



# The Daily Astorian



Astoria, Oregon

Thursday, June 28, 2007

## Chalkboard comes to play, full-time

*Oregon schools gain, but most new money comes with little accountability*

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Teachers' attitudes nationwide are changing on the topic of merit pay, reported The New York Times recently. This is a striking development. For decades, teachers and teachers' unions in particular have resisted the notion of tying pay directly to measurable performance.

Accountability is becoming a trend in K-12 education, and at all levels of instruction. In Oregon, we have the Chalkboard Project to thank for being a constant nag on the topic of measuring all manner of performance and providing more transparency to school district budgets. With financial support from 20 funders, Chalkboard has the ability to stay in the legislative game, even after many other players have gone home.

It is refreshing to see such consistent lobbying and research devoted to education, rather than to narrow commercial interests such as protecting beer distributors or the tobacco industry.

It has been a moderately successful legislative session for the Chalkboard Project, with one major exception. While the Oregon Legislature is bumping up education spending, "most of the new money comes with little accountability on how it will be spent," reported The Oregonian last Sunday.

Chalkboard's big loss was that the legislature did not target investment in kindergarten and first grade class size and in K-3 reading tutors.

Nonetheless, Chalkboard is in the game. Its priorities have traction. Having the stamina to come back in the interim and the next session will insure that accountability in education will increase, not wane.

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