland Public Schools Board of Directors brings tremendous energy and invaluable perspective to OSBA. By rejoining the association, PPS helps unify advocates for public education as we tackle major statewide issues like school funding, student achievement and accountability."

Betsy Miller-Jones, OSBA interim executive director, said the association and the Portland school board "are on the same page" concerning education priorities and goals. "We're excited to work with Portland Public Schools on a shared vision of public

education in Oregon," Miller-Jones said. "We have the same goals, and we're glad to partner with Portland Public Schools to achieve those goals."

Miller-Jones also said OSBA has taken effective steps to address issues of primary importance to the Portland Public Schools Board. These include the following:

- Training and networking on urban issues.
- Providing opportunities to participate in the leadership and direction of OSBA by considering ex officio OSBA board positions that would represent very large and very small districts.
- Convening discussion groups across the state on important educational issues.
- Attending PPS board meetings.

Portland Public Schools board co-chair **Pam Knowles** lauded OSBA's action to

welcome PPS back and to recapture a leading role in advocating for public education.

"We greatly appreciate OSBA's responsiveness in addressing the PPS Board's priorities," Knowles said. "We believe the time is right to rejoin OSBA and help make public education the focus of a statewide strategy for economic recovery."

In recent months OSBA officials have linked an upgrade to Oregon's investment in schools to long-term economic prosperity. In guest-opinion pieces that have appeared in major daily newspapers throughout the state since March, the association has stressed the economic benefits that school districts generate in local communities.

"We have also pointed out that a stronger public investment in education will produce a more capable workforce that attracts new employers and enterprises," Howatt said.

PACE legal services are valuable benefits that some don't know about

Many administrators and board members may not be aware of the full array of legal services that PACE provides—coverages simply not available anywhere else. Among these are the legal services provided by PACE attorneys, whose vast experience in school issues enables them to advise members and provide legal defense, investigation and audit services.

A particularly valuable feature of PACE coverage is its legal defense coverage, with an array of benefits that you cannot get elsewhere:

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act defense—\$25,000
- Bureau of Labor & Industries and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission defense—\$50,000
- Occupational Safety & Health Act defense—\$5,000
- Oregon Teachers Standards & Practices Commission defense (complaints filed by others)—\$25,000
- Oregon Government Ethics Commission defense—\$25,000
- Mold and mildew defense—\$100,000

- Injunctive relief/declaratory relief defense—\$25,000
- Fair dismissal hearing relief defense—\$50,000
- Breach of employment contract defense—\$50,000
- Lead handling defense—\$50,000

An entire separate category of legal services often receives little attention, except when members need them. These are the “School violent-acts expense coverage,” which covers \$50,000 of expenses in the event of a violent act caused by a dangerous weapon:

- Emergency-management consulting expenses
- Rental or lease expenses to relocate victims
- Counseling expenses
- Transportation expenses to move victims away from the premises
- Contracted security or police expenses
- Hazardous cleanup expenses

The coverage and services listed above are benefits that no board of education entity would want to be without.

Would \$50,000 in coverage help you?

Additional coverage is available through PACE that can have a profound effect on the outcome of adverse employment actions you may be facing. Did you know that your policy may afford up to \$50,000 towards the defense costs associated with BOLI or EEOC complaints? As districts are faced with reductions in force due to an adverse economy, we have seen an increase in the number of complaints filed with BOLI/EEOC by terminated employees. A successful response to a BOLI/EEOC complaint can potentially dissuade a terminated employee from pursuing Federal Court litigation which can really disrupt your district's focus on your primary goal, education. You don't have to go it alone; contact your agent or the PACE claims office for more information.



Call or email legal or claims staff to learn how to put PACE in your corner.

800-285-5461 or claims@sdao.com or info@osba.org

Integrated pest management plans are now under way

As the Oregonian reported several weeks ago, July 1 was the deadline by which all Oregon schools must reduce pesticide use by implementing an integrated pest management plan (IPM). By enacting Senate Bill 637 in 2009, the legislature sought to limit the use of pesticides and promote a clean school environment. The legislation also directed Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Service to develop a model integrated pest management plan as an option for use in schools.

Information is available online, http://www.ipmnet.org/tim/IPM_in_Schools/IPM_in_Schools-Main_Page.html.

“It’s an effective way to protect kids’ health at school,” Oregon Environmental Council Director Renee Hackenmiller-Paradis told the Oregonian’s Keldy Ortiz on June 19. “It’s a victory for staff, parents and everyone who uses the school because there will be less exposure to pesticides. This will have real implications for all Oregonians.”

Ortiz reported that schools will appoint an unpaid coordinator to look into the IPM pest prevention efforts. Schools will post signs 24 hours before pesticide use.

OSBA staff worked with OSU’s School IPM Program Coordinator to create a sample policy that reflects the requirements of the Senate bill. Contact policy staff for the sample at info@osba.org or 800-578-6722.

KEEPING YOU IN THE LOOP

Celebrate with a self-evaluation

At the end of the school year we celebrate successes, achievement and progress. But we also make time for evaluation and feedback, which are critical to learning and growing—both for students and staff.

Shouldn't boards also be part of this process? After all, everyone benefits from a frank conversation about what has worked well, what hasn't worked, and what we expect of each other in the upcoming year.

Self-evaluation by a board need not be complex. Simply schedule a time for a self-evaluation discussion and set an agenda that deals with the following questions:

- What has gone well in our board work this year?
- Has the board fulfilled its role in supporting and achieving the district's goals?
- What would we do differently if we got a second chance, and why?
- What do we want to achieve in the next year as a board?
- What should we commit to doing in the coming year?

Important ground rules

You will want to set an important ground rule up front: The self-evaluation discussion will focus on the board's role and work, and won't become an evaluation of others.

Here's another good ground rule: "Be hard on the problem and easy on the people." Personal criticisms seldom produce positive results.

Ensure that everyone gets an opportunity to speak, and encourage all members to listen carefully to what others say. Take notes and type up a formal summary of the self-evaluation at the end of the discussion. Then distribute the summary to board members. You'll find that these will come in handy as you refer to them throughout the coming year. A good practice is to review this summary at mid-year or quarterly to determine whether your board is on track.

A pre-self-evaluation survey may be in order if your board sees a need to examine certain issues in depth. OSBA can supply several samples that can help. Distribute the survey to board members in advance of the discussion, tabulate the results and share them with the board for use during the self-evaluation.

OSBA has developed a model self-evaluation tool (http://www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Board_Operations/Board_Self_Evaluation.aspx) for boards that parallels the one for evaluation of superintendents. Other sample evaluations follow the "check-off sheet" model. No matter which form you use, remember that the discussion among board members is the important thing, and the most important take-away is a plan for positive change in the coming year.

Public perception

We often say that a board member's real evaluation occurs at the ballot box. Still, you may want to find out well before the election how the public perceives your board and its work. Consider sending the survey out to partners who can provide informed and constructive feedback. These partners may include teachers, administrators, parents, PTA and other school organizations, as well as civic and governmental groups.

Bear in mind that people who have issues will likely be more vocal than those who are happy with the board's work.

Even so, you can learn from every single comment and suggestion you receive. As a board member, you serve as a bridge between the community and the school district. You convey the beliefs and values of your community to those who manage the district. And you turn those beliefs and values into policies and goals that shape the organization.

Don't forget to celebrate the successes. Board work is a journey with bumps along the way. In the end, the most important thing is your commitment to your communities and helping students succeed.



Betsy Miller-Jones
Interim Executive
Director

Betsy Miller-Jones



School Leader News

1201 Court St. NE, Ste. 400, Salem, OR 97301
PO Box 1068, Salem, OR 97308
503-588-2800 | 800-578-OSBA

PRSRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Salem, Oregon
Permit No. 282

County payments, cont. from pg. 1

An end to the payments would have meant the loss of about 4,000 jobs in Oregon and \$400 million in business sales, according to a recent study by economists at Oregon State University. The OSBA delegation pointed out the devastating impact that loss of the funding would have inflicted on many rural school districts in Oregon—districts that have already suffered severe budget reductions.

Representatives of OSBA joined U.S. Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley in a news conference on March 18 to urge the U.S. House of Representatives to approve the Senate’s one-year extension of federal payments to rural counties.

Greg Jackle, a member of the OSBA board of directors and the John Day School Board in Grant County, described to reporters the hardships that school children in John Day would suffer if the payment program were to end. OSBA Interim Executive Director Betsy Miller-Jones was also at hand to field reporters’ questions about the effects of the expiration of the program in late 2011.

Failure to act would have caused real harm

If Congress had failed to act, nearly every school district in Oregon would have suffered a net loss of resources, the OSBA representatives warned. The resulting shortfall in resources would have seriously jeopardized public schools’ ability to maintain a quality program of education.

Economic hardship has already hurt schools, the OSBA representatives stressed. For the past decade, Oregon’s school boards and district administrators have endured a prolonged cycle of hardship that has required them to cut budgets, lay off teachers, eliminate valuable academic programs and even close schools.

To make matters worse, higher costs for prisons and health care have forced the legislature to reduce public schools’ share of the state general fund and lottery funds.



Connect with us

www.osba.org
facebook.com/osba.org
info@osba.org

p: 503-588-2800 or 800-578-6722
f: 503-588-2813

© Oregon School Boards Association
Betsy Miller-Jones, Interim Executive Director
Tricia Yates, Director of Communications
Lonn Hoklin, Communications Specialist
Josie Hummert, Marketing Specialist
Diane Efseaff, Communications Assistant
Dan Peterson, Printing Services Manager