



March 18, 2011

OSBA to Ways and Means: Prioritize education in budget

OSBA and its Education Coalition partners testified before the Education Subcommittee of the Ways and Means Committee this week, asking the committee to reinvest in education.

OSBA President-elect **Kris Howatt**, Gresham-Barlow school board member, delivered testimony prepared jointly by Howatt and OSBA President **David Beeson**, who was unable to attend the hearing.

Howatt told the committee that the primary focus of local school boards, administrators, teachers, classified employees and community support groups is student achievement and they need the best possible budget from the legislators.

“School boards are focusing on the use of data to strategically target our investments in improving opportunities for students to achieve,” Howatt said. “School board members are increasingly aware that schools must expand the use of technology, and create new learning environments to reach students outside of the traditional classroom. Educators and school boards across Oregon are struggling to implement innovative approaches to education to keep pace with the needs of a changing society. Just as with the businesses that fuel our economy, innovation requires investment. In Oregon, during the past two decades, we have not invested adequately in our public schools.”

“School board members understand that nearly every other state program will suffer

cuts in funding in our current economic crisis. But it is our charge, and yours, to look out for the future of Oregon and Oregon’s youngsters. You here in Salem, during this session, have the power to positively impact the future success of our state and citizens. I ask you to please place Oregon children at the top of your list of investment priorities,” Howatt concluded.

Kent Hunsaker of the Confederation of School Administrators, OSBA Associate Executive Director Tricia Yates, Laurie Wimmer of the Oregon Education Association and Dana Hepper of Stand for Children also presented testimony on K-12’s declining share of the state budget and the need for the Legislature to take steps to reverse that trend. Since 2003, K-12’s share of the state General Fund and Lottery has decreased from 44.8 to 38.2 percent in the governor’s recommended budget. The coalition urged the committee to fund K-12 education at least at the current 38.8 percent, which would amount to approximately \$5.8 billion for the biennium. Education Coalition information and graphs are at: www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Legislative/Advocacy_resources_show_need_for_reinvestment.aspx.

The Education Subcommittee’s work feeds into the preparation of the Ways and Means Committee Co-Chairs’ Budget, anticipated to be released on March 31, which the Legislature debates in forming its final budget proposal.

Mandate relief bills in committees

The *Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee* has two mandate relief bills to consider:

Senate Bill 800, sponsored by Sen. Suzanne Bonamici (D-Beaverton) at the request of State Supt. Susan Castillo, OSBA and other Education Coalition partners, removes a number of outdated or redundant provisions in current law. Hearing is scheduled for March 22.

Senate Bill 560, sponsored by Sen. Betsy Johnson (D-Scappoose), streamlines school districts’ continuous improvement plan process. SB 560 provides that, instead of the lengthy, time-consuming biennial report the district is now required to file with

the Department of Education, a district may only be required to:

- File any substantial changes, as determined by the district school board, or any additions made to the local district continuous improvement plan; or
- Certify that self-evaluations were conducted as required by this section and that the local district continuous improvement plan did not receive any substantial changes or any additions.

Hearing date has not been set.

The *House Education Committee* held a hearing on March 11 on **House Bill 3117**, sponsored by Rep. Jim Thompson

Continued

Charter school bill out of committee

Senate Bill 255 was heard Tuesday in the Senate Education Committee. OSBA Legislative and Public Affairs Specialist Lori Sattenspiel, Portland Public Schools board member **Bobbie Regan**, and Cindy Hunt of the Department of Education presented the consensus bill, the product of the 10-Year Charter Review Committee, which received unanimous support by the Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee.

The 10-Year Charter Review Committee, which OSBA assembled in January 2010, consisted of school board members, legislators, representatives of local school districts and charter schools, the Department of Education, OSBA, Northwest Center for Educational Options, Oregon Education Association (OEA), Confederation of Oregon School Administrators (COSA), and the Oregon PTA. The committee was charged with discussing concerns and recommending needed changes. SB 255 includes issues that the entire committee agreed to change.

Bobbie Regan, committee chair, summarized the bill in her testimony: “Senate Bill 255 includes recommendations that are generally designed to clarify procedures for public school districts, charter applicants and charter schools. As you know, these recommendations, technically, would all be considered amendments to ORS 338. I want to emphasize that all nine of these recommendations made it into this bill via *unanimous consent* of the 10-Year Charter School Review Committee which represented every side of this issue.”

Senate Bill 255 passed out of the Senate Education and Workforce Development committee and moves to the Senate floor for a vote next week.

Read *The Oregonian* article by Kim Melton at: http://www.oregonlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2011/03/oregon_senate_education_commit.html.

Other charter bills this week:

- **House Bill 2287** failed to pass a House vote. HB 2287 would have extended the initial charter contract to a minimum of five years and expanded the appeal

Continued

Charter schools – Continued

process of a denied charter school application, giving the State the sponsorship authority if a school was deemed to be acting in bad faith.

- [House Bill 3397](#) was heard this week in the House Revenue committee. The bill requires districts to pass on 95 percent of the ADMw they receive for charter students; instructs districts to pass along federal dollars if the charter school student numbers were used for the purpose of the grant; and requires monies retained by the school district be used for costs incurred by the district in relation to public charter schools.

The House Revenue committee took no action on this bill after two hours of public testimony.

Transportation funding revamp considered

The House Education Committee is considering new amendments to [House Bill 2437](#) which would replace Oregon's current method of providing school districts 70, 80 or 90 percent of the cost of transporting students with a "block grant." Rep. Betty Komp (D-Woodburn), chief sponsor of the legislation, held meetings with OSBA and other stakeholders to get feedback on the bill and the current method of funding student transportation. Several amendments have been proposed and, on Friday, the committee received an update on these "dash-3" amendments:

- Eliminate the current transportation grant through the State School Fund and replace it with a block grant equivalent to the transportation grant the school district received for the 2010-11 school year.

Mandate relief – Continued

(R-Dallas). Rep. Thompson characterized his bill as a conversation starter on mandate relief, emphasizing that the Legislature needs to stop placing new requirements on local schools without funding those requirements. Supporting testimony, especially in the area of redundant or time-consuming data reporting, was offered by **Paul Evans**, Central 13J school board member; **Kent Klewitz**, Jefferson School District 14J superintendent, and **Christy Perry**, Dallas School District superintendent.

OSBA Associate Executive Director Tricia Yates told the Committee that OSBA convened a Mandate Relief Project last summer and brought together COSA, OEA, AFT-Oregon, the Oregon Association of Education Service Districts and the

- Block grant adjustments would be made by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- Changes to the block grant must take into account various inflationary costs. Adjustments may also be made based on the "characteristics of the school district."
- Eliminate the mandate to provide transportation at the one-mile interval for elementary students and 1.5-mile interval for secondary students. Local school boards could set their own transportation boundaries and the State Board of Education could waive the requirement to transport secondary students.
- Implementation would begin with the 2011-2012 school year.

Contact OSBA Legislative and Public Affairs Specialist Morgan Allen (mallen@osba.org) with questions and feedback.

Oregon Department of Education to identify state laws that add burdens to school districts that could be amended, suspended or repealed. The group discussed state laws that had been passed without accompanying funding, and prospective mandates looming in the legislative session. The group also worked with Sen. Johnson, who subsequently introduced **SB 560**.

[House Bill 3370](#), sponsored by Rep. Jeff Barker (D-Aloha), which requires legislative fiscal impact statements to include the effect on school district expenditures if the measure imposes a new duty or increased level of service on school districts, is also a product of OSBA and its Mandate Relief Project partners. OSBA's Tricia Yates told the House Education Committee that this bill is sorely needed so that both legislators and school districts are aware at the outset how much proposed legislative mandates on schools will cost.

Legislative Update Webinar March 30, 8:30-9:30 a.m.

Hear from your OSBA legislative team about the status of the state budget and key education issues impacting schools.

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