

THE SUPERINTENDENT'S Pipeline

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From My Desk to Yours

A Message from Stan Bunn
State Superintendent of Public Instruction



The start of a new school year is a time of new beginnings. For some of you it is opening new school buildings, for all of you there are new staff members, students and parents.

As you step into the coming school year, let me remind you of the accomplishments of the last few years. We have much to be proud of in

Oregon education.

Our state test scores have shown a steady increase over the last decade—kids are learning more and more are meeting high standards. This growth is expected to continue, especially as younger students move up the grade levels. The progress to date should make us all feel optimistic about our future success.

National test scores confirm what our state tests tell us—Oregon students have a tremendous educational advantage. Whether you look at NAEP achievement tests or SAT or ACT college admissions tests, Oregon students stand near the top. And experts say we are flying in the face of conventional testing wisdom! Typically, when more students take the tests, scores go down. Our scores have gone up, the number of students taking the tests has increased, and more and more students who are first generation college applicants are stepping up to the challenge. This is a tremendous accomplishment!

We came through a tough legislative session with school funding in the best position ever and with education reform on track. In some cases, the good news is that we staved off efforts to eliminate programs or create cumbersome legal requirements that would prevent good work from being carried out efficiently. These areas are also positive indicators for the year ahead.

I wanted to visit with you about a recent newspaper article you may have seen concerning issues raised in May and June by the Oregonian which are now being considered by the Government Standards and Practices Commission.

Once such a newspaper article is published, it is standard procedure for the Government Standards and Practices Commission to do a review. I want to assure you that I will be cooperating fully with them and expect to be fully cleared of any concerns they may have.

I encourage you to embrace the optimism of the new school year and share your enthusiasm with your staff, community, and students. Together, we will accomplish great things for kids and for education in this state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Stan Bunn in black ink.

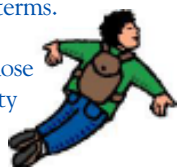
Stan Bunn

Oregon Department of Education

Grants for Urgent Repairs and High Poverty Districts Will Be Available

Nearly \$6.7 million in federal grant funds will be available for urgent school repairs in rural and high-poverty school districts in Oregon. A high-poverty school district is one where 30% or more students are at or below the federal poverty level, or where more than 10,000 students in total live in poverty. Rural school districts are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as those in which less than 2,500 people reside. Slightly more than half of Oregon's 198 school districts qualify as rural under these terms.

Urgent school repairs are those necessary to ensure the safety and health of students and staff. Examples include repairs of roofing, electrical wiring, plumbing, sewage systems, heating, and ventilation. Repairs to bring schools into compliance with safety and fire codes are also covered, including abatement and removal of asbestos and other hazardous



materials. Renovations to schools to comply with federal accessibility requirements are also included.

An additional \$2.2 million in competitive grant funds will be available to districts to make improvements to school facilities to accommodate students eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and/or to upgrade buildings for technology applications by improving wiring, acquiring hardware and software, and acquiring connectivity linkages including fiber optics, microwave, cable and satellite transmission equipment.

Eligibility guidelines and a schedule for the local grant competition will be posted on the Department web site at www.ode.state.or.us/stusvc/index.htm.

Contact [Dona Bolt](#), 503-378-3600 ext. 2727.

Governor Speaks at COSA Institute

Governor Kitzhaber addressed the Summer COSA Institutes for Principals and Superintendents in Florence on Aug. 1, focusing his remarks on school funding and the impact of the Quality Education Model. You can read his speech at www.governor.state.or.us/governor/speeches/s010801.htm

Mentor Monies Mix-up

A number of district staff have called the Department recently requesting information on grant funds available for mentor teachers due to passage of SB 250.

Although SB 250 did pass both houses, the funding for it did not. Funding for mentor teacher programs was included in the Department's proposed budget and was in the Governor's approved budget, but those funds did not survive the legislative process and were cut from the budget.

Fall High School Re-test Schedule Set

Mathematics, reading/literature, and science re-tests for grades 11 and 12 will occur from Oct. 13-Nov. 3. Mathematics problem solving and writing will be administered from Oct. 13-27.

Re-tests for grades 11 and 12 are not mandatory, but districts should have some tests available for those students who wish to re-test.

Order test materials for these assessments online through Sept. 14. Schools should order test quantities through the district test coordinator, who has access to the password protected, online ordering form. Testing materials should arrive in early October.

For more specific schedule information, go to the Department's web site at www.ode.state.or.us/asmt/administration/schedule.htm.

For more information, contact [Elaine Hultengren](#), 503-378-3600 ext. 234.

TESA Applications Available



The Department is still accepting applications by schools to participate in the Technology Enhanced Student Assessment (TESA) system for 2001-02. TESA is an online alternative to the Oregon State Assessment.

Individual schools may apply and may include students at grades 3, 5, 8 and 10. Participating schools may test all of their students at these grades in reading/literature and mathematics knowledge and skills using TESA's web-based testing delivery. High schools may also want to consider testing ninth graders or 11th and 12th graders who need retesting opportunities.

Over the next three years, the TESA system will be phased in to all schools in Oregon.

Interested schools will find information and application materials on the Department's web site at www.ode.state.or.us/asmt/tesa/schoolpartapp.pdf. Applications are due by Sept. 28, 2001.

Direct questions about TESA to [Bob Olsen](#) (503-378-3600 ext. 2250), [Tom Tinkler](#) (503-378-3600 ext. 4416), or [Chris Minnich](#) (503-378-3600 ext. 2349).

"Exceptional Insights" Published

The Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Field Services recently published a booklet on programs in schools that were identified as "Exceptional" on the Oregon School and District Report Cards.

"Exceptional Insight" features each school in a section telling about the school, its community and programs. Included is a set of data about the school's performance, staffing, and spending.

Booklets have been distributed to all schools and districts with a limited number of additional copies available from [Barbara Slimak](#), 503-378-3600 ext. 4498. You can find it on the Department's web site, www.ode.state.or.us/cifs/publications/exceptionalinsight.pdf.

SFDA Monthly VTel Trainings Starting in October

School Finance Data & Analysis will offer monthly VTel training sessions starting in October and continuing through May. On the second Friday of each month from 2-3:30 p.m., SFDA will provide training and updates on topics ranging from data collection to student accounting and financial reporting.

The workshop schedule including dates and content can be found on the district web site at: <http://district.ode.state.or.us/>. Then follow the links for Training.



For more information or to register for a training session, please e-mail or call the [Help Desk](#), 503-378-3600 ext. 2645.

SFDA Regional Trainings

School Finance and Data Analysis will be providing regional trainings on data collections, web surveys, student accounting, and the report card. Morning and afternoon sessions will be offered at each site.

Morning sessions will provide information to those responsible for collecting and sending financial data to the Department and to those responsible for Report Card data. Afternoon sessions are tailored to school level staff working with the nonfinancial and student accounting data.

Both sessions will provide information about the Department's web sites, SFDA news and updates from the legislative session.

Dates and locations for the training sessions can be found at <http://district.ode.state.or.us/>. To register, go to the Events Registration System, www.ode.state.or.us/events/.

Contact [Help Desk](#), 503-378-3600 ext. 2645.



Fall Field Test Opportunities

The Department regularly invites schools to participate in field tests for test items to be used in the statewide assessments. Field-testing for writing and mathematics will occur Oct. 6-27. The field test requires two or three class sessions of 45 minutes each. High schools with mixed grade classes may still participate if the majority of the students are from the identified grade(s).

Writing field tests will occur at grades 4, 6, 9, and 11. Students write a paper over the course of three class sessions, just as they do on the statewide assessment.

Mathematics offers several choices for schools, with testing occurring at grades 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, and 11. Schools may field test two problem solving tasks, one problem solving task and one constructed response item, or two constructed response items at grades 3 and 4.

Participating schools benefit by helping to assure the quality of the statewide assessments, obtaining scores which may be used as work sample scores for individual students participating, giving students the opportunity to practice for the state performance assessments in an authentic testing situation. Schools are also eligible to receive grant funds at the rate of \$1 per participating student when they return scoreable responses.

Schools interested in participating in any of the field tests should have the building

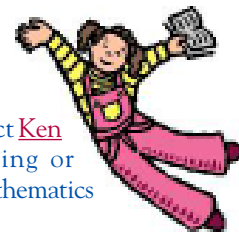
State Board Retreat

The State Board of Education held their annual planning retreat Aug. 22-24. Following a review of past efforts, the Board focused on two key areas: Priorities for the 2001-03 biennium and in-depth discussion of the Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM).

A summary of the retreat as well as other information on the Board and its activities can be accessed on the Department's web site at www.ode.state.or.us/stateBoard/index.htm.



administrator contact [Ken Hermens](#) for writing or [Cathy Brown](#) for mathematics by Sept. 7.



The following information will be needed—district and school name, building contact person's name and e-mail address, building address for mailing test materials, grade level(s) and number of participating classes, teachers, and students.

Honorary Diplomas for WWII Veterans

The Oregon Department of Education has partnered with the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs to sponsor *Operation Recognition*, a program designed to recognize the service men and women who served in World War II and were unable to finish high school.

In May 2002 honorary diplomas will be awarded to qualifying WWII veterans. The Department will be encouraging high schools to recognize local WWII veterans by issuing honorary diplomas from their schools and holding a graduation ceremony/assembly.

At the same time, a service-learning project, *Honoring Oregon's Veterans: A Service-Learning Project Connecting Students and Communities*, will also be available.

Contact [Karyn Phillips](#), 503-378-3600 ext. 2215.

Teacher of the Year Applications Due Soon

In mid-September, superintendents and principals will receive an application packet for candidates for 2002 Oregon teacher of the year. Nominees need to provide written responses to several questions as well as letters of support. Packets are due at the Department by Oct. 12. Additional application packets will be available from [Kayla Barstad](#), Administrative Specialist for Communications, 503-378-3600 ext. 2357.

Changes Coming for 2002 Report Cards

Senate Bill 811, passed during the 2001 legislative session, brings several changes into effect in the school and district report cards.

Changes to the current procedures that will go into effect with the January 2002 report cards are as follows:

1. Include all students for accountability through
 - a) Assigning all students to a "report card" school
 - b) Providing an expanded view of participation through charts that include 100% of students and under which conditions they were tested. For example, 70% under standard conditions, 20% modified, 10% exempted.
2. Include a provision that high performing schools that maintain their performance do not have to meet additional improvement requirements in order to receive a high rating.
3. Display the overall rating on a continuum. This would clarify changes in overall ratings. For example, a school that rated "strong" for two years in a row, but fell to a "satisfactory" level because of a small change in the score, would show, through the continuum, that the reduced rating did not represent a significant loss in achievement.
4. "Flag" certain alternative schools with a statement to interpret their scores with caution because the current formula may not accurately reflect their program's strengths.
5. Consider schools that experience a boundary change resulting in a 40% turnover in students a "new school" for report card purposes. The school, then, would not receive an overall rating for its first year as a "new" school but would begin again with a new baseline.
6. Address inconsistencies. For example, there were 41 schools that received an overall rating that was inconsistent with the "sum" of their three subcategory ratings.



New elements from SB 811 that will be added for January 2002 report cards are listed below:



At the school level

1. Enrollment in English as a Second Language courses under ORS 336.079
2. Attendance rates
3. Students who met or exceeded standards leading to the CIM
4. Dropout rates and the number of students who dropped out of school
5. School staff by category (administrators, teachers, etc.)

At the district level

1. Resident students who attend a public school in another school district (superintendents and principals would also like to see displayed the number of students coming INTO the district.)
2. Facilities used for distance learning (this will likely be V-tel facilities)
3. Election results of any bond levy proposed to the electors of the district
4. Expenditures (per pupil spending)
5. Level of monetary support from the education service district
6. Administrators not assigned to a specific school
7. School district staff identified by category (administrators, teachers, etc.)
8. Number or percent of students in special education programs



School Improvement Funds

Grant applications for School Improvement Funds are due at the Department Sept. 4. The grant funds were authorized by HB 2298 in the 2001 legislative session and provide \$220 million in funds for local schools.

Grants will be awarded for activities such as the following:

1. Class size reduction
2. Increases in instructional time
3. Professional development
4. Remediation and alternative learning
5. Early childhood support
6. Services to at-risk youth
7. Additional instructional materials
8. Curriculum and instructional support
9. Services for English as a Second Language students
10. Other activities approved by the State Board that focus on increasing student achievement

The first round of approved grants will be distributed by Oct. 15, 2001. Contact person for the grants is [Nancy Heiligman](mailto:Nancy.Heiligman@ode.state.or.us), 503-378-3600 ext. 2213.



Charter Schools Update

The number of Oregon charter schools will grow to 16 in the 2001-02 school year. The Department of Education is sponsoring a charter school start up workshop for both charter school developers and sponsoring districts in October.

More information on the charter schools can be found at www.ode.state.or.us/cifs/charterschools/.

Information on the start up workshop will also be posted on the Department's web site. Contact [Joni Gilles](mailto:Joni.Gilles@ode.state.or.us) at 503-378-3600 ext. 2276.

Changes Underway for 2003 Report Cards

A number of changes are under consideration for the 2003 Report Cards. These changes were presented at the Summer Institutes for Superintendents and Principals in Florence in late July and early August, and will be discussed in a variety of other forums. Those individuals who want to comment on the proposed changes and provide feedback can do so either by e-mail to the Report Card mailbox at report.card@state.or.us or by contacting [Nanci Schneider](#) at 503-378-3600 ext. 2353.

The changes proposed for the January 2003 Report Cards are as follows:

1. Clarify what "parental non-consent" means and how it is distinguished from "student non-consent."
2. Include science test scores in calculating student performance
3. Change the weighting for reading, math multiple choice, writing, and math

problem solving (and science). Currently, the multiple-choice tests are weighted 35% while writing is weighted 20% and math problem solving is weighted 10%. When this decision was made, the multiple choice tests were considered to be more reliable than the others. However, that is no longer the case. Therefore, the weighting will be updated to reflect the greater reliability of all the tests.

4. Create a separate rating for improvement. Currently improvement is woven throughout the formula across the ratings. Many people feel it would be more accurate to rate student performance, student behavior and school characteristics on current performance only, and then to add a separate rating for improvement.
5. Under current conditions, the schools receive a rating of "strong" if they test 85% or more of the **eligible** students.

However, inconsistencies exist between schools and districts as to which students are tested under various conditions. The 2003 card will begin to close this gap.

6. The overall rating formula will be changed to be simpler and yield ratings more consistent with the "sum" of the ratings in student performance, school characteristics and student behavior.
7. New elements may be displayed at the school and district level as data becomes available. Input on items that would enhance the report cards is welcome.

As an additional feature, the Department of Education is exploring options that would allow schools and districts to include their local information on the report card that is displayed on the Department's web site. As a result, those who view the report cards on the web site would see a more complete picture of the school and district including important information from the local level.



If you have questions or comments about this publication, please contact [Barbara Wolfe](#), communications team, at 503-378-3600 ext. 2219.