

April 2013

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## OSBA Events

### *Finance Campaign Regional*

April 4, 2013

### *NSBA Annual Conference (San Diego, CA)*

April 13-15, 2013

### *OSBA/COSA Legislative Day*

April 19, 2013

### *PACE Day*

April 26, 2013

### *National Teacher Appreciation Week*

May 6-10, 2013

### *Urban Issues Day*

May 10, 2013

### *Sustainable Schools-Sustainable Solutions Conference*

June 25, 2013

### *Summer Board Conference*

July 19-21, 2013

## President's Post

### Voter survey supports greater public schools investment



Terry Lenchitsky  
OSBA President

An important part of OSBA's mission is to shape public opinion in support of schools. To do this effectively, however, we need a starting point: we must first find out what voters already believe about key education issues.

Last fall, OSBA retained DHM Research, one of the Northwest's premier polling firms, to survey Oregon's voters to get their opinions about public K-12 education and possible ways to improve it. The association's communications team and executive leadership worked with DHM to craft a set of questions that would yield useful and reliable answers, with representative samplings by gender, age and other relevant demographics.

The survey took place Dec. 27-30, 2012, by telephone (both landline and cellular). The results are in, with a confidence level of 95 percent.

As expected, the survey produced both good news and bad news. In general, the results have validated many of our assumptions about Oregon's political climate, most of which we've based on previous voter surveys (ours and others'), news stories and our interactions with political leaders, interest groups and other members of the public. Still, the survey produced some results that came as complete surprises.

#### *First, the good news*

In pushing for a greater investment in public schools, OSBA is squarely on the side of strong public opinion.

By a more than two-one margin, voters told us they favor more funding for public schools (63-30 percent). Nearly six in ten expressed satisfaction with the overall quality of education in Oregon, while a whopping 64 percent said they were satisfied with the quality of their own home school districts. Note: this level of satisfaction is up from just 50 percent in a survey taken in 2006.

Clearly, Oregon's schools are doing something right, and the public knows it. Despite a prolonged economic crisis that has generated cascading reductions in school budgets, huge class sizes, thousands of laid-off teachers and cuts to valuable academic programs, Oregon's public schools have managed to strengthen the confidence that voters place in them.

I would go a step further. Voters have recognized the profound importance of a high-quality system of public education as a prerequisite for prosperity. Not coincidentally, OSBA's leadership has hammered this message home for the past year on the op-ed pages of all our state's major daily newspapers. Even better, the Legislature has apparently heard the message: the joint-budget committee's co-chairs have proposed a substantial increase in K-12 funding over the governor's proposal for the coming biennium.

#### *The not-so-good news*

Unfortunately, the survey showed less than lukewarm support for increasing taxes to support schools. Only one in five voters endorsed letting districts increase income taxes to pay for K-12 education, a level of support that has actually fallen over the past six years.

Not surprisingly, voters split on whether to enact a sales tax to support schools, notwithstanding a proportional offset to income taxes—46 percent in favor,

48 percent against. And although public support remains solid for the recently enacted Ballot Measure 85, which allocated corporate “kicker” refunds to help pay for public schools, only 42 percent of voters agree that their local school districts spend money wisely.

### Voters want PERS reform

Nearly six in ten voters favor reform to the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS), while just one in five say PERS needs no changes. An overwhelming 87 percent favor shifting from a seniority-based pay model to one that compensates teachers based on experience, performance and workload.

School boards and education service district boards can take heart that momentum continues to build for a bigger investment in public schools, even though a consensus for increasing revenue remains elusive (for the moment, at least). Board members, administrators, teachers and all their allies deserve praise for sustaining their quest for excellence despite dwindling resources and ever-higher demands—a quest that has generated growing public confidence in public schools. OSBA will redouble its efforts to convert this public support into political action that results in stable, adequate funding for schools in the future.

## OSBA/COSA Legislative Day is a good investment of your time

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The future of education in Oregon hinges on the ability of advocates for K-12 to work effectively with legislators. This means persuading individual legislators to support more school funding, reform to the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) and other critical policy objectives that school, education service district (ESD) and community college boards have set forth in their legislative agendas.

While some lobbying skills are intuitive, others are not. This year’s OSBA/COSA Legislative Day (Friday, April 19) provides a rich opportunity to learn all the essentials of effective legislative persuasion. Just as important, you will receive thorough updates on major education issues, ensuring that you will be an informed and knowledgeable advocate in the corridors and meeting rooms of the capitol.

- **Funding.** You will hear a briefing on school funding by Craig Hawkins, executive director of the Confederation of School Administrators (COSA).
- **PERS.** Jim Green, deputy executive director of OSBA, will present an explanation and update on PERS reform.
- **ESDs, governance.** Chuck Bennett, COSA’s director of government relations, will offer perspective and guidance on ESDs and governance.
- **Compression, tax reform, local options, hot issues.** Morgan Allen, OSBA’s legislative

specialist, will describe the complex and often misunderstood issues of compression, local options and tax reform. Morgan will then team up with his OSBA colleague, Lori Sattenspiel, to address other “hot issues” that advocates may encounter in the capitol.

- **Message delivery.** Chuck Bennett will then deliver an important briefing on message delivery.

From 10:15 a.m.-noon, you will have the opportunity to meet with individual legislators to discuss education issues and press your organization’s agenda. *Note: Now is the time to schedule appointments with your Senators and Representatives for Legislative Day.*

Check-in for Legislative Day begins at 7:30 a.m. on April 19 in Room 50 in the State Capitol basement.

## PACE Trustees work to hold down premiums

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Property and Casualty Coverage for Education (PACE) Trustees spent much of their March 4 meeting discussing how to hold down premiums and inoculate districts from losses.

Mike Doherty, chief financial officer of the Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO), told trustees that an increase in liability claims and significantly higher costs for reinsurance had combined to raise premium cost estimates for the coming year. As a result, he said, PACE is looking for creative ways of obtaining property reinsurance.

Currently, PACE pays the first \$250,000 of a property loss, and the balances of any larger claims are paid by reinsurers. To help keep down premiums to members, Doherty said PACE was considering increasing its liability to \$5 million per occurrence and \$7.5 million annually.

Even if those changes are made, Doherty said, premium renewals are expected to increase by at least 15 percent, and possibly as high as 25 percent. “Twenty (percent) is our target,” he said.

Frank Stratton, PACE manager, said that by increasing the cap from \$250,000 to \$5 million, PACE would also have a significantly greater number of reinsurers to choose from – as many as 30 instead of just a handful.

Staff also made a recommendation designed to encourage PACE members to consult with pre-loss attorneys before terminating an employee. Currently, PACE members incur a \$5,000 deductible if they do not consult with pre-loss attorneys before taking that step; the recommendation was to increase the deductible in such cases to \$25,000.

Lisa Freiley, the Oregon School Boards Association’s director of legal, labor & PACE services, said an OSBA attorney is available daily to consult with members on pre-loss situations. She said OSBA attorneys are always ready to provide advice on risks.

“Pre-loss attorneys are never going to tell you that you can’t fire someone, but we’re going to explain to you the problems that might result if you do,” she said.

Geoff Sinclair, SDAO’s director of claims services, concurred. “We can’t make or change someone’s local decision, but we want to make sure you have the best information before making your decision,” he said.

Trustees unanimously improved the deductible increase for members that do not consult with pre-loss attorneys before termination.

Trustees also discussed potential changes in how PACE underwriters calculate general liability premiums for employees or agents of members that have armed security. Any changes will be sent out with renewal notices.

More information will be available at PACE Day in Portland on April 26. It’s free for the first attendee from PACE member organizations, and members are urged to attend:

[http://www.osba.org/Calendar/Events/PACE\\_Day-2013.aspx](http://www.osba.org/Calendar/Events/PACE_Day-2013.aspx)

Keeping You in the Loop

## OSBA advances key initiatives

Over the past year, in countless conversations with our board members from around the state, I’ve heard the same refrain as far as your expectations for me: Be accessible, be relevant.

Those same demands extend to OSBA as a whole, and my response to you has been and remains that we will meet and strive to exceed your expectations. I’ve said that you will see and feel the energy and dedication necessary in representing nearly 1,400 members in school districts, education service districts and community colleges. I’m excited to report the progress we are making with your support.

Here are some of the key initiatives we’ve undertaken in 2013:

- **Partnering with other organizations through our “Strong Schools, Strong State” campaign to advocate for significantly higher K-12 investment in the next biennium.** Our legislative and communications staff members have been working tirelessly in this area, and the co-chairs have proposed a budget of \$6.75 billion for K-12 education, including \$200 million in PERS savings. Working with Morgan Allen of our staff, **Terry Lenchitsky** (OSBA President and Oregon Trail School Board), **Beth Gerot** (Eugene School Board), and **Bobbie Regan** (OSBA Secretary-Treasurer and Portland Public Schools Board) all testified at the Capitol in favor of school funding of



Betsy Miller-Jones  
Executive Director

at least \$6.75 billion – an increase of \$1 billion from the last biennium. As OSBA Deputy Executive Director Jim Green told our Board of Directors on March 15, “I see the momentum building.”

- **Working with a separate coalition to realize Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) reform.** When we polled members last year, you told us that school funding and PERS reform were by far your leading issues. Our resulting PERS legislation, Senate Bill 754, has garnered the most attention among roughly 40 PERS reform bills. Although supported by a wider group, it is often referred to as “the OSBA bill.” We have obtained legal advice from an expert attorney indicating that it will withstand a legal challenge, and the latest estimates are that it would save the state between \$1.2 and \$1.3 billion in the next biennium. “Incredible leadership,” is the way Bobbie Regan summed up our PERS reform efforts before our Board.
- **Raising OSBA’s profile with the public and the media.** In March I visited with three newspaper editorial boards to talk about school funding, PERS reform, student achievement, tax compression and other issues. I was joined by Regan and **Betty Reynolds**, (OSBA Legislative Policy Committee (LPC) and West Linn-Wilsonville School Board) at *The Oregonian* in Portland; **Jennifer Geller** (Eugene School Board) at the *Register-Guard* in Eugene; and **David Beeson** (OSBA Board and Silver Falls School Board) and **Nancy MacMorris-Adix** (LPC and Salem-Keizer School Board) at the *Statesman Journal* in Salem. In addition, OSBA Communications Director Tricia Yates and Communications Specialist Alex Pulaski are reaching out to other media around the state on these important issues.
- **Attending local school board meetings and listening to your issues and concerns.** In just the last month I’ve visited boards in Forest Grove, Corvallis, North Santiam and the High Desert ESD. I have more planned, and if you would like me to visit your board, please contact me at [bmillerjones@osba.org](mailto:bmillerjones@osba.org).

Our staff has much more in store, including the OSBA/COSA Legislative Day on April 19; 2013 PACE Day on April 26; and Urban Issues Day 2013 on May 10.

Please remember that your continued support is vital to all that we’re doing. Dozens of district boards have passed resolutions in support of “Strong Schools, Strong State” – you can get more information and see a sample resolution at:

[http://www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Improving\\_Education/S4/JoinStrongSchools.aspx](http://www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Improving_Education/S4/JoinStrongSchools.aspx).

Our Board adopted a resolution in support of PERS reform on March 16, and I encourage individual boards to join us; more information and a sample resolution can be found at:

[http://www.osba.org/News%20Center/Announcements/2013-03-21\\_PERS\\_resolution.aspx](http://www.osba.org/News%20Center/Announcements/2013-03-21_PERS_resolution.aspx).

As educators we often talk about the importance of high expectations. Thank you for your high standards and for leading on behalf of Oregon's schoolchildren. "Together," as Mother Teresa was fond of saying, "we can do great things."



OSBA President Terry Lenchitsky joined other school board members from around the state March 13 in providing testimony at the state Capitol about the importance of boosting school funding to at least \$6.75 billion. Lenchitsky testified that OSBA members are "extremely encouraged" by the co-chairs' proposal, which targets \$600 million more for education than the budget proposed by Gov. Kitzhaber, when \$200 million in PERS reforms are included.



Eugene School Board member Beth Gerot testifies in support of a school funding budget of at least \$6.75 billion.

## OSBA Board adopts resolution urging NSBA American Indian/Alaska Native caucus growth

The Oregon School Boards Association's Board of Directors adopted a resolution March 16 to recommend to the Pacific Region of the National School Boards Association (NSBA) that the NSBA increase membership of its American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) Caucus.

Doing so would grant the caucus an ex-officio seat on the NSBA Board of Directors.

The resolution was moved by OSBA Past President **Kris Howatt**, a member of the Gresham-Barlow School Board. Howatt also advocated for and the Board approved a motion that the OSBA Board sponsor 10 memberships in the AIAN Caucus; five of those memberships will be filled by OSBA officers and five will be offered to school board members at large.

Betsy Miller-Jones, OSBA's executive director, lauded the recent actions.

"Our board has shown leadership in recognizing the impact of Native American board members in the NSBA governance model," she said. "Increasing the membership is an important step to allow full recognition of the caucus." Contact Betsy Miller-Jones at [bmillerjones@osba.org](mailto:bmillerjones@osba.org) for more information.

## OSBA Urban Issues Day will deal with concerns of large school districts

OSBA has reached out to board members and administrators from Oregon's largest districts, key representatives from education service districts, community colleges and other agencies, to hold a conversation about issues that urban districts consider the most urgent. The event, "Urban Issues Day," will occur on May 10 at the Salem Convention Center.

In recent years, Oregon has become much more diverse, both culturally and racially. As districts address the needs of increasingly diverse student populations, collaboration among educators and supporting organizations has become ever more critical.

Setting high expectations and providing a framework for accountability are critical to improving student achievement and eliminating the achievement gap in all districts, both large and small. While Governor Kitzhaber's 40-40-20 goal, the Common Core Standards and achievement compacts have all played key roles in this effort, much work remains to be done.

### The agenda

To kick off Urban Issues Day, Dr. Doris McEwen of the Oregon Education Investment Board will present an overview of the state's plans and goals. Dr. Thomas Alsbury will then discuss recent national and international research on board leadership.

During lunch, a distinguished panel will discuss partnership potential. The panel will include Multnomah County Commissioner Judy Shiprack; Duncan Wyse, president of the Oregon Business Council; and Larry Whittlesey, executive director of School Partnership.

Arty Trost will facilitate the afternoon discussion on the challenges that urban school districts face. The session will capture data in a useful way and enable

participants to network and share their ideas, successes and concerns.

To ensure an appropriate mix of participants, OSBA will register only invited participants until April 10. After this initial cutoff date, OSBA will open registration to all interested board members and administrators until receiving 150 total registrations. Registration is free.

For registration details:

[http://www.osba.org/News%20Center/Announcements/2013-03-12\\_Urban\\_Issues\\_Day.aspx](http://www.osba.org/News%20Center/Announcements/2013-03-12_Urban_Issues_Day.aspx)

### Agenda

- 9:00 Welcome and Introductions
- 9:15 Dr. Doris McEwen (Oregon Education Investment Board)
- 10:00 Networking Break
- 10:15 Tom Alsbury: Board Leadership Effectiveness
- 12:00 Lunch
- 12:30 Community Partners Panel
- 1:30 Table Discussions: Framework for Association's Support
- 2:30 Networking Break
- 2:40 Arty Trost: Key Supports and Framework
- 3:40 Wrap up/Adjournment

Contact Joe Wehrli at [jwehrli@osba.org](mailto:jwehrli@osba.org) for more information.

## Polish your advocacy at OSBA's Summer Board Conference

Why not combine a family vacation in scenic central Oregon with OSBA's 2013 Summer Board Conference on July 19 at the beautiful Riverhouse Hotel and Convention Center in Bend?

This year's conference offers an agenda packed with presentations to help you polish your advocacy skills to help your district. You will learn cutting-edge best practices and receive up-to-date information on school leadership, legislative advocacy, finance and more. Just as important, you'll have an opportunity to network with colleagues and education professionals from the whole state.

This year's theme is LEAD, which means "Listen, Engage, Advocate, Dream." It's a theme that symbolizes OSBA's vision and the work that lies ahead for educational leaders in Oregon.



### Featured speaker: Dr. James Johnson

The featured speaker this year is Dr. James Johnson, director of the Urban Strategies Center at the University of North Carolina. Dr. Johnson is an expert in community and economic development, the effects of demographic changes on the U.S. workplace, inter-ethnic minority conflict in advanced industrial societies, urban poverty and workforce diversity. At Summer Board, he will examine the causes and consequences of growing inequality as it affects socially and economically disadvantaged youth.

Dr. Johnson will present both a workshop and a keynote address at this year's event. His presentations will prove especially valuable to board members as they grapple with the achievement gap and the critical need to raise students' performance overall.

As usual, the 2013 conference will feature a workshop for board secretaries. On July 19, board secretaries will hear presentations on school law and fiscal oversight.

A Leadership Institute Bronze Award track will also take place for board members. Check OSBA's website for information and programming of the "Pre-conference Day" on July 19 for board members.

The 2013 conference will feature something new—a vendor showcase that will enable board members to learn about new products and services. Contact Joe Wehrli at [jwehrli@osba.org](mailto:jwehrli@osba.org) for more information.

## Coming soon—Model Handbooks, Key Dates and Activities Calendar!

Beginning in mid-April, OSBA will make your life easier by issuing new model handbooks to help you update your staff and/or student handbooks. This year, OSBA will roll out a new feature—model handbooks designed specifically for public charter schools.

The new handbooks will appear as downloadable Microsoft Word documents on OSBA's website. Each will enable you to create your own fully annotated handbooks, with virtually all the information you must include to satisfy state and federal requirements for notice to students, parents and staff. You can use your logo and customize the clear, straightforward language to meet your own needs.

Specifically, both model handbooks feature the following essential items:

- Statements and notices the law requires
- Editorial notes on how to use the information
- Suggestions on how to correlate language with board policy

The cost of any complete handbook is \$125. Or, for \$50, you can obtain a document that simply contains legal changes and revisions made since last year. Both versions are available electronically on OSBA's website.

The Key Dates and Activities Calendar, which is available for \$150, gives you a complete listing of required

actions and activities by your board and administrator. You can use this handy annotated calendar to develop your calendar of activities and key dates, knowing that OSBA's staff has scoured Oregon's statutes and administrative rules, federal laws and a variety of other sources to provide a complete listing of requirements.

### Combination Pack

To save money, you can buy a combination pack that includes a Student Handbook, Staff Handbook and the Key Dates and Activities Calendar. The price is just \$275.

For \$200, you can obtain a combination pack that includes just the handbook revisions required since last year and the current Key Dates and Activities Calendar.

Watch OSBA's website for availability, or contact La'Nell Trissel in our Policy Services department for more information, 800-578-6722 or [ltrissel@osba.org](mailto:ltrissel@osba.org).

## Success story: Milwaukie High School wins ASCD Award

Milwaukie High School has won ASCD's 2013 Vision in Action: The ASCD Whole Child Award<sup>1</sup>, the *Clackamas Review* reported in a story on Mar. 13.

According to the story, the ASCD recognized MHS' dedication to "the needs of the whole child" beyond the efforts of all the other schools throughout North America. The organization gave special notice to MHS' focus on professional development in support of "equity in action" to address social justice and equity issues.

In August, the high school opened a 2,800-square-foot, state-of-the-art health center to meet students' health needs without using district money, the *Review* reported. To help fund the center, school staff raised more than \$600,000.

Principal Mark Pinder accepted the award on behalf of his school at ASCD's conference in Chicago on March 17.

The award recognizes schools that produce learners who are knowledgeable, emotionally and physically healthy, civically active, artistically engaged, prepared for economic self-sufficiency and ready for the world beyond formal schooling, the *Review* reported.

### Aiming to be the best

Trained staff evaluate incoming MHS students' reading and math proficiency. The school provides supplementary reading and math courses, as needed. Also, teams of staff meet once a week with a group of school counselors, mental and physical health providers, social workers and administrators to discuss ways to support at-risk students, the *Review's* story said. During these meetings, participants collaborate to build individual intervention plans for these students. These initiatives have produced improvements in reading and math achievement in participating students, and MHS' graduation rate has improved beyond Oregon state's average.

"The staff at Milwaukie High believes that there is more to education than just to teach a student how to read, write and think critically," Pinder told the *Review*. "The physical and emotional well-being of the student must be nurtured as a part of teaching and learning. When the whole child is educated at Milwaukie High, we are guaranteeing that we will produce a graduate ready to participate as an active, contributing community member."

<sup>1</sup> ASCD was formerly called the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

## Don't miss the 2013 Sustainable Schools-Sustainable Solutions Conference

In rethinking the future of public education, a coalition of policy makers and educators have discovered that the concept of "sustainable schools" offers great potential not only to save money, but also to enhance the quality of education.

The third annual Sustainable Schools-Sustainable Solutions Conference offers board members a priceless opportunity to sharpen their knowledge of how sustainable practices can make schools safer and healthier, improve students' performance (both academically and socially), and stretch precious tax dollars.

This year's theme is "Creating resilient schools and communities." The conference is a presentation of the Confederation of School Administrators, Oregon Sustainable Schools Initiative, American Institute of Architects Portland, and Environmental Education Association of Oregon. OSBA is a proud sponsor of the event. The venue is Trillium Creek Primary School in West Linn, Oregon, and the date is June 25. This year's keynote speaker is Christian Long, Vice President/Education at Cannon Design. An educator, designer, school planner, futurist and advocate for innovative learning communities, Long is the founder and co-developer of Prototype Design Camp, an innovative national design program for creative young people.

The conference features concurrent sessions, student panels, exhibitors and opportunities to network with colleagues and professionals who know firsthand how to create resilient schools and communities. Don't miss this exciting event and the chance to learn and share your knowledge.

Information on registration, sponsorship and how to participate as an exhibitor can be found at: <http://www.sustainableschools.org/our-services/2013-conference>

## NSBA's Technology Site Visit will showcase Vancouver Public Schools' efforts

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The National School Boards Association's 2013 Technology Site Visit at Vancouver, Wash., Public Schools will enable education professionals to see firsthand the best ways to use technology in education—a major attraction for Oregon school board members who seek cutting-edge ways to improve student achievement.

The event will occur May 1-3.

Attendees will visit K-12 classrooms and learn how technology helps schools meet curriculum goals and spur learning. Stops will include Vancouver iTech Prep, a STEM magnet program, as well as other elementary, middle and high schools.

The tour highlights Bring Your Own Device programs, use of iPads in English, social studies and mathematics, a digital music program, interactive whiteboards and many other innovative technologies.

“NSBA's Education Technology Site Visits showcase digital learning trends that have implications for district policies, funding, and questions of equity and access,” said Ann Flynn, NSBA's director of educational technology. “These highly interactive visits help decision-makers consider those implications in light of real-world examples and innovative solutions through classroom observations, focused briefings and conversations in each of our host districts.”

Sponsored by NSBA's Technology Leadership Network (TLN), the site visits typically attract many kinds of participants, including federal and state policy-makers, school board members, superintendents, administrators, principals and teachers from all geographic regions of the country, Flynn said.

More details on the technology site visits are available at [www.nsba.org/tlbsitevisits](http://www.nsba.org/tlbsitevisits).