



Representative Paul L. Evans, District 20  
900 Court St. NE, H-281  
Salem, OR 97301  
503-986-1420  
Rep.paulevans@state.or.us

As legislators, there's no investment we can make that's more important to the future success of this state than funding our classrooms. With students and teachers returning to schools throughout our community this month, it's a good time to reflect on the big investments we've made this year, and how much work we still have left to do to create the world-class school system our kids deserve.

This spring, the Oregon Legislature passed a historic \$7.4 billion budget for K-12 schools. After too many years of disinvestment in our K-12 system, our schools are finally on track to begin rebuilding educational programs that can prepare the next generation to compete in the global marketplace.

The overall funding level is enough to provide stability for districts across the state, which is great news following many consecutive years of budget cuts.

For the first time in Oregon's history, we're funding all-day kindergarten for every school district, so that kids—no matter where they live—are starting off their school career with a solid foundation. Studies show that students who had all-day kindergarten perform better in upper grades, setting them up for success in their adult lives.

We also doubled the available funding for high-cost disability students and English Language Learners, along with major reforms to ELL programs to improve accountability, transparency, and efficiency. The result will be better outcomes for ELL students.

And we made it easier for low-income kids to get lunch when they're at school. All kids should be able to focus on learning, not whether they're going to be able to eat that day.

I've long made emergency preparedness a priority, and I'm heartened to see that others are now becoming more aware of the regional impacts of a major earthquake, should one hit the area. This year, the legislature made a historic \$300 million investment in safety and building improvements for schools across the state, including \$175 million just for seismic upgrades. That means safer learning environments for our kids, more peace of mind for parents, and lots of jobs.

For the Salem-Keizer and Central School Districts, the legislature's K-12 budget will allow for substantial improvements and investments.

According to district officials, Salem-Keizer will be lowering class sizes in secondary grades and self-contained special education classrooms, adding support staff like behavior specialists and counselors, and buying updated instructional materials. What I'm most excited about is that the legislature voted to fund the Career and Technical Education Center, which will train our students for good-paying jobs right here in the community.

Central is hiring support staff, like career counselors and receptionists in addition to additional teachers and instructional assistants for full-day kindergarten.

While there's a lot to celebrate with the major K-12 investments, it's also clear that we need to do more to fund our schools. We need to hire more teachers, lower class sizes, and add back lost school days. That's why I plan to continue my time in the legislature working to make sure that education funding is a priority, and that we're spending funds in the most efficient, effective way possible.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul L. Evans", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Paul L. Evans  
Oregon House of Representatives  
District 20