



# Oregon CLASS Project:

*Creative Leadership and Student Success*

## **What is the Oregon CLASS Project?**

A new opportunity to raise student achievement by building teacher leadership skills, expanding educators' career options and providing educators with additional compensation for individual and/or team excellence.

## **How the CLASS Project will work**

Chalkboard has selected three Oregon school districts – Sherwood, Tillamook and Forest Grove – to be the first to receive planning grants for the CLASS Project pilot program. Each district will receive a grant to develop individualized pilot programs that expand career paths and create differentiated pay structures. The pilot projects will establish new leadership roles for teachers, expand training and collaboration opportunities and create better performance evaluation processes. Participating districts also will reward individual and/or team success for meeting school goals in improving student achievement, based on a broad set of measurements.

Each participating district is spending several months designing its own program based on input from teachers and staff, administrators, school board members, parents and other stakeholders. Chalkboard is providing up to \$30,000 per district to support this planning phase. Once design is complete, each district will receive implementation awards of \$200,000 to \$400,000 for multiple years.

## **Why is this project needed?**

To raise student achievement, we need to better support Oregon educators. To attract and retain highly qualified educators, we must make teacher career paths and compensation options more attractive. We must make sure great teachers have the chance to move up the career ladder to peer leadership positions more quickly based on their performance, not their seniority. We must make sure educators have time to collaborate and share great practices so they feel supported in meeting classroom challenges.

About 20 states are moving to implement new career enhancement and compensation models for educators. Some are straight pay-for-performance models, while some are much broader in their efforts to support, evaluate and reward educators. It's still early to measure the results of these programs in raising student achievement, but many early results are promising. Minnesota in particular has created a strong model program, with buy-in from the teachers' union, to provide locally developed programs that offer new career options for educators and better evaluate and reward success in meeting school and student achievement goals.

Two statewide work groups of education and finance experts both recommended to Chalkboard that it pilot new career and compensation models for educators. Meanwhile, citizens told Chalkboard loud and clear that one of their top educational priorities is supporting great teachers while increasing the professional accountability of all educators. In 2006, Chalkboard conducted several informational sessions for Oregon school district staff to share what kinds of efforts are moving forward in other states, and gather feedback about a potential Oregon pilot project. Chalkboard also convened groups of Oregon teachers to get their input.

## **Next Steps:**

- CLASS Project planning and design phase, March – fall 2007
- CLASS Project implementation, begins winter/spring 2008