



*OEA Review and Recommendations*

## **Oregon Education Investment Board and Achievement Compacts January 23, 2012**

In the spring of 2011, the Oregon Legislature created the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB) – an initiative and priority of Governor John Kitzhaber. The OEIB, chaired by the Governor, is tasked with overseeing the Governor’s vision for education transformation. The initial elements of this effort include a complete redesign of the administration of public education from pre-kindergarten through higher education.

Oregon educators have long been at the forefront in demanding transformation of our public schools to ensure that all students have an opportunity to succeed in every Oregon community. Toward that end, OEA embraces the goal of creating a seamless, unified system from early childhood through post secondary to ensure that every student has access to a quality public school. Oregon educators also strongly believe in providing the necessary investment in our schools and students to improve the future for all Oregonians.

From the beginning and throughout the process of developing a budget framework for this education enterprise, OEA has been strong advocates for:

- **Equity in access for all students.** Regardless of where they live, attend school, have special needs or their socio-economic conditions, all Oregon students will receive the level of investment in their public education that they need and deserve.
- **Investment in evidence-based teaching and learning** that will make a real difference in student achievement.
- **Creation of quality public education research, including data and technology** that builds off of the Quality Education Model to ensure that the State of Oregon leads its effort with cutting-edge research that is proven to be good for students and that districts have the infrastructure and tools they need to share what is working.
- **Protecting students, educators, parents, and school communities from an over-emphasis on standardized testing** and acknowledging the complexity of measuring success for every child.
- **Supporting the mission of Oregon’s community colleges** by recognizing the multiple functions and services they provide to students beyond degree completion.
- **Encouraging true collaboration** by providing a voice for educators working on the frontlines with students. The voice of educators, students and parents need to be at center of any reform.
- **Ensuring our outcome expectations match the level of investment in our public education system.** A meaningful discussion about the need for more revenue is essential as a part of education redesign. If

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we want an outcome that is different from previous efforts, we must ensure our level of investment in public education is adequate to close achievement gaps and help all children learn.

One of the components of Governor Kitzhaber's transformation efforts is the creation of **Achievement Compacts**. The compacts seek to 'organize a system of accountability and support to ensure student success from pre-K to college and career readiness.' Oregon educators welcome accountability and fully embrace setting goals and identifying the resources needed to reach those goals. Our hope is that the Achievement Compacts will:

- **Be developed collaboratively between local school leaders and educators.** It's critical that any achievement compact require collaboration between the district and the educators charged with delivering on the compact. It is critical that the compacts provide a meaningful opportunity for professional educators to be directly involved in developing, evaluating and meeting the districts' goals.
- **Ensure that every district has access to a statewide data and technology infrastructure to share best practices and information.** In order to achieve the goals put forth in the compacts, schools need the ability to collaborate with and share information and best practices with other local schools; districts need to share among districts; and the Oregon public needs to know how this new direction is leading to increased student achievement and success.
- **Move away from an overemphasis on harmful standardized testing.** Research has long proven that standardized test scores are not the best measure of a student's success in school and also an incomplete measure of student growth. Education policy leaders agree that test scores alone cannot accurately measure a school's or district's success. The achievement compacts should measure the things that really matter in terms of student achievement such as learning conditions, class size, individual student growth, and teacher quality through formative evaluation processes and 100% licensure standards. Also, we cannot ignore such significant barriers to learning like economic conditions, disability, language and lack of parental involvement, all which play a large part in determining the level of success of all Oregon's students.
- **Align our investment in our schools with the outcome we expect.** There is no additional funding that will come with these compacts. It's important to recognize that school districts are still dealing with crisis budgets. We cannot expect our schools to continue to do more with less and then penalize them for our inability to provide them with the investment needed for every student to succeed.
- **Protect local control and avoid one-size-fits-all mandates.** Every community in Oregon has its own unique set of conditions under which students best learn. Student and family demographics, socio-economic status, geography, and the level of community support are just a few factors that significantly impact teaching and learning. It is parents, teachers, school and community leaders who know what is best for their neighborhood schools. The achievement compacts should reflect what the local community wants and needs for their students and their schools.
- **Shared accountability.** Schools and educators believe in accountability and are not afraid of high standards. As we expect our schools to perform to certain standards, it just makes sense that the compacts would include reciprocal standards for elected officials who are responsible for providing the funding for our schools.
- **Address the needs of the whole child/family.** The leading predictor of student success is family income. Poverty directly impacts a student's ability to learn. The compacts must recognize the level to

which students are experiencing food and housing insecurity, lack of access to health care and other conditions of poverty that impact learning.

*There are still a lot of unknowns about how these ideas will work in local schools and local districts of all sizes and communities. We hope that the Governor, the OEIB and legislators will reach out to professional educators, school leaders, parents and the community about the kinds of outcomes that make the best sense for our for their schools.*

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**Questions OEA hopes will be addressed before this legislation becomes law:**

- How do we know that these compacts will work equally in big, small, rural, urban and timber-supported districts?
  - Will the compacts be designed collaboratively and require educator input?
  - We talk about our return on investment, but we measure it almost exclusively by test scores. What else should we be measuring to support student success?
  - What other community inputs that determine student success also need to be measured and/or held accountable?
  - What about pilots in a dozen different types of districts where we test different constructs to ensure these concepts work before changing the whole system?
- What infrastructure does Oregon need to create to make the compacts meaningful and how will we pay for it?
  - What will be included and/or required in the district compacts that districts don't already provide to the state?
  - What will it cost to measure the new requirements in the compacts, and how will it be paid for? (Data Center, technology between every school and between every district that allows communication on what is working and targets.)
  - Where is the plan to ensure the investment necessary to meet these new targets?
- What does outcome-based budgeting mean?
  - Will schools/districts that have additional community funding to support better outcomes get more money?
  - How will this impact or change the state school funding formula?
  - Can a district survive on 'sustainable base funding' – isn't this another way of saying 'crisis budget'?
- Addressing the whole child – poverty, wrap-around services, family supports – is essential to success. It is included as an investment priority in the state's early childhood efforts, but it is not carried through to K-12.
  - What will the state do to address this need?
  - How will any of this effort close the achievement gap and ensure that investment in our schools will further equitable access to a quality education?
- According to the Quality Education Model we invest in K-12 at 65% and still manage a 67% statewide graduation rate. Why not calibrate the achievement compacts to the QEM so that educators and the public know what is being achieved despite the lack of full investment in public education?

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## OEA's Suggested Amendments for LC 160 - 1/17/12

OEA understands from Tim Nesbitt, Manager of the Governor's Education Investment Project, that additional amendments are in the works for LC 160. OEA's comments are based on the draft dated 1/17/12.

1. **The State of Oregon should begin with a comprehensive pilot project to ensure that the Achievement Compacts further the goals for increasing student achievement and are measurable for school districts in meeting the state's 40-40-20 aspiration.** To ensure that we are supporting success for improving public education for all students, we must be clear how the achievement compacts will work on a practical day-to-day level in a variety of school districts – big, small, rural, urban, those with local support through local option and those without, as well as those that are supported primarily through timber.
2. **Achievement Compacts should go into effect with the 2013-15 biennium, and not in 2012-13 to allow school districts to plan and to work collaboratively with educators.** Most school districts have already begun work on their budget and program for the 2012-13, school year. The kinds of targets that were discussed in OEIB meetings, and in the 1/20/12 Senate Education Committee's meeting, require more time and input than the current calendar would allow for 2012-13 implementation.
  - a. **First report should be in 2013 and districts should submit modifications in 2014 as an interim report to the legislature during its short February session.** This is consistent with a continuous improvement model, rather than a more punitive accountability program. *This will allow school districts the time and flexibility to consider innovative measures and indicators to meet and succeed at the 40-40-20 goal.*
3. **Educators must be equal partners in developing the Achievement Compacts, as the front-line required for successful implementation with our students and in our schools.** Much like Race to the Top and the Teacher Incentive Fund require local education sign-off, recognizing that success will occur when all educators are invested and understand the target.
4. **Achievement Compacts should be calibrated against the Quality Education Model to ensure that educators and the public understand what schools are achieving and at what level of public investment.** Until the State of Oregon invests in its own public research on best practices in public education, the only tool available is the Quality Education Model.
5. **The State of Oregon must invest in an assessment of the conditions of teaching and learning in schools and districts across the state.** Educators must be involved in helping to ensure that Oregon has conditions in place in its public schools that support quality education opportunities for all students. Subjects for this study would include resources and support for quality teaching and learning, as well as culture and climate. Funding for this could be provided with support from private grants. It is critical, however, that it occur through the State of Oregon (and not a private endeavor) to ensure the study's validity. Examples of this from other states are the [TELL \(Teaching, Empowering, Learning and Leading\) Study](#) by the New Teacher Project in Massachusetts, the [National Education Association's KEYS Program](#) and [North Carolina's Teacher Working Conditions Survey](#).
6. **Delete Section 14(3)(b) as these are not ideas that can be validly measured on an across the state basis from school district to school district.** Again, the OEIB must set the goals and allow school districts the flexibility to innovate on measures and indicators to meet the goals (the idea of "tight and loose".)
7. **Clarify Section 15(1)(a) to say that OEIB can only waive state law reporting requirements but not waive state laws.** This will tighten the authority of the OEIB to ensure that the legislature maintains its appropriate role in the application of state law to Oregon's statewide education policies.