



PRESS RELEASE

June 1, 2009

For Immediate Release

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Chalkboard and Forest Grove School District Salute First Year of State Mentoring Program

As the inaugural year of Oregon's Beginning Teacher & Administrator Mentor Program comes to a close, the Chalkboard Project is marking the occasion by co-hosting a listening and recognition session with the Forest Grove School District. The goals of the June 4 event are to get feedback from seasoned and novice educators on the practice of teacher mentoring, applaud the commitment of Forest Grove participants, and gather ideas on bettering Oregon's education system.

More than 50 teachers are expected for Chalkboard's "Conversation with Oregon Teachers," the second in a series of listening sessions the group is organizing. "We learned from our first event in Cottage Grove that many teachers consider time as their biggest challenge," notes Chalkboard President Sue Hildick. "They want time to collaborate across grades, to plan, to observe master teachers at work, to get on-going training. We know from our research that these are critical components for facilitating great teaching. And the effectiveness of teachers is the most important in-school factor for determining student success."

At the June 4 gathering, Forest Grove educators will share insights on what they need most to be successful and suggest ideas on how Chalkboard can best support those needs. They will also be asked to provide feedback on the state Mentor Program.

Forest Grove is one of more than 80 Oregon school districts participating in the program. The program pairs experienced educators with beginning teachers and administrators in a rigorous instruction curriculum.

Mentoring has been proven to decrease teacher turnover while increasing student achievement. About 40% of Oregon teachers leave teaching within their first five years, costing taxpayers more than \$45 million a year. It is estimated that 99% of first- and second-year teachers who participated in the Mentor Program will remain in the profession in the coming year. Currently, more than 100 districts have applied for 2009-10 Mentor Program grants, which would affect nearly 1,000 educators and tens of thousands of students.

Thursday's Conversation will be followed by a celebration of Forest Grove's successful implementation of the Mentor Program. Educators will be recognized with certificates and enjoy door prizes, food, and refreshments. Sum's Hildick, "We're delighted to help offer some small rewards to these leading teachers for the important role they play in shaping our state's future."

A Conversation with Oregon Teachers
McMenamins Grand Lodge, Alice Inkley Room
3505 Pacific Ave.
Forest Grove, OR 97116
June 4, 2009
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

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About Chalkboard Project

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 nation's best, while strengthening our school system's financial accountability to taxpayers. Chalkboard aims to help create a more informed and engaged public that understands and addresses the tough choices and trade-offs required to build strong schools, and to enable statewide programs that can be applied at the local level to improve school quality, accountability, and funding. For more information about Chalkboard and to learn how to get involved, call (877) YOUR-K12 or visit www.chalkboardproject.org.