

## **PRESS RELEASE**

April 21, 2009  
For Immediate Release

Contact:  
Sue Hildick  
President  
hildicks@chalkboardproject.org  
(503) 542-4325

Merry Ann Moore  
Communications  
merryann@bendcable.com  
(541) 549-2468

### CHALKBOARD TUNES IN TO TEACHERS FOR APPRECIATION WEEK

**April 21, 2009** - In Lane County, Teacher Appreciation Week means more than a thank you note or a shiny apple this year. Chalkboard Project is partnering with the South Lane School District to show its commitment to teachers by inviting them to a "Conversation with Oregon Teachers." The goal is to listen to what educators have to say about their own career advancement and about the direction of education in Oregon.

"We honor the role of teachers as leaders in education, and we want to know what their priorities are in their own careers," explains Sue Hildick, president of the Chalkboard Project. Chalkboard is a non-partisan education advocacy group aiming to make Oregon K-12 public schools among the Nation's best. "This conversation will inform us on ways to work hand-in-hand with teachers in shaping Oregon's education system. It's a listening session for us, and a teachers' lounge talk for them, with the potential for real action on what comes up."

Teachers will be asked what types of support would be the biggest help, what Chalkboard could do to assist them in meeting their personal goals as teachers, and the best ways for teachers to get information on such matters.

One outcome will be new ideas to include in a Chalkboard website feature called the Teachers' Lounge, now in development. Much of its content will come out of what is learned from dialogue with teachers. Depending on interest, additional listening sessions may be scheduled by Chalkboard in different parts of the state.

The Cottage Grove teacher forum will complement an event being held by the South Lane, Creswell, North Douglas and Pleasant Hill School Districts celebrating a successful year of implementing Oregon's Beginning Teacher and Administrator Program. This mentor program pairs experienced teachers and administrators with beginning educators. Similar programs have been shown nationwide to decrease teacher turnover (which currently costs Oregon \$45 million dollars a year) and to increase student achievement. The Chalkboard Project and other Oregon education advocates are pushing to retain this low-cost, high-return program, which may be targeted in state budget cuts. (For more, visit Chalkboard's new Web site, [www.MentoringEducators.org](http://www.MentoringEducators.org).)

Says Hildick, "High-achieving teachers mean high-achieving students. Chalkboard's top priority is having quality educators in every classroom, and that means partnering with

teachers to help them get where they want to be professionally. We invite teachers who are eager to move ahead to join us on May 6."

A Conversation with Oregon Teachers  
Sponsored by The Chalkboard Project  
3:30-5:30 p.m., Wed., May 6  
Cottage Grove High School  
1375 South River Rd.  
Cottage Grove, OR

###

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](http://www.chalkboardproject.org).