



Building “Best Practices” in School District Business Operations: *A Chalkboard/OASBO Partnership*

In 2007, the Chalkboard Project and the Oregon Association of School Business Officials announced a joint project to review business operations practices in five Oregon school districts. Their goal: to develop a set of “best practices” that can be shared with districts throughout the state.

The process

OASBO has created a 10- to 12-member team of business experts to conduct the reviews. Team members include representatives of OASBO, ASBO International, the Oregon School Boards Association and other education-related agencies and associations.

The team is reviewing district practices in areas such as processing payroll; purchasing services and supplies; providing food service, transportation and custodial services; and forecasting budgets. The team will use the information gathered to create a set of “best practices” that can be shared with all districts to encourage innovation and savings.

The districts

Several school districts have expressed interest in participating in the project. OASBO selected the Beaverton School District to be the first to receive a business practices review, and that review occurred in October 2007. OASBO will select four other districts of varying sizes, geography and demographics to participate in winter/spring 2008 reviews that will conclude by June.

Chalkboard’s role and interest

Chalkboard provided OASBO with an \$87,500 grant to conduct the business practices reviews. Chalkboard’s interest in funding the project grew out of extensive research about how Oregon K-12 schools can improve. Statewide spending on district business operations is higher than the national average. In addition, more than half of Oregonians believe schools can do more to eliminate unnecessary spending. Findings from the OASBO project will complement the information available on Chalkboard’s Open Book\$ Web site, an online tool showing how Oregon school districts allocate money in key areas.

www.chalkboardproject.org

www.openbooksproject.org