



EDUCATION POLICY BACKGROUNDER AND PLATFORM

Oregon is currently 21st out of 50 states in per person K-12 education funding¹, roughly on-par with our income level compared with other states². However, we are at the bottom (45th or worse) in instructional time³, student-teacher ratio⁴, college attendance⁵ and on-time graduation rates⁶. Oregonians of all political persuasions want a better performing education system⁷. Our party's goal is a strong result-oriented K-16 education system that engages students and offers them opportunities to succeed, whether their career paths involve college or technical and vocational training.

Oregon must spend its current budget more wisely and prudently, seeking savings in employee costs and prioritizing spending that enhances student achievement. Oregon should invest more resources into education programming and strategies that prove successful.

We encourage our candidates and members of the Oregon Legislature to consider the following proposals as ways to reduce costs, improve performance outcomes and better meet the state's obligation to provide our children with the opportunities they need to learn and prosper.

- Reform PERS to balance cost with assuring retirement incomes that meet the original intent of the PERS program.
- Reform health care compensation for public employees by better leveraging buying power and avoiding double coverage, while assuring an above average health care benefits for employees.
- Allocate new revenues for K-12 education to prioritize funding for vocational training as well as college prep and on increasing class time, extending the school year, and decreasing class size.
- Prohibit Teachers unions from striking and closing down our schools. Oregon is currently only one of 11 states where teachers unions are allowed to strike as part of their contract negotiations. Public education is a constitutional right and therefore is a vital public service. In lieu of strikes, teacher unions and school districts should be

¹ http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/2017_Rankings_and_Estimates_Report-FINAL-SECURED.pdf (F1, pdg 61)

² http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/2017_Rankings_and_Estimates_Report-FINAL-SECURED.pdf (D3, p. 38)

³ Rank was 45th, according to 2013 PPS study. Comparison of instructional hours is here.

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/95/05/9505.pdf>

⁴ Rank was 46th out of 50 in student-teacher ratio.

http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/2017_Rankings_and_Estimates_Report-FINAL-SECURED.pdf (C3, p. 30)

⁵ http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/2017_Rankings_and_Estimates_Report-FINAL-SECURED.pdf (C4, p. 31)

⁶ http://www.oregonlive.com/education/index.ssf/2015/12/us_graduation_rate_reaches_rec.html

⁷ <http://oregonvaluesproject.org/ovp-content/uploads/2013/09/OVB3S3QAnnotTotal-BenchmarkRegion.pdf> (q. 36)



subject to binding arbitration. This will provide for fair contracts for teachers and surety for parents, without harming our children's education.

- Adopt tools to encourage more young teachers to enter the profession. Ideas include a "teacher's ROTC program" that forgives student loans for teachers who relocate to low-performing schools or schools in economically disadvantaged communities. Alternative proposals include offering teacher scholarships to elite students, increasing entry level wages for new teachers and offering free or low cost higher education for teachers after five years of teaching.
- Allow high school students to proceed early to higher education by earning credits by passing comprehensive tests in various subjects. To some students, sitting in high school classrooms all day is not the best use of their time or of teacher time. Students who develop their own mastery of subjects should be able to earn high school credits by passing tests, enabling them to proceed early to college, community college, or vocational training.