



NEWS

Oregon Legislature - House Democratic Caucus

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 1, 2013

CONTACT: Lindsey O'Brien (503) 986-1907
or lindsey.obrien@state.or.us

Oregon Legislature secures historic investment in public education

SALEM – Today the Oregon House of Representatives secured the largest investment ever made in Oregon's public schools. The new education budget will provide Oregon's 197 school districts with \$6.75 billion for the upcoming budget cycle – that's one billion more than current funding levels.

"I had no doubt in my mind that we would find a way to prioritize Oregon's children and turn the tide for school funding in our state," said House Majority Leader Val Hoyle (D – Eugene). "It will take time to undo all of the damage caused by years of disinvestment in public education, but today marks a substantial step in the right direction."

School districts throughout the state have been forced to make deep budget cuts in recent years, including over 7,000 teacher layoffs. The bleak results have been widely reported: Oregon's kids and teachers are coping with shortened school days, layoffs, fewer elective programs, school closures, and swelling class sizes. The school budget passed by the House today will take Oregon's schools in the opposite direction with a significant funding boost.

"One billion more dollars for our kids should be celebrated by every Oregonian," said Representative Brian Clem (D – Salem). "Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the great."

"We had a clear obligation to prioritize education funding, so that's what we did," said Representative Lew Frederick (D – Portland), member of the Ways and Means Committee and long-time public education advocate. "Today is a historic moment in the effort to strengthen our schools and build a brighter future for Oregon."

The \$6.75 billion in school funding comes from a direct appropriation of \$6.55 billion and \$200 million in savings from the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) enacted in Senate Bill 822.

"It was devastating to watch Salem-Keizer cut over 200 teachers last year, and similar stories have been far too common for too many years. We all knew something had to change," said Representative Betty Komp (D – Woodburn), co-chair of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education and former middle school principal. "We've made major strides to rebuild our education system this session, and today's budget makes me feel hopeful for our students and our teachers."

Senate Bill 5519A, Oregon's education budget, passed the House 53 – 5 and now heads to Governor Kitzhaber for his signature.

###