



OREGON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

JOINT WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

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NEWS RELEASE

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CO-CHAIRS UNVEIL TURNING POINT BUDGET TO BOOST SCHOOL RESOURCES BY \$1 BILLION

(SALEM) -- Oregon's public schools would net \$6.75 billion, the equivalent of nearly \$1 billion in additional resources and savings, in the 2013-15 biennium under the draft budget framework released by the Co-Chairs of the Joint Ways and Means Committee today.

The \$16.5 billion biennial budget proposal makes K-12 funding its priority to help Oregon turn the corner from a half-decade of cuts to vital services onto a path of steady growth and stability. This will require strict budgeting and increased efficiencies, savings in the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS), and a boost in revenue from targeted reductions in tax expenditures.

The Co-Chairs' budget also makes critical investments in health care, mental health, community colleges, and public safety.

"We're asking Oregonians from all walks of life to join in the effort required to revitalize our schools and give our kids and our teachers the resources they need to thrive," said House Co-Chair Representative Peter Buckley (D-Ashland).

In the Co-Chairs' Turning Point budget, the State School Fund would receive \$6.55 billion, a 14.6 percent increase over the current funding level. The State School Fund for K-12 schools received approximately \$5.715 billion in 2011-13. An additional \$200 million will be available to school districts in the form of savings from PERS reforms and adjustments, thereby netting a schools budget equivalent to \$6.75 billion.

“This is the turning point for Oregon,” said Senate Co-Chair Richard Devlin (D-Tualatin). “With this budget, we can finally bring back opportunities for our students. Education is the key and we’re moving forward.”

The Co-Chairs’ budget moves Oregon forward in its health care transformation efforts by renewing the self-assessment on hospitals to expand Medicaid to 220,000 additional Oregonians. The budget also increases funding for community mental health programs specifically targeted at children and young adults.

The Co-Chairs are looking to the Joint Committee on Public Safety and the Ways and Means Sub-Committee on Public Safety to find cost savings that can be re-invested in community corrections and other public safety programs that reduce recidivism and halt the growth of prison beds while keeping our communities safe.

The Co-Chairs’ budget maintains current funding for the Earned Income, Farm Worker Housing, Political Contribution, and Cultural Trust tax credits.

The Co-Chairs’ budget also includes sufficient reserves to prudently manage potential fluctuations in the economy over the next biennium.

“As we recover from the Great Recession, we need to re-invest in our state,” the Co-Chairs said. “If we can reach our goals in new resources and reforms, we will be able to stabilize our schools and maintain other vital services in this framework for recovery and reinvestment.”

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[Budget Narrative](#)