



2009 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY: Quality Educators

Chalkboard believes that an excellent teacher in every classroom is critical to improving student achievement. That's why Chalkboard strongly urges mentoring and professional development for every Oregon K-12 educator. Governor Kulongoski agrees and his upcoming biannual budget includes targeted investments of more than \$10 million in these areas. Too many Oregon teachers leave the profession within their first five years. The cost to taxpayers is more than \$40 million a year. It's time to elevate the teaching profession and support our teachers. It's time to give our kids the high level of teaching that they deserve. Chalkboard is committed to making our K-12 schools among the nation's top 10 in student achievement.

MENTORING

Investing in teaching quality is an investment in student achievement. That's why Chalkboard overwhelmingly endorses the Governor's continued commitment to mentoring programs for new teachers and administrators. The 2007 Legislature allocated \$5 million to launch a mentoring program for 2008-2009. **The Governor's recommended budget includes \$10 million for the biennium to continue the mentoring program statewide which includes \$2.5 million from the Education Stability Fund.** Chalkboard intends to work with the Legislature to identify additional funding to expand the program even further this biennium. The estimated cost of connecting every new Oregon teacher and administrator with a mentor is \$24 million.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Improving teaching quality is among the most cost-effective ways to improve student achievement. Oregon can no longer afford to leave the professional development of 30,000+ teachers and administrators to chance with random and disjointed professional development experiences. Chalkboard's research shows that teachers crave quality professional development, but they don't know where or how to find it. At this time, no central resource exists for quality professional development programs that meet national standards. Chalkboard is partnering with the Governor and others to change that in the following three areas:

- ★ Collaborative leadership (Enterprise Education Steering Committee)
- ★ Professional Development Standards (National Staff Development Council)
- ★ Web-based clearinghouse for high quality professional development programs for every Oregon educator

The Governor has allocated \$150,000 the first year of the biennium and targeted the same amount for the second-year.

About Chalkboard

Launched in early 2004, Chalkboard Project exists to inspire Oregonians to do what it takes to make the state's K-12 public schools among the nations best, while strengthening financial accountability to taxpayers. Chalkboard—an initiative of Foundations for a Better Oregon—is sponsored by a growing list of independent foundations. The six foundations are: The Collins Foundation, The Ford Family Foundation, Jeld-Wen Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, and The Oregon Community Foundation and the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation. For more information about Chalkboard, visit www.chalkboardproject.org.

Additional legislative priorities

Finance and Accountability

EDUCATION FUNDING STABILITY

The Chalkboard Project is committed to ensuring adequate funding for public education. While our main objectives are to improve the quality of education and increase student achievement, this cannot be done without adequate and stable funding. Chalkboard will assist stakeholders to find more education dollars within our current economy. Changes in budgeting practices, options for stable funding sources, and increases in the Rainy Day Fund and Education Stability Fund continue to be a goal of the Chalkboard Project.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Our research on student transportation focuses on alternatives to the current reimbursement formula and new incentives for high performance. The Oregon Department of Education is currently conducting a baseline study; their findings report is expected to be ready for presentation in February 2009. Chalkboard urges policymakers, stakeholders, and business leaders to use this report in order to select and prioritize ways to improve transportation funding. Smarter use of transportation dollars will free up resources that could be applied directly to the classroom.

SCHOOL BUSINESS PRACTICE REVIEWS

School districts are eager to share best practices with one another and are keenly aware of the need for sensible and transparent fiscal management. Chalkboard recently funded school business reviews for five districts across the state with outstanding results. Based on the early success of this pilot effort, Chalkboard urges expanding the pool of auditors to include highly qualified private and non-profit businesses and organizations to assist with evaluating district business practices.

Student Success

NEW DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS

Chalkboard shares the State's commitment to preparing high school graduates for the economy of the future, not the economy of the past. A 21st century education requires more creativity, more technology and more problem-solving than ever before. Every student should graduate ready for college, working, and citizenship. We support funding evidence-based teaching and learning practices to assure students receive the necessary reading and academic support to successfully meet the new diploma requirements.

EARLY AGE INVESTMENTS

Chalkboard Project has identified that a key strategy to improving student achievement is to focus on children entering the school system. By the end of third grade, students make a transition from learning to read to reading to learn. Children who cannot read at grade level by the end of third grade are far more likely to fall behind in school, and they're at much greater risk of eventually dropping out. Class size reduction in K-1 and reading tutors for K-3 are critical for lasting success.

