

# OSBA Legislative Highlights



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OF OREGON

May 8, 2015

## OSBA Legislative Priority: Capital matching funds for school districts in the spotlight

Oregon's K-12 school buildings reflect a national pattern of under-investment: crumbling buildings, obsolete systems and deteriorating site conditions. School bonds passed by local voters are not keeping pace, and many districts have had no success with local voters at all. And when budgets are tight, maintenance funds and capital investments are often the first to be cut.

The Task Force on School Capital Improvement Planning issued a report to the Legislature in 2014 concluding that state matching dollars are a critical incentive for local communities to invest in school facilities; OSBA President Dave Krumbein (Pendleton School District) served on the task force. Key task force recommendations were drafted into **Senate Bill 447**; these include:

1. \$125 million in new XI-P state general obligation bonds for K-12 matching grants in 2015-17. Grants would range from \$4 million to \$8 million;
2. Establishing an Office of School Facilities in the Oregon Department of Education as a resource for school districts;
3. Providing technical assistance and small grants to assess district needs, support long-term capital programs and inform statewide capital planning; and
4. Launching the Oregon School Facilities Database to start building a repository of data for local district and statewide capital planning information.

On May 1, the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction heard testimony in support of SB 447 from an OSBA-organized panel that included: Condon School Board Member **Nichole Schott**; Grant School Board Member **Gordon Larson**; West-Linn Wilsonville School Board Member **Betty Reynolds**; Task Force Member Ted Wolf; OSBA President **Dave Krumbein**; Don Grotting, superintendent of the David Douglas School District; Mark Witty, superintendent of the Grant School District; Kathleen Rodden-Nord, superintendent of the Junction City School District; and Bill Watkins, superintendent of the Marcola School District.

Wolf kicked off the testimony by telling the committee that the Task Force "...believes that the availability of state matching grants can increase the chance that school

districts can win the support of their voters. In Oregon, raising capital for K-12 school facilities is an uncertain proposition. Reviewing the 79 school bond elections held around the state since 2009, the success rate is 50 percent...The success rate is too low to keep up with the needs of K-12 schools...the Task Force estimated that deferred maintenance at Oregon K-12 schools statewide totals at least \$7.6 billion. This figure does not take into account instructional needs or student capacity issues."

Supt. Grotting said that "...SB 447 provides a great incentive for local communities to invest in their schools by passing local bonds. This creates a multiplier effect at the local level. For a modest state investment, individual school districts will be able to leverage tens of millions of dollars in local investments."

Condon School Board Member Nichole Schott talked about the challenges her small district faces with declining enrollment. With less than 150 students left, the district would like to locate the students in one K-12 facility. The funds needed to do this are significant for the community to raise and the ability to get matching funds from the state will help their board convince voters to make a significant investment in their students.



*Left to right: Nichole Schott, Condon School Board; Gordon Larson, Grant School Board; Dave Krumbein, Pendleton School Board; Ted Wolf, parent advocate; Betty Reynolds, West Linn-Wilsonville School Board; Mark Witty, Grant SD superintendent*

OSBA President Dave Krumbein told the committee the legislation has broad support, including endorsements from the Oregon Small Schools Association, the Oregon Education Association, the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators, the Oregon School Employees Association, Stand for Children and the Oregon PTA. He noted that incentives for local districts to pass bonds for their schools will help communities with a low tax base make major investments in their school buildings.

Grant School District Superintendent Mark Witty and Board Member Gordon Larson described the urgent maintenance and capital needs in their district and in districts across Oregon that have been exacerbated by the budget cuts of recent years. They told the committee about the challenges associated with a small tax base when raising funds; school construction costs are similar whether 50,000 taxpayers or 5,000 are footing the bill.

If you are interested in the efforts to pass SB 447, now is a crucial time to get involved. For more information about how to make your voice heard on this critical issue, contact Morgan Allen, OSBA legislative specialist, at [mallen@osba.org](mailto:mallen@osba.org).

View SB 447:

[www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Legislative/BillTracking.aspx?s=15&t=&r=&q=sb 0447&c=50&key=SB 04470&ptadd=: SB 447 Details](http://www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Legislative/BillTracking.aspx?s=15&t=&r=&q=sb 0447&c=50&key=SB 04470&ptadd=: SB 447 Details)

## Paid sick leave bill heard

**Senate Bill 454A** was heard again late this week in the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services. The bill creates a very prescriptive process to allow employees paid sick leave if they work in Oregon under certain conditions. The bill also requires school districts to allow paid sick leave to temporary employees who have not earned this benefit under current law.

Currently, many school district employees already earn a sick leave benefit under ORS 332.507. However, SB 454 would add a mechanism for temporary workers (such as substitute teachers and coaches) in school districts to obtain an hour of paid sick leave for every 30 work hours accumulated. Districts would be required to initiate a burdensome and costly system to track these temporary workers in order to comply with the proposed law change.

The Oregon School Business Officials Association estimates the bill would cost school districts roughly \$14 million over the next biennium to provide paid sick leave to employees who don't already have the benefit provided under current law.

Public hearings were held on SB 454 earlier in the legislative session, including opportunities at evening hearings in Salem for the public to provide remarks related to the proposed statewide policy change. Proponents generally spoke about the need for paid sick leave, explaining they can't afford to stay home when sick and will come to work because they need the paycheck.

OSBA has opposed the bill as an additional financial burden on school districts for their temporary workers who do not meet the qualifying requirements under current law. "The existing statute provides sick leave benefits to qualified school district employees," OSBA Legislative Specialist Lori Sattenspiel commented. "This bill creates a tracking system for our temporary employees that would be burdensome to create and difficult to implement. It is simply another cost school districts cannot absorb into their already squeezed budgets."

## OSBA Annual Convention workshop proposals requested

Mark your calendars to help celebrate OSBA's 69th annual convention, November 12-15, at the Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront Hotel.

OSBA is seeking informative and interesting workshops primarily targeting school board members and superintendents. We are encouraging charter schools, colleges, education service districts, school districts and other organizations to present sessions which showcase successful approaches to educational issues, as well as sessions which demonstrate the advancement of student achievement and promote equity.

To share your successful program, submit your Workshop Proposal by **May 26, 2015**; go to:

[www.osba.org/Calendar/Events/Annual\\_Convention-2015.aspx](http://www.osba.org/Calendar/Events/Annual_Convention-2015.aspx)

Others testified against the bill, stating that each employer should be able to make his or her own sick time decisions, based on what the business can afford and what the employees want. One employer said workers like to be able to make shift changes among themselves as needed for their own or their family members' illnesses. Another employer, who has several part-time workers in high school or college, noted they like the part-time schedule which allows for the flexibility of time off for school and other activities. The workers also like the ability to pick up additional hours with shift changes that provide additional income.

The committee did not hold a work session as originally posted, but intends to bring an additional set of amendments next week in order to clarify some implementation issues and concerns that arose after testimony by business stakeholders.

Contact Lori Sattenspiel ([lsattenspiel@osba.org](mailto:lsattenspiel@osba.org)) for more information.

View SB 445A:

[www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Legislative/BillTracking.aspx?s=15&t=&r=&q=sb 0454&c=50&key=SB 04540&ptadd=: SB 454 Details](http://www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Legislative/BillTracking.aspx?s=15&t=&r=&q=sb 0454&c=50&key=SB 04540&ptadd=: SB 454 Details)

## In "Promise" video, Oregonians trace path to success through public schools

As part of "The Promise of Oregon" campaign, 10 adult Oregonians describe how their public school experiences led to professional successes. Watch the video here:

<http://promiseoregon.org/in-promise-video-oregonians-trace-path-to-success-through-public-schools/>



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