

Election 2008

Legislative Priorities

Issues Important to Public Education and Labor

The Oregon School Employees Association plays an important role in the shaping of Oregon's public policy regarding public education and the working lives of our members and all Oregonians.

OSEA's political activities are guided by a set of principles and priorities designed to strengthen and enhance Oregon's public education system from preschool through college and promote and maximize the value of our members as integral players in a quality education system.

Inside are the principles and priorities that will guide OSEA through the 2008 election cycle.

The **PRIORITIES** that
Guide our **Union.**



**Oregon School
Employees Association**

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OSEA GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

The promise of education reform can never be fulfilled without adequate funding.

Funding → Quality Education

Educational Funding

OSEA supports public policy options that provide funding for public education from pre-school through college that is sufficient to ensure that the goals and requirements in the law regarding quality, achievement, and access can be met.

OSEA supports school districts' ability to make budget decisions based on local needs and priorities.

OSEA opposes public funding of student vouchers, private or charter schools, or other schemes that divert public education dollars away from public schools to private sector education programs.

OSEA opposes proposals such as "The 65% Solution" or other schemes that would set an artificial level of funding for any specific education service provided by school districts.

Oregon Prekindergarten/Head Start

OSEA supports state and federal funding levels that are sufficient to ensure that all eligible children can participate.

K-12/ESDs

OSEA supports funding of K12 education and operations at the level determined by the Quality Education Commission as sufficient to meet the quality standards in the law.

OSEA supports state funding of all district-provided student transportation services based on reimbursement of actual and approved transportation costs.

OSEA opposes redirection by the state or school districts of student transportation dollars to non-transportation programs or services.

Community Colleges

OSEA supports funding at the level determined by the Post-Secondary Quality Education Commission as sufficient to allow post-secondary institutions to offer a quality, affordable education to Oregonians.

Taxes and Revenue

Oregon's public education system is dependent on a varied stream of revenue sources. The bulk of funding comes from local, state, and federal taxes and is supplemented by significant allocations from the Lottery and the Common School Fund.

OSEA supports maximizing and protecting revenue sources available for funding public education—such as local, state and federal taxes, the Common School Fund, and the Lottery—to assure that sufficient education dollars are available and protected from diversion.

OSEA supports changes to the tax system that enhance fairness and equity between taxpayers and assure that sufficient revenue will be available for critical services including education.

OSEA opposes proposals that will reduce or redirect revenue available to public education.



High Quality Schools & Services

Oregon's public school system developed over time with an eye toward creating a complete environment in which all children can be provided what they need to learn and develop to their greatest potential. This unique environment was created because, unlike adults, children cannot be made responsible for the multitude of tasks necessary to provide for their needs throughout the day. In order to assure parents of the safety and security of their children and that quality instruction is provided, school leaders long ago determined that trustworthy professionals should perform these tasks. In most cases, in districts throughout the state, these trusted staff members are fellow community members and neighbors of the parents sending their students to school. Parents have come to expect and trust that when their children enter this environment, they will be safe and well cared for while they learn.

OSEA supports policies that promote safe, healthy learning environments, with fully-trained, high-quality career professionals serving the educational needs of students.

OSEA opposes policies that ignore the impact of unsafe or unhealthy environments and inadequately trained staff on student achievement.

High Quality Schools & Services (Continued from Page 3)

Privatization

OSEA supports establishment, in the law, of criteria education districts must meet before contracting out public education services normally performed by district-employed staff, including demonstration that the proposed contract will not reduce the quality of the service provided and that cost savings will not be achieved by reductions in employee wages and benefits.

OSEA supports changes in public contracting laws known as the Products of Disabled Individuals Law that will assure no-bid or set-aside public contracts are not used to eliminate or replace public education jobs.

Safe and Healthy Buildings

OSEA supports policies that promote and require school buildings and environments that are safe and healthy for students, staff, and the public.

OSEA supports policies that provide districts sufficient resources and direction to assure that buildings are adequate for the student population, structurally sound, environmentally safe, and energy efficient.

OSEA supports policies that assure employees responsible for building maintenance and safety are provided adequate training and professional development in order to achieve a safe and healthy environment for students, staff, and the public, while maximizing energy efficiency.

Student Transportation

OSEA supports the current requirement in the law that districts provide transportation to and from school to students in certain circumstances.

OSEA supports laws that prohibit the transportation of students by districts in vehicles other than well-maintained school buses that meet current standards for construction and environmental safety.

OSEA supports requirements in the law that districts may use only trained professional school bus drivers to transport students.

Staff Development

OSEA supports policies that provide training and professional development for school and district staff at all levels to assure that the highest quality educational services are provided as efficiently and effectively as possible.

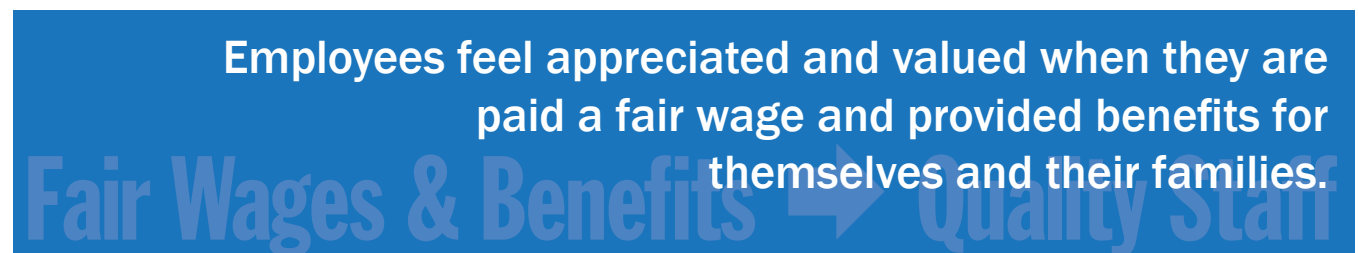
High Quality Schools & Services (Continued from Page 4)

OSEA supports establishing ODE-approved tests that demonstrate ESEA “highly qualified” skill levels for educational assistants and permitting the transferability of “highly qualified” status of educational assistants moving from one district to another.

Student Safety

OSEA supports pre-employment criminal background checks that assure employees’ criminal backgrounds do not pose a risk to students and staff.

OSEA supports the prohibition of firearms in schools except those in the possession of law enforcement and other certified security personnel.



Worker Benefits & Collective Bargaining

Our society relies on an educated population to maintain our quality of life. Our public education system relies on the quality and commitment of its workers as they provide the thousands of services necessary to educate a student from preschool through college. It is in the best interest of all our citizens to protect and promote all professions within our education system.

OSEA supports policies that promote public education careers by enhancing the wages, benefits, and working environments of workers in all classifications within our public education system.

OSEA opposes policies that restrict or reduce the rights or benefits of education employees.

Collective Bargaining

Laws governing the rights of workers to form a union and collectively bargain with their employers over wages, benefits, and working conditions have long been the policy in Oregon. Our laws state clearly that the people of Oregon have a fundamental interest in the development of harmonious and cooperative relationships between employers and employees. Experience in the private and public sectors of our economy has proved that unresolved disputes are injurious to the public, and protection by law of the right of employees to organize and negotiate collectively safeguards employees and the public from injury, impairment, and interruptions of necessary services.

Worker Benefits & Collective Bargaining (Continued from Page 5)

OSEA supports the right of all workers to form a union and collectively bargain with their employers under the Public Employee Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA) or the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA).

OSEA supports repeal of the expedited bargaining process in PECBA, because it provides employers an unfair advantage outside of the normal collective bargaining process. OSEA opposes any effort to restrict or repeal the rights of workers currently held in PECBA or the NLRA.

Wages

OSEA supports wages for all workers sufficient to meet their living needs.

OSEA opposes “pay-for-performance” or other salary schemes that base employee compensation on student assessment or subjective rather than objective criteria.

Retirement

A key element of any benefit package likely to attract and retain high-quality career professionals is a retirement benefit that will allow workers a life of dignity and economic security after retirement. Most, but not all, OSEA members have retirement benefits under the Public Employees Retirement System or Oregon Public Service Retirement Plan. Every OSEA member, regardless of employer, needs and deserves an adequate and secure retirement benefit.

OSEA supports a requirement that all employers providing public education services provide employees a retirement benefit that will allow career employees an income sufficient to meet their life needs after retirement.

OSEA supports retirement counseling services being available to all retiring employees so they may make fully-informed retirement decisions.

OSEA supports removal of benefit restrictions associated with retirees working for PERS-covered employers.

OSEA opposes any changes to the current retirement plans of OSEA members that would result in higher employee costs or reduced retirement benefits.

Health Care

OSEA members recognize that the current system of providing health care to Oregonians is inadequate and unaffordable. Although much has been done to try to insulate ourselves from any unnecessary costs in the current system, it is clear that a complete overhaul of our system of delivering health care to our population must be done.

The world in which we live is constantly changing. School employees must be trained in the latest technologies to meet the needs of students and teachers.

Educated Staff → Quality Schools

Worker Benefits & Collective Bargaining (Continued from Page 6)

OSEA supports establishment of a health care system that would provide access to affordable and adequate health care for all Oregonians.

OSEA opposes any effort that would reduce the access to or affordability of health care currently available to OSEA members.

Unemployment Insurance

Retention of high-quality education employees is a critical component in providing high-quality education. Unemployment insurance was established as a way employers could reasonably assure that employees would return to work after shutdown periods. Unfortunately, these two truths are disconnected in current law, which prevents classified school employees from being eligible to receive unemployment benefits during regularly-scheduled school shutdown periods.

OSEA supports the removal of the current restriction against classified school employees' eligibility for unemployment insurance during regularly-scheduled school shutdown periods.

Workplace Safety

Many of the jobs performed by OSEA members are difficult and hazardous, and the risks associated with these jobs can lead to serious on-the-job injuries. Minimizing these risks and supporting employees while they recover from injuries will reduce the number and severity of work-related injuries.

OSEA supports employer-provided education and training in the proper techniques to perform hazardous work without risk of injury to the employee, students, or others.

OSEA supports occupational safety and health laws that require employers to provide safe working environments and penalize those who do not.

OSEA supports employer-provided workers' compensation insurance that will provide high quality care and treatment of workers' injuries and adequate compensation for loss of work or ability.