



KEY FINDINGS:

Greater Albany Public Schools Business Practices Review

October 2008

In May 2008, the Oregon Association of School Business Officials (OASBO) led an independent review of business operations in the Greater Albany Public Schools. OASBO's key findings and recommendations:

COMMENDATIONS

- ***The district has strong relationships with the local business community.*** For example, the district created an innovative computer-replacement program that includes purchasing off-lease computers from Dell for student use.
- ***Nutrition services is a first-rate food service operation.*** Several programs are best practices for other districts to emulate including: culinary competitions in elementary and high schools, student work programs designed to develop positive work habits, culinary arts program with local community college and student work programs coordinated with the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses.
- ***The district has widespread collaboration among staff and the community supported by a strong communication program for both internal and external audiences.*** The district has a comprehensive communications plan that is significant and likely contributes to good relations throughout the district and community. Several innovations include: a well-organized and easy to navigate website, Association Information meetings, "Breakfast with the Board" program and strong parent involvement in district committees and volunteer opportunities.
- ***The district has a strong mentor program for first year teachers and administrators.*** New teachers are matched with experienced teachers by grade level or subject area. For administrators, the program focuses on giving insight on staffing and budgeting issues in addition to board operations.
- ***The district has solid labor relations including a "de-escalation" committee designed to foster collaboration.*** The district has established a collaborative relationship with its licensed and classified unions that prioritizes consideration of the union's perception of the district. The "de-escalation" committee is made up of top managers and union officials, as a key to fostering collaboration.
- ***The student transportation program supports bus drivers and excels at safety.*** Drivers are well trained and participate in the state's safety competition. For several years, the district has had the state's overall winner and the top-10 state winner. The general administration supports the staff with a "driver of the month" award to show appreciation for staff.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- ***Develop a human resource plan and enhance existing practices. Conduct exit interviews in person.*** Human resources could benefit from a written plan with goals. The district decentralizes many HR functions and an overall set of direction will enhance overall operations.
- ***Review the transportation delivery model and the services desired by the district.*** Particularly as the district grows, it will be important to assess the transportation needs for the district and seek alternatives such as sharing services with other districts or participating in a transportation consortium with other districts.
- ***Create professional development opportunities for staff throughout the district.*** Technology staff should have access to professional development opportunities so they are trained at appropriate levels.
- ***Develop a documented workflow process and communicate it to building occupants.*** The operations and maintenance program needs to convert to planned preventative maintenance and move to a work-order system that is documented and well understood by everyone on the operations and maintenance staff and staff in buildings.
- ***Develop a consistent method for addressing performance issues in a timely fashion.*** Employee performance issues need to be approached by a consistent identification of issues, a clear implementation plan to address the issue and follow up plans for assistance. The program should include specific training for supervisors and building principals on evaluating and coaching staff.