

Paul L Evans
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 20



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Representative Paul Evans Statement on Education
bringing feedback from Educators to the Capitol

On Tuesday, March 31st, I had the privilege of cohosting my Education Forum with Chemeketa Community College President Julie Huckestein. The forum served as a platform to discuss assessments, academic programs, and the economic outlook of Oregon's K-12 and college systems.

Many questions and concerns were raised pertaining to class sizes, standardized testing, and how to attract and keep quality teachers in a system that fails to provide them with the necessary tools to be successful. Although answers to these questions hinge on a budget that has yet to be passed, along with many other issues, I want to ensure all Oregonians that I am doing everything in my power to strengthen Oregon's K-12 and college educational systems.

Simply stated: hard times demand hard choices. And, although a \$7.255 Billion K-12 Budget was passed by the Oregon House of Representatives, is not ideal, nor is it adequate. The budget bill includes an important provision that will automatically add more money to our schools if the revenue forecast increases in May. It's the best way to ensure that we're doing more to invest in our classrooms.

Sadly, even this 11% increase in education funding sweeps resources from other critical service areas such as human services, public safety, and resiliency.

It is important to remember that we didn't get here overnight. In the mid-90s, antigovernment extremists greatly reduced local governments' ability to provide critical services. Overtime, this required the state to step-up and dedicate a larger proportion of the general fund to public safety and K-12 education.

Additionally, we passed House Bill 2927A, which Increases the amount transferred from the State School Fund to the High Cost Disabilities Account each fiscal year. Few bills passed this Legislative Session will have as great an impact upon our highest need, highest cost students and families than this bill.

I voted for House Bills 5017 and 2827A because it is the prudent choice at this time. This is our baseline; and I pledge to continue working with legislators from across the spectrum to scrape for any additional funds available for high needs/high costs students, increased school safety, and essential warp-around programming that can increase outcomes.

Today is a beginning and not an end to this journey. It is time we have a meaningful conversation about our structures and systems: anything less is little more than window dressing. Together we must work for adequate, effective, and sustainable resourcing for the critical services associated with building a 21st century economy in order to support exceptional K-12 and college systems.