



Social Capital Community Survey Shows Area's Strengths and Needs for Improvement

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SALEM – A program to provide all beginning teachers, principals and superintendents in Oregon a strong mentor to support them during their first two years on the job will phase in under bipartisan legislation being championed by Stand for Children, the Chalkboard Project and a host of other education stakeholders.

House Bill 2574, which would provide \$5 million in the next biennium to begin reviving Oregon's dormant educator mentoring program, will receive its first hearing and possible work session Thursday, March 15 at 1 p.m. by the House Subcommittee on Education Innovation.

This research-based strategy to raise student achievement by providing more focused assistance to educators is gaining broad support. Joining Stand and Chalkboard in promoting the mentor legislation are the Oregon Department of Education, the governor's education advisor and a range of other education stakeholders. The bill also has won the support of The Oregonian's editorial board, which recently concluded, "the positive buzz around this legislation suggests it will pass. It deserves to pass." ("If lawmakers create a powerhouse program out of a dormant law, they'll do wonders for new teachers," February 27, 2007.)

Chief sponsors of HB 2574 are Reps. Arnie Roblan (D-Coos Bay) and Linda Flores (R-Clackamas); and Sens. Richard Devlin (D-Tualatin), Betsy Johnson (D-Scappoose), Bruce Starr (R-Hillsboro) and Vickie Walker (D-Eugene). Co-sponsors include Reps. Peter Buckley (D-Ashland), Kevin Cameron (R-Salem), Chris Edwards (D-Eugene), Sara Gelser (D-Corvallis), Betty Komp (D-Woodburn), Karen Minnis (R-Gresham) and Gene Whisnant (R-Sunriver); and Sens. Brad Avakian (D-Portland) and Gary George (R-McMinnville).

"House Bill 2574 helps ensure that we invest in mentor programs that will get results," said Jonah Edelman, Stand for Children Executive Director. "This bill focuses the taxpayers' resources on high-quality mentor programs that increase student achievement, improve teacher retention, and strengthen the quality of our new educational leaders."

"In our extensive research, we have learned that strong mentoring is a 'best practice' that makes a significant difference in retaining high-quality educators and improving student learning," said Sue Hildick, Chalkboard Project president. "Oregonians are solidly behind this effort to give our new teachers and administrators the support they need and deserve so they can excel at their jobs."

Research Basis for the Program

In Oregon, we lose about 30% of our new teachers within their first three years, costing Oregon taxpayers an estimated \$45 million each year.

The children who face the greatest learning challenges are typically taught by the teachers who have the least experience and who receive minimal support.

An estimated 40% of the nation's principals will retire in this decade.

Research-based mentor programs:

Increase educator effectiveness – Studies show that new teachers with best practice mentoring help students reach achievement levels comparable to those of veteran teachers in the same district, despite being assigned larger proportions of low-achieving students. Further studies find that principals who received mentoring in their first two years see improvement that lasts throughout their careers.

Increase educator retention – Districts implementing best-practice mentoring programs for new teachers have found significant reductions in teacher turnover.

Currently, only a few school districts in Oregon stretch limited resources to operate mentor programs that reflect best practice. Expanding these programs has been impossible due to lack of state support.

Program Implementation and Cost

The legislation offers school districts flexibility to implement mentoring programs that reflect core best practice principles. Districts that already have research-based programs can continue or expand those programs with state funding via the Oregon New Educator Mentor Program.

The mentor program will be paid for by funds administered by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). The agency will ensure every school district receives adequate support to implement mentoring programs with research-based components, or continue current research-based programs that are achieving results. The estimated cost per year is \$5,000 per new educator. If the programs were fully implemented in the 2007- 2009 biennium, serving 1,200 new teachers, 100 new principals and a handful of new superintendents, the total cost would be approximately \$27.3 million.

The program will be fully phased in over four years. Gov. Ted Kulongoski allocated \$5 million in his 2007-2009 budget (within the ODE budget) to fund the start-up of the program by June 30, 2008, and enable one-third of eligible teachers and principals to receive mentorship in the 2008-2009 school year.

About Stand for Children

Stand for Children's mission is to teach everyday people how to join together in an effective grassroots voice in order to win concrete, long-lasting improvements for children at the state and local levels. Together, our 4,000 members and supporters advocate for improvements to and funding for schools and other programs that give every child in Oregon a fair chance in life. We have staffed Chapters in Portland, Salem, North Clackamas, Beaverton, Hillsboro, Canby, Bethel, Eugene, Jackson County, Lincoln County and Coos Bay. Since 1999, Stand for Children members in Oregon have achieved 42 successes that have positively impacted the lives of more than 934,000 children in our state. With a cumulative budget in Oregon of \$3.7 million over the past seven years, Stand for Children has won over \$1 billion in funding for children's programs and services. Every dollar invested in Stand for Children has delivered \$286 in public funding for children's programs in Oregon.

(www.standforchildren.org/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 who understand and address 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. To date, Chalkboard has connected with about 100,000 Oregonians, asking for their best ideas to strengthen the state's K-12 public schools. It also has partnered with other education organizations to create the Open Book\$ Web site (www.openbooksproject.org) to track school district spending.

Chalkboard – an initiative of Foundations For A Better Oregon – is sponsored by a growing list of independent foundations. The founding five foundations are: The Collins Foundation, The Ford Family Foundation, Jeld-Wen Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, and The Oregon Community Foundation. For more information about Chalkboard and to learn how to get involved, call (877) YOUR-K12 or visit www.chalkboardproject.org.

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