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PRESS RELEASE

June 24, 2023

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Education Funding Prioritized as Senate Approves Billions in Agency Budgets

*Oregon Senate approves budgets for unprecedented \$10.2B in K-12 schools,
\$3.7B in higher education*

SALEM – Yesterday, the Oregon Senate passed a number of key budget bills to fund state agencies for the upcoming biennium, including historic investments in K-12 schools and higher education. Having previously received approval in the House, these bills now head to the Governor's desk for her signature.

“We have spent the entire session carefully crafting dozens of state budgets in order to fund the critical services that our state offers every day,” said **Senator Elizabeth Steiner (D-Portland), Co-Chair of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means**. “I am proud of the work we have done and believe that our collective hard work has resulted in budgets that will support Oregonians through the next biennium.”

\$10.2 Billion to State School Fund ([House Bill 5015](#))

The Senate gave final legislative approval to a historic \$10.2 billion to the State School Fund for the 2023-2025 biennium, nearly \$1 billion higher than current service level. When paired with local property tax revenues, total resources for K-12 schools for the 2023-2025 biennium will reach an unprecedented \$15.3 billion.

The State School Fund is the primary funding source for the general operations of school districts and education service districts, paying for needs including teacher salaries, textbooks, school supplies, desks and building maintenance.

These districts serve more than 552,000 Oregon students in K-12 schools.

"From the beginning of session, legislative leaders were clear that one of our priorities needed to be fully funding our K-12 schools and students," said **Senate President Rob Wagner (D-Lake Oswego)**. "Our young people are our future. There is little more important we can do with our budgets than fund our schools and prepare our students for the future."

The money in the State School Fund is distributed based on a formula to ensure schools across the state are getting approximately the same funding per student, weighted for certain student and district characteristics.

"We need to attract the best and brightest teachers to our schools to ensure our students get the educational opportunities they deserve," said **Senator Lew Frederick (D-Portland)**, co-chair of the Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education. "This budget is a direct investment in Oregon's future."

\$3.7 Billion to Higher Education ([House Bill 5025](#))

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission is set to receive \$3.7 billion to ensure Oregonians seeking postsecondary education in the state can obtain a high quality education no matter where they choose to attend.

The commission's primary role is overseeing strategic planning for the state's postsecondary education system. It is responsible for allocating funds to public postsecondary education institutions, approving new degree and certificate programs, licensing private postsecondary institutions, making budget and policy recommendations to lawmakers and administering state financial aid.

"Higher education is the vehicle to achieve launch velocity from poverty into the middle class and beyond," said **Senate President Rob Wagner (D-Lake Oswego)**. "I'm proud the Legislature is helping uplift Oregonians with this budget."

Included within this budget is \$1 billion for the Public University Support Fund and \$800 million for the Community College Support Fund, the primary funds for operational expenses at the state's universities and community colleges.

The Oregon Opportunity Grant student financial aid program will receive \$308.4 million and the Tribal Student Grant program will be funded on a continuing basis with \$24.2 million.

Billions Go to Other Critical State Agencies

The Senate also passed budgets for early childhood education, health care, local transportation projects, environmental quality improvements and more, collectively committing billions of dollars to ensure Oregon's agencies can continue offering the services Oregonians expect their government to provide.

Among the agencies funded were the Department of Consumer and Business Services, the Department of Early Learning and Care, the Department of Energy, and the Department of Emergency Management.

“These budgets reflect the values Oregonians sent us to the Legislature to uphold,” said **Senate President Rob Wagner (D-Lake Oswego)**. “With these budgets, we are investing in the projects and programs that will make a difference in the lives of Oregonians across the state.”

Some of the items that were funded yesterday included:

- \$1.18 billion to the Department of Early Learning and Care for child care subsidies, child care and early learning programs, and family and provider support ([House Bill 5013](#)).
- \$162 million to the Department of Education for the high school graduation and college and career readiness fund ([House Bill 5014](#)).
- \$5.6 billion in general fund (\$18.5 billion total funds) for the Department of Human Services to fund programs supporting children, aging people and people with disabilities ([House Bill 5026](#)).
 - \$39.9 million general fund (\$148 million total funds) to support Vocational Rehabilitation programs to facilitate people with disabilities finding and retaining jobs ([House Bill 5026](#)).
 - \$963.2 million in general fund (\$1.6 billion total funds) for child welfare programs, including child protective services, foster care and youth homelessness support ([House Bill 5026](#)).
- \$143.5 million to the Department of Emergency Management for the 911 Emergency Response program ([House Bill 5017](#)).
- \$717 million to the Department of Environmental Quality for programs ensuring healthy air and waterways and managing hazardous waste and contamination ([House Bill 5018](#))

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