

OSBA Legislative Highlights



the Promise
OF OREGON



March 17, 2017

OSBA presses for bill to force Quality Education Model funding

An OSBA priority for this session, [House Joint Resolution 4](#), was heard early this week by the House Education Committee. OSBA Executive Director Jim Green went straight to the point Monday, telling the committee about the need for a new resolution.

“What House Joint Resolution 4 is designed to do is to tell you all to fund the Quality Education Model,” Green testified.

Under a ballot measure passed by voters, since 2001 state law has required the Legislature to appropriate in each biennium enough money to meet the Quality Education Model. As interpreted by court rulings, the Legislature can alternatively publish a report that says why the state couldn’t fund to the model.

Oregon has never funded to the model, and so each biennium the Legislature writes such a report.

“I’ve read these reports every two years, and they change the dates to say we don’t have the money to fund it,” Green said.

Green laid out some of the ideals in the model for curriculum, class time, class size, support services and full-time specialist teachers. Most Oregon schools fall far short in all areas. Green pointed out that in a [recent OSBA poll](#), 66 percent of Oregonians support amending the constitution to require funding the QEM.

“OSBA’s top legislative priority is adequate and stable education funding,” testified **Betty Reynolds**, OSBA board president. “House Joint Resolution 4 is one element of our proposal to fully fund Oregon’s Quality Education Model.”

HJR 4 removes the law’s language about writing a report, essentially reducing the law to “the Legislative Assembly shall appropriate in each biennium a sum of money sufficient to ensure that the state’s system of public education meets quality goals established by law.”

“We need more,” testified Tim Sweeney, superintendent of Coquille School District.

Sweeney, who appeared with Coquille High students Sam Dow and Sammie Huffman, explained that the district has done great things, particularly in early education, but that short budgets are taking a toll in the education and services offered, especially at the high school level.

The two students told their stories of trauma-related needs and working with school counselors and nurses. With proposed funding at \$8.02 billion, counseling in Coquille could disappear completely along with several other programs. Dow went to the Legislature to ask for additional support not only for herself but for students who need that extra assistance outside the classroom and, in particular, for students who are in foster care programs.

Morgan Allen, deputy executive director of the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators, said that when adjusted for inflation, Oregon has not increased per-student spending since 1991. Allen showed a correlation between statistics on low spending and poor student achievement relative to other states.

“There is absolutely a relationship between investment and outcomes,” said Allen.



Sam Dow (left) and Sammie Huffman joined Coquille School District Superintendent Tim Sweeney on Monday to tell the House Education Committee about the need for school counselors, which have been essential to their success. Without more funding, counseling could be cut at Coquille. (Photo by Rep. Sherrie Sprenger)

Education advocates explain need for \$8.4 billion in State School Fund

OSBA, in coordination with COSA and the OEA, arranged 10 speakers across a series of three panels Thursday in the Capitol to present the need for increased education funding.

The Joint Ways and Means Education Subcommittee took testimony on two bills, [Senate Bills 5516](#) and [5517](#), that represent the bulk of the funding for Oregon schools. Much of the testimony focused on the need for an \$8.4 billion appropriation to the State School Fund to avoid painful education cuts. SB 5517 offers \$8.02 billion.

“The proposed budget is far below what the Quality Education Commission identifies as needed, and about \$380 million short of what school business managers across the state have told us we need just to maintain current service levels,” OSBA President **Betty Reynolds** testified.

“In many of the state's 197 school districts, it's a cuts budget,” she said. “This issue affects more than 578,000 public school students. Those kids are our future: Oregon's economy is dependent upon a well-educated workforce.”

Aliemah Bradley, a senior at Jefferson High in Portland, testified about the progress her school has been able to make recently and how a cuts budget imperils that.

“At Jefferson,” she said, “we have made remarkable progress on improving our graduation rates. The graduation rate for the class of 2014 was 66 percent. Last school year, that number was 84 percent. With this crisis budget, there is potential for serious setbacks in that progress.”

Maryalice Russell, superintendent of the McMinnville School District, testified about her tenure as an administrator and the experience of students who were in first-grade in 2009. Some of those students attended the hearing.

“I have been a school administrator for 35 years,” she said. “For 25 of those years, I've had to make cuts. The students I met as first-graders, the students here with me today, have been attending our schools during budget cut after budget cut after budget cut, due to inadequate K-12 funding. They need to be assured that the programs of study they are planning for today are here tomorrow and are here through their graduation in June 2019.”

There was no opposition to the given testimony from any subcommittee members. Sen. Rod Monroe (D-Portland), subcommittee co-chair, responded generally to the request for a larger State School Fund allocation by saying that, to his disappointment and frustration, the budget would not support an increase in school funding given the current revenue level.

Unfortunately, he said, when he joined the subcommittee, “they didn't give me a printing press” to



Advocates for education at Thursday's hearing in the Capitol on the State School Fund include (from left) South Lane School District Superintendent Krista Parent, OSBA Board President Betty Reynolds, McMinnville School District Superintendent Maryalice Russell, OEA President Hanna Vaandering, Portland Public Schools Board Student Representative Aliemah Bradley and Oregon PTA President Collin Robinson. (Photo by Rachel Fleenor, OSBA)

print more money. He said revenue reform was necessary if there was going to be an increased level of funding to schools.

- Richard Donovan
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OSBA and COSA hold successful Legislative Day at the Capitol

Almost 100 education advocates visited the Capitol on March 13 as part of the OSBA and COSA Legislative Day. Most attendees took the opportunity to visit directly with legislators and share their views on pressing topics such as education funding, Measure 98, revenue reform and the replacement of old school buildings.

The day began at Willamette Heritage Center, where OSBA Board President **Betty Reynolds** (West Linn-Wilsonville School District) welcomed attendees.

“Our top priority is adequate and stable funding for education,” Reynolds told the audience.

The chair of the House Education Committee, Rep. Margaret Doherty (D-Tigard), delivered some reassurance to a roomful of school board members, educators, district staff and superintendents.

“Anything that is an unfunded mandate, I'm not going to pass through committee,” Doherty said.

That was an applause-generating message for education advocates, who were receiving strategic training and guidance for dealing with the Legislature. The K-12

Unnecessary workplace bullying bill increases costs, opponents say

[Senate Bill 292](#) would make it an unlawful employment practice, under the Oregon Safe Employment Act, to create or maintain an abusive work environment.

On Monday, proponents before the Senate Judiciary Committee testified that abusive work environments are widespread, harmful and costly.

Lisa S. Stine of the National Association of Social Workers submitted testimony: “Up to 20 percent of the U.S. workforce will experience some sort of abuse during their careers. At any given time, at least 4 percent of the population is being targeted.”

The costs, she said, have a “financial impact across all Oregon enterprises, including for-profit, nonprofit and government organizations.”

Other testimony in support of the bill detailed personal accounts of difficult work environments and work experiences.

OSBA testified in opposition to the measure. Richard Donovan, OSBA legislative specialist, testified that passage of the bill “would cost school districts and community colleges money due to an anticipated increase in costs of insurance and liability coverage that every district must purchase.”

These potential costs, he said, would necessarily “be taken from money that would hopefully otherwise be going to the classroom.” Also, because much of the conduct prohibited by the bill is already illegal, Donovan testified that sufficient legal remedies exist.

The members of the committee spent a good amount of time discussing what was or was not bullying in the workplace. Specific examples of reasonable expectations for conduct in workplaces, including private businesses and the military, were cited. Some members of the committee were openly favorable to the bill, while at least one member was opposed.

No further hearings are scheduled, and OSBA will monitor the bill’s progress.

- *Richard Donovan*
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Craig Hawkins, Confederation of Oregon School Administrators executive director, urged education advocates at the OSBA and COSA Legislative Day to stay focused on the amount in the State School Fund and not let themselves be distracted by small talk or other issues. (Photo by Alex Pulaski, OSBA)

public education budget will be a primary focus this session.

“You have one job and the job is to make the case for why at least \$8.4 billion is the minimum amount that needs to be in the State School Fund for the next biennium,” Craig Hawkins, Confederation of Oregon School Administrators executive director, told the group.

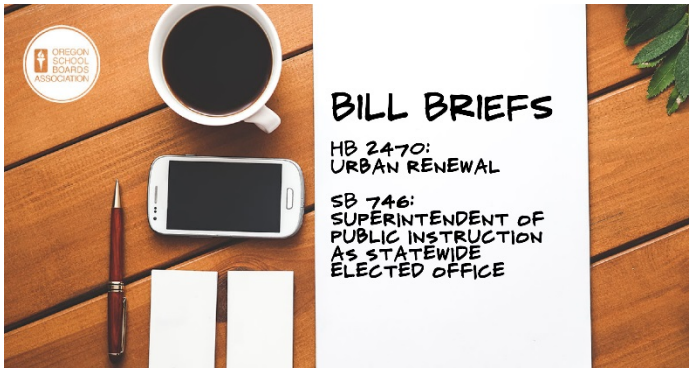
Oregon school business officials have calculated that the State School Fund needs at least \$8.4 billion for most schools to continue at current service levels. The legislative budget framework presented in January offered \$7.8 billion for the school fund. Participants were reminded over and over again to stay focused on the need for \$8.4 billion and the impact if schools don’t get it.

Speakers gave an overview of legislative issues and advice on how to talk with legislators. Attendees, who met with legislators later in the day, were reminded of the power of face-to-face meetings and real-life stories about kids needing support.

Siuslaw School District Superintendent Andy Grzeskowiak said he wanted his senator to commit to pushing for a stable education funding system. “Doesn’t matter if the economy is up or the economy is down, the kids still go to school,” he said.

- *Jake Arnold*
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Bill Briefs



Urban renewal

House Bill 2470

What it does: The bill would require approval of an urban renewal plan by all overlapping taxing districts. It would add a representative from each taxing district, which includes school district representation. Currently, urban renewal districts are designed to get rid of blight and use tax dollars to work on economic development projects, including infrastructure. These investments return additional tax dollars to the jurisdictions that provide services. School districts compete with urban renewal for those tax dollars and should be included in the visioning and planning as a partner.

What's new: The Senate Economic Development and Trade Committee heard the bill March 15.

What's next: OSBA supports the bill and will monitor its progress.

Superintendent of public instruction as statewide elected office

Senate Bill 746

What it does: The bill would make the office of superintendent of public instruction an elected statewide office. SB 746, along with related measures [SB 649](#) and [SJR 37](#), envision substantially different oversight systems for education in Oregon. Prior to 2012, the superintendent of public instruction was elected by the people of Oregon for a four-year term. As part of an education overhaul, SB 552 in 2011 eliminated the elected office of superintendent. That bill made the governor the superintendent and tasked the governor with appointing a deputy superintendent of public instruction. The appointee must have at least five years of experience as a school administrator and is subject to approval by the Oregon Senate. The current deputy superintendent of public instruction is Salam Noor.

What's new: The Senate Education Committee heard the bill March 16.

What's next: OSBA will monitor the bill's progress.

The Week Ahead



March 20, 3 p.m. House Education Committee holds public hearing on training and requirements for school counseling ([HB 2528](#), [HB 2529](#), [HB 2530](#) and [HB 2536](#)), establishing grants for student transportation ([HB 2693](#)) and developing ethnic studies ([HB 2845](#)).

March 20, 3 p.m. Senate Workforce Committee holds public hearing on changes to PERS ([SB 712](#) and [SB 761](#)).

March 21, 8:30 a.m. Joint Ways and Means Education Subcommittee holds public hearing on the Department of Education ([SB 5516](#)) and the State School Fund ([SB 5517](#)).

March 21, 9:30 a.m. Oregon Department of Education holds administrative rules hearing for adding school counseling standards to Common Curriculum Goals and revising the form for physical exams for playing sports.

March 21, 3 p.m. Senate Education Committee holds public hearing on establishing student loan insurance ([SB 747](#)), amending constitution on paying for schools first ([SJR 18](#) and [SJR 20](#)), awarding grants for district programs ([SB 803](#)) and changing sunset date on post-graduate scholar programs ([SB 136](#)).

March 22, 3 p.m. House Education Committee holds informational meeting on Measure 98 and public hearing taking students' aspirations into consideration ([HB 2587](#)), establishing Task Force on Out-of-School Youth ([HB 2657](#)) and adopting complaint process against school district policies ([HB 2649](#)).

March 23 State Board of Education considers final state plan for implementing Every Student Succeeds Act.

March 23, 3 p.m. Senate Education Committee holds public hearing on providing professional development to school districts ([SB 706](#)) and studying school social workers ([SB 278](#)), and work session on opting out of Oregon Educators Benefit Board ([SB 387](#)).

Items may be added to committee agendas during the week. The Oregon Legislature keeps an updated page of committee agendas at:

olis.leg.state.or.us/LIZ/Committees/Meeting/List

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