

The Chalkboard Project entered the 2007 Oregon legislative session with an ambitious agenda to improve our K-12 public schools. Here's a progress report on what your legislators accomplished, based on Chalkboard's education priorities.



GOOD PROGRESS



Teacher mentoring

New teachers, principals and superintendents will receive high-quality mentors for two years, thanks to a new law phasing in this support over the next four years.



Stable funding

The state now has its first-ever comprehensive rainy day fund to support key services, including public schools, in bad economic times. A one-time diversion of the corporate tax "kicker" rebate will help fill that fund.



Transportation savings

The Oregon Department of Education will conduct a thorough study of our school transportation system to look for ways to operate it more efficiently.

SOME PROGRESS



K-3 student support

Options to lower K-1 class sizes and provide more reading tutors were included on the list of initiatives districts can undertake with \$260 million in "school improvement" money, but they weren't established as priorities, as Chalkboard preferred.



District operating cost review

A new process allows the Secretary of State's office to review school districts' business operations to share "best practices" and identify savings. The catch — the reviews are voluntary, not mandatory, as Chalkboard preferred.

NO PROGRESS



Teacher professional development

A bill to create a statewide professional development network for educators that would help ensure the ongoing training they receive is rigorous and relevant failed to gain approval by the Legislature.

SO WHAT'S NEXT?

Oregon Legislature: Round two

Chalkboard was proud to act as the change agent for schools in the 2007 legislative session. While progress was made, much important work remains undone. Chalkboard will take a hard look at that to-do list and continue to advance proposals in upcoming legislative sessions. Top priorities likely will include ensuring stronger professional development options for teachers, maintaining funding and momentum for the educator mentor program, and increasing financial efficiency and accountability.

Progress on other Chalkboard initiatives

Chalkboard doesn't need legislative approval to move forward with other important initiatives to improve Oregon schools and better connect them with citizens:

CLASS Project: Creative Leadership and Student Success

This Chalkboard pilot project will offer new career paths, collaboration opportunities and compensation options to teachers in the Forest Grove, Sherwood and Tillamook school districts. Each district is designing its own program and, if approved, will be funded by Chalkboard for three years. The goal: Raise student achievement by better supporting and rewarding teachers and other school staff.

Tracking school spending

Chalkboard has unveiled phase two of the popular Open Book\$ Web site (www.openbooksproject.org), which provides easy-to-understand information about school district spending. The new site contains updated financial information for all Oregon school districts, as well as new features such as information on class size, staffing and per-student spending.

"Best business practices" reviews

Chalkboard is partnering with the Oregon Association of School Business Officials to review the business practices of five volunteer school districts over the coming year, beginning with the Beaverton School District in fall 2007. The goal: Develop a "best business practices" list to share with districts across the state, as well as a model process for reviewing the business practices of all Oregon districts.

Parent outreach

Chalkboard is extending the reach of its Running Start parent toolkit materials, which help reduce barriers between schools and hard-to-reach families. Chalkboard will fund trainings for staff of Portland Impact, the SUN School Program and other organizations to incorporate Running Start materials into their parent outreach activities.



To learn more: www.chalkboardproject.org