



2019 Legislative Priorities

Our public education system is key to keeping our economy strong, our communities healthy, and ensuring a good quality of life for every Oregonian. The 2019 Session offers a renewed opportunity to improve outcomes for students by investing in our schools and ensuring they have the resources to meet the diverse needs of all students.

These investments will help Oregon's schools overcome decades of inadequate and unstable funding. We can increase our graduation rates and add school days and instructional time. We can ensure that our students have reasonable class sizes and our schools are safe and welcoming for all students. We can close opportunity gaps for historically underserved students, including students of color, students experiencing poverty, English Language Learners and students receiving special education services.

Educators across Oregon are committed to meeting the needs of all students. COSA members have prioritized the following policy and funding recommendations during the 2019 Session:

STATE SCHOOL FUND - Current Service Level

To avoid cutting student services and increasing class sizes, Oregon needs to invest at least \$8.97 billion in the State School Fund and an additional \$100 million to help cover district PERS liabilities (for a total of \$9.07 billion, as proposed in Governor Brown's Recommended Budget) to ensure that there is sufficient funding to continue current programs and staffing.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FUND - Progress Towards Quality Education Model funding

A School Improvement Fund targets investments in key areas and allows flexibility for local school districts and their communities to meet the specific needs of their students. The Joint Committee on Student Success has identified over \$3 billion in possible education investments and the Governor has recommended investing \$800 million in a school improvement fund. COSA members believe the goal should be to invest \$1 billion in an updated School Improvement Fund focused on four main areas of investment and related outcomes:

- **Class Sizes** - Reducing class size and adding more educators and skilled professionals in school buildings with the specialized training needed provide the individual help and attention students need to be successful.
- **Well-Rounded Education** - Offering a more well-rounded and meaningful education that includes more opportunities for electives, extracurricular activities, CTE/STEM, art, music, PE, and enrichment activities.
- **More Learning Time** - Provide more time to learn by adding school days, additional instructional time and learning opportunities like summer school and before and after school programs for students who need them most.
- **Student Health and Safety** - Meeting the social, emotional and mental health needs of our students and ensuring that our schools are safe and welcoming for all students.

FULLY FUND BALLOT MEASURE 98

Partial funding from Measure 98 in the 2017 session allowed school districts to make meaningful investments in CTE, college readiness, and dropout prevention. Full funding for Measure 98 (\$303 million) will allow districts to expand programs and reach more students.

EARLY INTERVENTION/EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION

Investing \$75 million in birth through age 5 special education programs will help thousands of Oregon children with disabilities be better prepared for kindergarten, strengthen families, improve outcomes for students and save money by reducing the need for special education programs in K-12.

COSA WORKGROUPS - Investments in Workforce, Early Learning, and Student Health

COSA convened three workgroups and invited stakeholders from across various sectors to make recommendations in three key areas:

- **Education Workforce Development:** Invest \$16.7 million to grow and diversify the preK-12 education workforce by developing and expanding “Grow Your Own” programs. Oregon’s schools are facing a teacher shortage and research shows that all students benefit when our educators reflect the diversity of our schools.
- **Early Learning Expansion:** Expand early learning opportunities for 10,000 low-income children ages 3-4 and provide more flexibility for K-12 to participate in Preschool Promise.
- **Social and Emotional Determinants of Health and Education:** Invest \$85 million so school districts can hire social workers, school counselors, nurses, mental health specialists and other professionals to work with students and their families, or pay for professional development to improve educators’ knowledge of trauma informed practices.

CONTINUED K-12 FACILITIES INVESTMENTS - State Bonding Dollars

Aging school buildings and a backlog of deferred maintenance needs continue to be a challenge for many communities. Coupled with the need to seismically upgrade many school buildings, the Legislature should continue investing in the successful 1) Seismic Rehabilitation Grant Program (\$100 million) and 2) Oregon School Capital Improvement Matching Program (OSCIM - \$100 million) to provide safe buildings and healthy environments for our students.

REVENUE REFORM AND CONTROLLING COSTS

Oregon needs revenue reform to make needed investments in our schools and COSA members will help make the case for increased K-12 funding to the Legislature and voters. Expenditures that are outside of the control of school districts (healthcare, PERS, unfunded mandates) need to be carefully evaluated by the Legislature and any changes should result in savings for school districts without negatively impacting workforce recruitment or retention.

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