

The students of Oregon deserve an education that prepares them to compete with their counterparts around the country and throughout the world. K-12 education in Oregon is in jeopardy of taking two giant steps backwards as the Co-Chairs try to pass a \$7.235 billion budget. You cannot have a thriving economy with sub-par education funding. Please advocate for the children of Oregon by calling for a budget of at least \$7.5 billion.

At a time of recent economic growth and increased state revenue, I fear that approving a \$7.235 billion K-12 budget would short-change St. Helens and all Oregon school children.

Consider the current status of Oregon's education system:

- Oregon has one of the lowest graduation rates in the country.
- Oregon is 49th in the nation in class size (nearly six students more than the US average.)
- Oregon students receive on average one instructional year less in their K-12 education compared to the national average.
- Oregon spends about 88% of the national average per pupil K-12.
- Oregon is 46th in state expenditures on K-12 education as a percent of state taxable resources.
- K-12's share of the Oregon state budget has dropped 6% to 39% since 2003-05.
- The state's economy is expected to grow by 11% in the next biennium.

This is what \$7.235 billion in K-12 funding would mean for the St. Helens School District:

- St. Helens will receive \$77 less per student next year compared to our 2014-15 funding level.
- A \$7.2 billion budget is nearly \$2.84 million short of what St. Helens needs to maintain current programs, add full-day kindergarten, operate a full-school year and replace curriculum materials and outdated technology.
- A full calendar year, although short in comparison to the national average, might not be possible.
- The cost of implementing full day kindergarten is not covered.
- We would have to consider cutting teachers or days of school.
- Our projected fund balance in 2015-16 and 2016-17 would drop to about 3 percent.
- We would have no ability to replace outdated curriculum materials that align to the Common Core State Standards.
- The aging student computers in our schools and classrooms would not be replaced and our outdated technology infrastructure will have to last even longer.
- Our ability to help teachers meet more rigorous expectations for 21st century learning through professional learning would be severely limited.

What we are doing to children today is going to impact Oregon and our economy over the next three decades. I am counting on you to vote to invest in Oregon's future. That starts with a \$7.5 to \$8 billion investment in K-12 education for 2015-17.

**A template letter and the Legislative contacts list can be found on the district website. Please help us fund schools adequately.*

<http://www.sthelens.k12.or.us/site/default.aspx?PageID=1>