



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Senate Democrats ensure stability, fund Full Day Kindergarten, with approval of State School Fund Budget

HB 5017 includes extra funding for school lunches and English language learners

SALEM – The Oregon Senate today approved a \$7.255 billion budget for the state’s public schools. The budget is a \$600 million increase over the last biennium, which will provide stability for most school districts while also funding full-day kindergarten for children throughout Oregon for the first time in state history.

“Today we are voting on a budget that will provide stability for our schools and allow districts to prepare for the 2015-2016 school year when we finally offer free full day kindergarten for all Oregon kids,” said Senator Ron Monroe (D-Portland), co-chair of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education. “As a lifelong educator, I have always fought for more dollars in our classroom. With today’s vote we set the floor for funding—not the maximum amount of funding that our schools can get, but the minimum.”

This investment is part of a multi-year effort to get education funding back on track after years of recessionary cuts. In 2013, the Legislature added \$1 billion to Oregon’s K-12 schools, approving the largest budget in state history as the economy began to improve. The \$7.255 billion budget approved today is a nine percent increase that will maintain that historic boost, and automatically increase school funding if more money is available after the next economic and revenue forecast in May.

“We stand here today, not even halfway through the 2015 Session, and we are making clear that our schools come first in the state budget. Senate Democrats continue to prioritize education, with the lion’s share of available resources this session already directed to our

schools,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). “This budget is realistic. It is responsible. It is also a starting point. With the responsibility of governing, we have to make hard decisions. I am satisfied that this is the budget for right now.”

The \$7.255 billion K-12 budget (House Bill 5017) includes:

- \$600 million more than the 2013-15 K-12 budget, maintaining the historic \$1 billion increase the Legislature approved in 2013;
- Full funding for full-day kindergarten;
- Targeted investments to support children with disabilities, low-income students, and English language learners.
- A trigger that will send 40 percent of new revenue to the State School Fund if the economy shows improvement in the May economic and revenue forecast.

“This budget provides an increase of \$605 million of state funds and an estimated increase of \$351 million in local funds, equaling a \$956 million total funds increase for K-12 schools in the next biennium. It fully funds full-day kindergarten and allows us to maintain the \$1 billion in investments we made in Oregon classrooms two years ago,” said Senator Richard Devlin (D-Tualatin), co-chair of the Joint Ways and Means Committee. “It provides a floor for funding that will allow school districts to move ahead with the process of writing their budgets while we await the May forecast and work to find even more dollars for Oregon’s schools.”

HB 5017 will now go to the Governor’s desk for her consideration.

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