



**Contact:**

Liesl Wendt  
Vice President of External Relations  
Chalkboard Project  
[liesl@chalkboardproject.org](mailto:liesl@chalkboardproject.org)  
503.542.4325

**Popular website expands to provide more information about Oregon schools**

*The Chalkboard Project's Open Books now features student achievement and demographics data to support updated financial information.*

**March 3, 2009 – Oregon** – The current economic climate is forcing schools to make difficult budget decisions that are affecting Oregon children. Yet, far too many Oregonians are unaware of how their tax dollars are being spent and how these investments affect student learning. In response, the Chalkboard Project has released an updated and expanded version of the Open Books Project website.

In 2006, when Open Books first launched, Chalkboard's goal was to develop a site that provided a simple but innovative way to view how school dollars were being spent. Today, the financial data that Open Books is well known for has been updated and now includes information about student achievement, details about teachers, student demographics and the community. These new features will allow Oregonians to gain significant insight into how their local and state public schools are performing. Data about the average years of experience for teachers, the household income distribution within a district, and access to the latest assessment test results are only a few the website's highlights.

Research by Chalkboard and other educational organizations in Oregon suggests a disconnect between public perception and the realities facing school financing and student achievement. "Determining how resources are distributed in order to best serve students is a difficult task. Open Books serves the education community by helping us build public trust and support for the challenges we face daily," said George Russell, Superintendent, Eugene School District.

Along with the education community's support, the business community has heralded Open Books as an important step towards reducing wasteful spending. Open Books aims to make Oregon school decisions and results easily understandable and transparent.

"Openness and transparency in our schools is paramount regardless of the state's economic situation. However, now it is more imperative than ever that we put budget decisions under a microscope," said Ryan Deckert, President, Oregon Business Association. "Open Books is a perfect tool to ensure Oregonians are well informed about where their money is going."

Open Books is a part of a larger strategy implemented by the Chalkboard Project to increase the quality of K-12 education in Oregon with the goal of increasing student achievement to among the top 10 in the nation. Chalkboard believes stable and adequate funding to be vital, yet insufficient, if not coupled with transparency and efficiency.

“Every Oregonian should find it easier to know how their schools spend money and what results they get,” said Sue Hildick, president of the Chalkboard Project. “We’re very proud of the diligent steps taken to ensure all the data is as accurate and extensive as possible.”

To access Open Books, go to [www.openbooksproject.org](http://www.openbooksproject.org).

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