



# F O C U S O N ISSUES

*Critical*

SPRING  
2004

## Breaking barriers to Close the Gap



*Triggered by growing student diversity – and spurred on by No Child Left Behind – Oregon school boards are struggling to meet the needs of students who don't speak English, have special needs, live in poverty or otherwise get left behind. Research, experts and common*

*sense tell us all children can succeed. Hope makes us believe it just has to be true. But dwindling resources and the threat of sanctions – even a slap on the wrist – leave us scratching our heads.*

### In This Issue



**How to act like a two-year-old**



**Hear from high achievers**



**Gervais' success story**



**The impacts of poverty**



**Oregon Small School Initiative**

**O**SBA is taking on the challenge to help school boards close the achievement gap this July 10-11 in Beaverton with **Breaking Barriers**, the Summer Board Conference. National and local experts will give boards practical skills to connect with students and families from Hispanic, poverty, special education and ethnically diverse populations. Workshops will showcase best practices and models at work in Oregon.

This edition of *Focus on Critical Issues* explores some of the topics in detail to whet your appetite and leave you with useful information.

Inside you'll find:

- The tough questions your board must ask to take on this challenge and define its role in reaching *all* children.
- Advice on how to unlock children stuck in generational poverty – a growing challenge every board faces.
- How 13 ESDs are pooling resources to fill training and service gaps statewide.
- Oregon's ground-breaking \$25 million Small Schools Initiative and the promise it holds for high schools.
- Personal triumphs from Hispanic students – what made them beat the odds?
- How Gervais also beat the odds, plus links to other programs showcased at the recent

*Celebrating Educational Opportunities for Hispanic Students* conference.

- National resource links through NSBA.
- How the Oregon Dept. of Education is shifting to better serve school districts.

## Dare to ponder the big questions on *accountability*

**G**ranted, the No Child Left Behind Act has taken some of the fun out of being a school board member.

The control local boards once had over curriculum, assessment and other vital functions has been somewhat harnessed – albeit in the name of closing the achievement gap.

That said, it's critical to acknowledge that changes give school boards huge opportunities. High on the list is new political leverage to measure district performance against uniform standards and to direct resources toward meeting those standards.

**Continued on page 2**



## Dare to ponder – from page 1

For extra motivation, the leverage comes in the form of punitive federal sanctions that include dissolving the boards of non-performing school districts.

Boards that accept the challenge of closing achievement gaps face some major decisions about their role as educational policy leaders. Here's a series of "big questions" (with very frank answers) we suggest you ponder.

They are based on a reflective interview with Mike Wittmayer, OSBA's policy services director who ends 35 years of experience in education this June. The past 12 years of Mike's experience has been as one of OSBA's policy experts. This former teacher, principal and acting superintendent has worked with every school board in Oregon during his tenure at OSBA. We also got insight from the National School Boards Association.

### Are you willing to hold teachers, administrators and even students accountable for meeting performance goals?

Accountability can come in many forms, including extra resources to help low performers and penalties for persistent laggards. It also can include rewards for those who meet or exceed performance goals.

Whatever the format, accountability measures are essential to closing the achievement gap.

"It's kind of scary," Wittmayer says, acknowledging the backlash in communities that have tried such punitive accountability measures as denying graduation to students who flunk high-stakes tests. "But if there's not going to be any accountability – well, there just has to be."

Wittmayer says evaluation systems for superintendents, administrators and teachers can be tied to federal and state standards. And he says that if Oregon educators want to see a significant improvement in student achievement, they will have to hold students accountable as well.

Most Oregon laws, policies and rules provide neither meaningful rewards nor meaningful sanctions to students based on their performance against standards. Even admissions

officers in the state university system essentially ignore how Oregon students do on state tests and whether they earn a state certificate of mastery, Wittmayer says.

"The results are tied to nothing for kids," he says. "So, they don't have a compelling reason to try hard and do well – that has to change."

### Are you willing to make performance goals and elimination of the achievement gap a major focus of your board's work all year-round?

Wittmayer says that most boards aren't this focused – but they should be if they want to avert punitive sanctions under NCLB.

The National School Boards Association takes a similar tack. In an Action Alert on the NCLB Act, the NSBA states boards should begin in the summer by developing a calendar of achievement-gap activities for the coming year. (A sample calendar is online on the *Breaking Barriers* page, [www.osba.org](http://www.osba.org).)

The calendar should provide time for the board to consider developments like the release of test results, steps to follow if schools miss performance targets, and the preparation of a district budget that provides resources to close the gap.

Board meetings and work sessions are the proper place for boards to take on this challenge, Wittmayer says. Boards should follow their established chain of command, starting with the superintendent, when deciding with whom – and how – to discuss the issues.

### Are you willing to spend time to learn about the standards that apply to your district, the assessment systems that measure performance and what these systems do – and don't – reveal?

Again, NSBA says the answer should be yes. The best time to learn about standards is early in the board's operating year. The work should focus on learning about the standards, not designing them.

Next, tackle assessment. This work is especially important if your district wants to look beyond required state

tests. These local tests may provide more timely results than required state tests, and may give the board an important head start on making improvements from one year to the next.

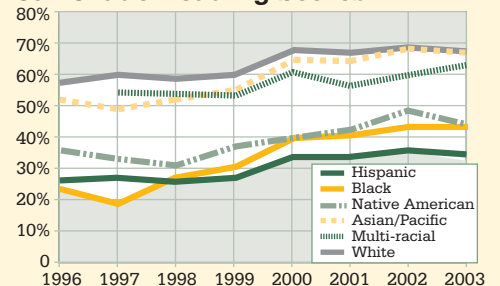
### Are you willing to shape your budget and policies to close achievement gaps?

The NSBA says curriculum and instructional practices should be studied and restructured as needed to fix weaknesses. Same thing for teacher recruitment, assignment and compensation, as well as professional development programs, textbooks and enrichment programs for low-performing students.

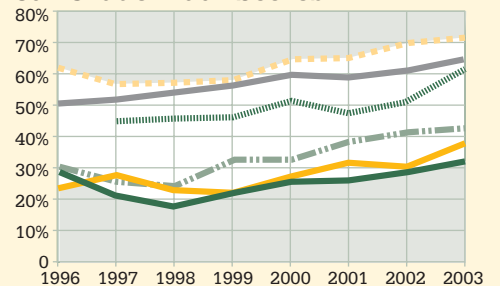
Such steps could impinge on funding for sacred-cow programs such as across-the-board salary increases based on longevity. But, at the least, the board should be willing to have an open discussion in front of the community about the resources needed to help low-performing students – and the consequences of inaction.

## The achievement gap:

### 8th Grade Reading Scores



### 8th Grade Math Scores



While eighth grade reading and math scores are generally rising, note the space ("gap") between the top three lines (white, Asian and multi-racial) and the bottom three (Hispanic, Black and Native American).

Source: Oregon Department of Education

## More questions: Your permission to act like a two-year-old!

Your job is to ask questions – ask staff and administrators the WHAT, WHEN and WHY. Their job is to provide answers. Here are a few questions to ask about TESTING – the most visible signs that schools have an achievement gap, and the most visible way to close it.

### Do our students take the courses they need to succeed on the tests – before they take the tests?

Districts can, and should, require students to take the courses that prepare them for the tests. But elective courses and lower-level courses for low-performing students remain popular, especially in middle and high schools. The school board needs to know students should be counseled away from non-critical courses before they've taken the courses they need to ace the required tests. The board also needs to give administrators the authority to drop courses or steer low-performing students away from them when it's clear they are interfering with test preparation.

### Does our district's grading system reflect proficiency in key test areas?

Grading systems need to reflect what's important in the assessments, but often they don't.

### Is our district giving pre-tests to students?

Pre-tests are available, and research indicates that test scores improve the more times students practice taking the test.

### Is our district studying patterns in test results over time, rather than just looking at a single year's data?

Doing this kind of "longitudinal" analysis could indicate whether individual teachers were adjusting their methods to better serve low-performing students. Unfortunately, it's difficult to drag meaningful longitudinal results for individual teachers out of Oregon test data.

## Hispanic achievers share triumphs

Schools offer many programs to boost achievement for all students – but what *really* makes the difference for students with limited – or no – English skills?

When you hear the inspiring stories of four students who spoke at the Celebrating Educational Opportunities for Hispanic Students Conference, the "secret" is clear: A personal commitment to learn – followed by the inspiration and confidence nourished from a supportive environment.



### Sam Byrd: Being included "as is"

Sam Byrd's family followed agricultural jobs throughout

California and the Northwest. While mainstream education and ELL services were unknown in the

1950s, he fondly recalls primary teachers who practiced inclusiveness simply because they were "excellent" teachers.

"They took me from where I was," he says, "as opposed to where I was supposed to be." High school again placed him in the capable hands of husband-and-wife teachers Byrd recalls speaking a "language called human."

Byrd fears today's approach, using "high stakes" uniform standards and testing as prescribed by No Child Left Behind. "People don't learn languages in the same way, at the same time," he says. "One of the best ways to learn language is immersion in the culture – on the playground and in conversation."

### Velina Chavez-Lopez: Finding opportunities

Raised in a small New Mexico town, Velina Chavez-Lopez remembers working "twice as hard" and taking advantage of every opportunity. Support networks, both in and out of school, provided the foundation for her academic successes: a bachelor's degree in political science from Highlands University and a master's in human development and psychology from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Chavez-Lopez views her role now as "giving back" by using her education to help disadvantaged children. "We all need to give back a little more than we received," she says.



### Does our district's evaluation system hold staff accountable, from the superintendent down?

Administrators should evaluate staff at least in part on their effectiveness in improving student achievement. That same approach should apply up the line when superintendents evaluate administrators and boards evaluate the superintendents.

### Are our schools teaching to the test?

For years, "teaching to the test" has been condemned as an unnecessarily narrow approach to learning. But in Oregon, state tests are designed to measure the skills that students need to succeed as adults. So, teaching (and re-teaching) the skills that are measured in the tests is teaching to success. The school board needs to know how much time is actually used to teach these key skills to students. The board also needs to know the extent to which teachers of subjects that aren't tested incorporate the tested skills into their curricula.



### Juanita Silva: Teachers influence father

Juanita Silva felt pulled between demands of helping her newly immigrated family and doing school work. "I'd put a towel under my door so my dad couldn't see the light was still on and I was wasting electricity doing homework," she recalls.

As Silva searched for opportunities outside her family, teachers helped her volunteer with the local hospital

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# POVERTY: *The elephant in the room*

If school boards share one thing in closing the achievement gap, it's the "elephant in the classroom" – poverty.

Until boards and educators examine their own beliefs about who can learn, and how they learn, it will be difficult for them to meet the needs of extremely poor children. The number of Oregon students on free and reduced price lunch programs has grown 33 percent since 1995 according to Donna Beegle, president of Communication Across Barriers and a popular OSBA speaker.

"My advice to school boards? Ensure that poverty is discussed among staff and students," she says. "Train staff in the history of poverty, and how they have come to their current ideas about children living in poverty."

Born into an impoverished family who followed seasonal fruit-picking jobs from Arizona to Oregon, Beegle slipped through countless schools before dropping out to marry at age 15. "They didn't know what to do with me," she recalls. "I smelled bad and I moved all the time."

Today, equipped with a doctorate in education and first-hand experiences of a childhood in poverty, Beegle travels the nation teaching educators exactly how to meet the needs of poor children.

Beegle's own ascent from poverty began at age 25. Divorced and struggling to feed and shelter two children on a monthly \$408 welfare check, she enrolled in a fledgling displaced homemaker program. Beginning with a GED, Beegle persevered to earn multiple degrees with honors, including her doctorate in educational leadership in 2000 from Portland State University.

Teachers and administrators from middle-class backgrounds must first understand that people from generational poverty are born into a different reality than middle-class children.

The focus of life is on surviving: Where will we sleep tonight? What will we eat? How can we keep the heat turned on? "Most educators are aligned with the middle-class reality of self-development," Beegle says, "like what is the best education

possible? What extra-curricular activities will enhance reaching their full potential?"

These differences impact how we relate to each other, our expectations and how we experience the world. As a child and young adult, Beegle's only experiences with police officers were negative: serving eviction notices to her struggling family or arresting one of her five brothers. She contrasts this with a summer block party she attended in an affluent neighborhood. A motorcycle officer, called to investigate illegal fireworks, joined the gathering to eat a hotdog while children played on his bike.

Beegle says poverty families often see education in a similar negative light. This stems from children sent to detention for not completing homework or being tardy due to family struggles far out of their control.

While attending school, Beegle recalls impatient family members asking "when are you getting out," comparing education to a "sentence" preventing her from helping to support the family. For many poor children, education has little meaning and they have never met anyone who has ever benefitted from it.

"Help children in poverty understand the possibilities of what education can do for them," she urges.

Just as justice is defined differently in separate socio-economic classes, behavior is interpreted on different

scales in our schools. Beegle notes that a child in poverty who questions a teacher is considered a trouble maker, while a middle-class child doing the same likely might be labeled an independent thinker or leader.

Disparity between the haves and have-nots can also be obstacles to learning. "We have zero tolerance for overt racism in our schools," Beegle says, "but classism can be brutal." This means having to have the name-brand shoes, participate in the right activities and come from the right neighborhood to avoid being picked on.

Beegle recalls pleading to stay in the classroom during recess to escape playground bullying about her clothes. Forced to go out, she would end up in the principal's office for trying to defend herself.

Unlike developing nations with high concentrations of poverty, Americans hold a clear expectation of lifestyle and expected earnings. "There's a stigma that being poor is a person's own fault in this land of opportunity," she says.

Beegle says school leaders can set the tone for how students from poverty are welcomed. "If a leader has zero tolerance for students being made fun of, ridiculed because of words they don't know, or clothing they wear, it sets a tone that these students are valued and they bring something in."

## *Rich ideas to overcome barriers*

Donna Beegle offers no-cost solutions that can make a world of difference in the life of a child:

- **Don't be judgmental.** Be understanding of the struggles students and families in poverty may face.
- **Be a mentor.** For some children, a teacher may be the only person they know not living in abject poverty.
- **Believe in the student.** We live in a system that feels IQ is related to social class level. Even a low-scoring middle-class child has a 70 percent chance of attending college. Conversely, children in poverty are unlikely to be perceived as college material, regardless of their abilities. "Treat them like they can and they will."
- **Network.** Who can you call to provide services or help for this child?
- **Step out of your job title.** Beegle gratefully recalls her daughter's Headstart teacher having the "wisdom to teach me, too." Through this, Beegle learned how to advocate for her daughter, become involved in her education, and pursue enriching opportunities.

## Success story: To beat the odds, Gervais shelters language learners, builds family relationships

**B**y statistics alone, Gervais High School should have one of the highest dropout rates in Oregon.

Yet the school where 78 percent of students receive free/reduced lunches, 44 percent are English Language Learners, and nearly 30 percent move each year posts a dropout rate of 3.6 percent compared to the state average of 4.4 percent. This year, only two out of 303 students have dropped out of school and both are enrolled in a GED program.

Much of the credit goes to the Sheltered English Language Learners' Program. "We make all students feel welcome," says Sylvia Garcia, ELL mentor and teacher.

When a student registers for school, a New Student Welcome Committee learns what language is spoken at home, previous school experience, and determines English proficiency for accurate placement. Students with no English skills join "newcomer" and "transition" rooms where they learn basic language and school procedures.

"Some students come knowing multiple languages, but speak no English, and have had little school experience," Garcia says. "We also look at their backgrounds: is their family supportive of school or is there work pressure?" If the student is living in poverty, Garcia determines whether it is situational or generational. "We need to first understand *all* of their needs."

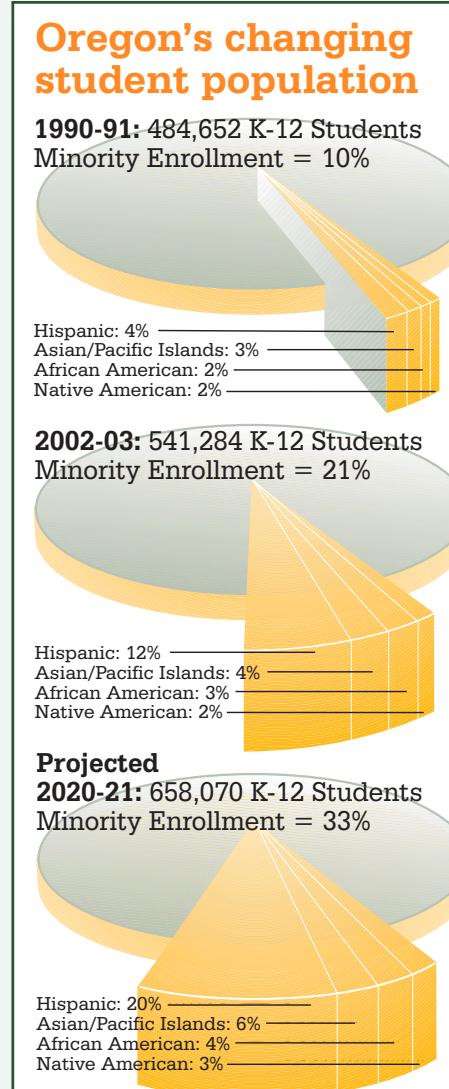
The program emphasizes English proficiency in reading, writing and speaking, then mainstreaming students into other classes. Freshmen and sophomores can take all core curriculum within the sheltered program, attending mainstream classes for electives. Juniors are limited to three sheltered core classes, and seniors are fully mainstreamed.

Mainstreamed students are closely monitored for academic success, attendance, and behavior by Garcia and other ELL staff. Teachers cannot fail an ELL student without first notifying ELL staff and working with

the student to improve academic performance Before- and after-school Title I programs and summer school also help.

Success extends beyond the classroom. Before the sheltered program, Hispanic students didn't participate in activities. Encouraged by staff, they now participate in student government, activities and athletics.

ELL staff also help students stay on track for graduation, write scholarship recommendations and tell students they can succeed. This involves "stepping out of the classroom" to understand cultures and build relationships with families.



Source: Oregon Department of Education

## Grant supports ESD summer workshops, training efforts targeting AYP

**A** major grant from the Oregon Department of Education has 13 ESDs working overtime this summer to help struggling districts keep up with Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements.

ESDs are targeting 46 school districts that have 102 Title I schools identified for program improvement (not making AYP for two or more years), or Title I schools on the AYP "watch list" (with one year of not making AYP).

ESDs will use their regional advantages to pool resources. For example, the Willamette ESD will share its experts in English Language Learner (ELL) strategies through the High Desert ESD in Central Oregon.

Professional development projects under the grant range from development of online resources to a collaboration between the Mexican Government and Oregon educators. One limiting factor to the grant is that all the efforts must be completed between now and Sept. 30.

"This is the first collaborative, statewide AYP staff development project designed by the ODE and OAESD leadership," says incoming Willamette ESD Superintendent Maureen Casey, who is helping with the summer push.

Here's a sampling of some of the ESD projects designed to help selected schools support low-achieving students:

### Umatilla-Morrow ESD

The Eastern Oregon Summer Institute in August will draw 200-300 teachers from the Umatilla-Morrow ESD to sessions offering targeted training for low-performing students. Included in that training will be Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) training. The

**Continued on page 6**



## ESD grants – from page 5

concepts, skills and procedures are especially important for English Language Learners (ELLs).

“We can’t always find enough bilingual teachers for our classrooms,” ESD Superintendent George Murdock says. “SIOP helps all teachers help students with language difficulties.”

### Southern Oregon ESD

Three online math courses for ELLs – pre-algebra, algebra and geometry – will help students in the Southern Oregon ESD access materials in both English and Spanish, connect with mentors online, and use interactive tools to build math skills.

English online also will provide support for students who need extra help.

“Teachers can use an online course as a support module, as credit retrieval for students to make up a failed course, or as a complete course,” says incoming ESD Superintendent Steve Boyarsky.

Grant funds will also support Southern Oregon ESD’s Achievement Teams, he says, to help schools in the “needs improvement”

category analyze school data, write school improvement plans and action plans. Other ESDs will be able to replicate the model.

### Clackamas ESD

Advocates for Special Kids (ASK) Project will provide in-depth, research-based training for teachers in instructional strategies to improve the academic performance of students with disabilities. Teachers receive training in how to implement the research in the classroom.

### Willamette ESD

Willamette ESD has a partnership between the Mexican government

# High school: *Thinking* **SMALL** for very **big** reasons

## New initiative breaks up big high schools into small schools to stop the cycle of underachievement

**L**ooking at the big picture in our high schools has some school boards thinking small.

Eight Oregon high schools are sharing in a ground-breaking \$25 million effort to close the achievement gap, boost academic success for all students and tie classroom learning to real-life experiences.

Breaking up large, traditional high schools into smaller, more personal, communities is the first step in the Oregon Small School Initiative.

Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation of Seattle and Meyer Memorial Trust of Portland, the project is the largest private investment ever made in Oregon’s public schools, according to backers. Schools chosen to participate are Portland’s Marshall High, Liberty

High in Hillsboro, North Eugene High, both high schools in Medford, and the high schools in Newberg, Woodburn and Lebanon.

Marshall, Liberty and Lebanon will open next fall as four small, free-standing schools within the former large high school campus. The other five have until fall 2006 to divide into small schools.

Key strategies include ensuring all courses prepare students for post-high-school education, and using innovative teaching methods to raise achievement, especially among minority students.

With almost \$1 million in grants over the next four years, Hillsboro’s Liberty High, for example, will fund teacher training and coaching from a

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*Interested in a program offered outside your area? Contact your local ESD curriculum office to make connections.*

and the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to provide curriculum to Spanish-speaking students. The Oregon Mexico Education Partnership (OMEP) will provide textbooks, CDs, teachers’ guides and other Web-based materials in Spanish to provide credit recovery, enable GED preparation and promote literacy.

The ESD’s Migrant/OLE (Optimal Learning Environments) Academy will help migrant educators develop literacy strategies and promote reading and writing achievement for ELL students.

GLAD, a research- and standards-based model for ELLs, will help students develop literacy and proficiency in literature, science and social science.

“Balancing: English Language Learners and Adequate Yearly Progress” is this year’s topic of the Oregon Summer Bilingual Institute, co-sponsored by the Oregon Association of Bilingual Education and Willamette ESD. Scholarships will support teachers, assistants and

administrators who want to participate in the conference.

### Northwest Regional ESD

Northwest Regional ESD will work to develop a coaching team for each district, trained in ASK, SIOP, and Student Owned Reading Strategies (SOS). Teams of trained teacher leaders will align and share common instructional strategies in effective content delivery for all students.

### Multnomah ESD

Multnomah ESD will provide support for school improvement by training targeted schools how to align curriculum to state standards. Building leaders will learn how to implement curriculum maps to improve students’ learning.





## Small schools – from page 6

small-schools expert who'll guide staff in making lessons more rigorous, engaging students and working with the community.

Portland's Marshall High, like other schools in the project, will provide an advisor and adult mentor for *each* student throughout high school. Research credits those close relationships with keeping students engaged.

How is "thinking small" changing the way these high schools look? At Lebanon High, almost every room has been remodeled to allow the large school to reopen in the fall as four separate schools. Each school combines academic and professional-technical courses around central themes: Social Systems, Living Systems, Physical Systems and Information Systems.

"Converting to small learning communities required a huge investment on the part of our district," says Lebanon School Board member Sherrie Sprenger. Construction and staffing are all built on the small school concept.

"I went to Lebanon High School," she says, "and I know that our school system has changed very little since then, while the world and the economy have changed drastically. We need to recognize that and change the way we educate our kids."

At Marshall High, each of the four schools will occupy two wings of the former Marshall campus and will have up to 300 students. Each school will have its own staff, curriculum and schedule.

North and South Medford high schools will each convert into five

smaller schools, offering students a wider range of educational choices.

Grants from the small schools project were available only to schools with a significant proportion of low-income or minority students and an enrollment of at least 700 students, says Karen Phillips, director of the Oregon Small School Initiative (OSSI). Fifty-five Oregon schools were eligible for the grants, 23 applied.

Detailed application materials and site visits were used to determine the schools most ready to begin intensive reform, including reconfiguration into small schools. OSBA President Carolyn Ortman (Hillsboro) serves on OSSI's advisory cabinet that weighed final decisions based on

those site visits.

"Schools chosen for grants will lead by example," says Phillips. "They'll share their experiences, successes and mistakes." Next year the Initiative will select another round of schools for restructuring. In addition, the Initiative will support local innovators, whether school districts or community groups, to develop new small high schools.

The ongoing Initiative will offer online learning tools and professional development opportunities for all Oregon schools, and will work with state and community partners to foster innovation, Phillips says.



## ODE reorganizes to shed "disparities" New teams to bring wider range of services in each visit; districts should notice less bureaucracy

**W**hen it comes to closing achievement gaps, the Oregon Department of Education can relate.

Just when it was taking on the full weight of the No Child Left Behind Act, the department saw its funding cut 20 percent by the 2003 Legislature.

With performance demands rising and resources disappearing, Susan Castillo took action. Over a 15-month period culminating this spring, Oregon's Superintendent of Public Instruction reorganized the department to focus on what she considers its central mission: eliminating disparities in the achievement of minority groups while improving student performance across the board.

Much remains to be done on Castillo's agenda. But the changes already are reshaping the way the department works with districts.

Here is an overview of the changes and their implications for local educators.

### More for districts, less for schools

With a few exceptions, ODE will work in teams to serve districts and not specific schools, says Vickie Fleming, deputy superintendent of operations. These work groups represent a range of expertise instead of just one discipline.

That approach started last fall when the department offered to send experts to districts across the state to help them meet new goals for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The groups included experts in special education, curriculum and the Title I program for poor and minority children. Every district that requested a consultation got one, says Nancy Latini, head of the Office of Student Learning and Partnerships.

The major exceptions to this change will be the 100 or more schools that have large poor and minority student populations and need the most help.

### More coordination, less duplication

ODE managers will focus on results and break down barriers that thwarted cooperation. For example, department staff are simplifying how districts show compliance with federal special education law and coordinating those efforts with state school-improvement requirements, which are oriented toward regular education.

ODE is also looking into Web resources to help regular-education teachers find learning materials suited to special-education students

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<http://www.osba.org>



## Hispanic achievers – from page 3

and police explorers. “It got me out of the house and people began looking at me as a leader,” she says.

With new confidence, Silva applied for (and got) a full scholarship to Central Washington University. She credits supportive teachers for giving her the confidence to convince her father that she should seize the opportunity rather than fulfill her “job to help at home.”



### Daniela Najera: Take on the challenge

Life took a giant step backwards for Daniela Najera when her family came to Hood River in

August 2000. In Durango, Mexico, she was one year shy of graduating from high school with a full life of sports, student council and extra-curricular activities.

Speaking no English, Najera found herself starting high school over as a freshman. After gaining language skills and confidence in her high school’s Newcomer Center and basic skills classes, Najera recalls a transformation in her junior year. “I began to challenge myself and decided I would overcome my obstacles,” she says.

Now 20 and poised to graduate, Najera has her sights on college and becoming a medical doctor. “Education,” she says, “is the most important element in helping someone become a better person.”

## ODE – Continued from page 7

in their classes.

### More diagnosis, less surgery

ODE will focus on determining what’s working – and what’s not. It will strengthen its ties to education service districts, which will take over much of the direct “school improvement” service to schools the department once provided.

The department has negotiated a new agreement with the ESDs, including a \$600,000 grant to provide cost-saving school-improvement services anywhere in the state (see story, page 5).

Fleming says schools should see the benefits of this change as early as this summer, with new professional development opportunities offered by ESDs.

### Fewer bureaucrats, fewer bureaus

The ODE reorganization, which took place after consultation with business and school leaders and a thorough audit, reduced top manage-

ment by 15 percent. It also knocked the number of boxes on the organizational chart from 14 to seven.

The old curriculum and professional education offices were rolled into a new Office of Educational Improvement and Innovation, which will help districts meet school improvement goals and prepare students for higher education and careers.

The old office of special education and parts of the old office of student services, including civil rights, were rolled into the new Office of Student Learning and Partnerships.

The old offices of assessment and technology were merged to form the Office of Assessment and Information Services. And business operations were merged under the new Office of Finance and Administration, which includes State School Fund accounting and nutrition services.

The reorganization created a new Office of System Accountability and Policy Development to coordinate the development of education policies at the federal, state and local levels.

### Resources and links on the Breaking Barriers page: [www.osba.org](http://www.osba.org)

- Read how Woodburn created a “shared vision” to engage its community to close the gap.
- Best practice highlights from Oregon and surrounding states from the Celebrating Educational Opportunities for Hispanic Students conference.
- Links to national resources on minority achievement, causes of the achievement gap, publications and experts.
- Sample planning calendar for boards to address No Child Left Behind deadlines and issues, starting this summer.
- More insight about poverty, plus links to valuable strategies and data to address this issue.



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