

School Funding Talking Points

- **First and foremost, describe what the three funding levels mean for students in your districts.**
- Statewide, here are some talking points:

FUNDAMENTAL CONDITIONS:

- Over the past dozen years, a smaller and smaller percentage of the state budget has gone to K-12. In 2003-05, schools received 45% of the state budget. During the current biennium, that number has declined to 39%. The Co-Chairs' budget would drive K-12's percentage even lower.
- Over the past dozen years, the legislature has prioritized other state programs and services over the education of Oregon's children. Since 2003-05, the percentage of the state budget going to Human Services budgets has increased by nearly triple and the percentage of the state budget going to Public Safety has increased by about double, compared to the increases provided to schools.
- A dozen (or more) years of disinvestment – an entire generation of students – has resulted in fundamental education conditions that have caused:
 - Oregon students, during grades 1-12, to receive about one year less instructional time than the national average. To make matters worse, many Oregon districts have had to cut school days to make budgets balance over the past five years.
 - Oregon students to experience the second-highest class sizes in the nation, with about six more students per teacher than the national average.
 - Oregon schools to rank near the bottom in graduation rates and in closing achievement gaps.
 - Lack of important programs and services – elective and CTE courses, counseling, nursing, mental health services, up-to-date curriculum and technology...

\$7.235 BILLION – CO-CHAIRS’ BUDGET

- Oregon is no longer in a recession, but this budget continues to treat schools as though we are. If approved, the result will be teacher and staff layoffs, fewer school days, higher class sizes, and a reduction of programs and services.
- The Co-Chairs’ budget provides a state average of about \$85 per student less for next year than districts are receiving this year.
- The Legislature promised to fund the implementation of full-day kindergarten beginning in 2015-16. But the Co-Chairs’ budget does not fully fund full-day kindergarten. Instead, it forces districts to choose between implementing full-day kindergarten or maintaining class sizes and programs for students in grades 1-12.
- The Co-Chairs’ budget falls \$300 million short of what most districts need to maintain current class sizes and programs in addition to adding full-day kindergarten.
- Oregon already has one of the shortest school years in the nation, with students receiving about one year less instructional time during grades 1-12 than the national average. The Co-Chairs’ budget would force many districts to cut school days, thus short-changing students even more. Oregon already has the second-highest class sizes in the nation, with nearly six more students per teacher than average. The Co-Chairs’ budget would force many districts to lay off teachers and raise class sizes even further. Only a State School Fund of at least \$7.5 billion allows most districts to maintain current amounts of instructional time, and \$7.875 billion is needed to begin to make progress toward the national average.

\$7.5 BILLION – FRAGILE STABILITY

- This is the funding level most Oregon school districts need in order to maintain current programs and class sizes, while adding full-day kindergarten.
- However, it will not provide the investment necessary to make progress toward the national average in instructional time or class size.
- Still, it will provide an important first step toward improvement – funding for the implementation of full-day kindergarten.

\$7.875 BILLION – INVESTMENT TRAJECTORY

- At this funding level, Oregon school districts will be able to increase instructional time, reduce class sizes and/or invest in programs and services for students who need them most.
- Over time, these investments will result in:
 - Greater third-grade literacy
 - Higher graduation rates
 - Reduced achievement gaps, including improved outcomes for ELL students
 - Increased college-and-career readiness
- \$7.875 billion is the first step in a ten-year plan to reach the Quality Education Commission’s recommended funding level of nearly \$9.2 billion – which is also the funding level needed to reach the national average for instructional time and class size.