



2026 Legislative Priorities

Portland Public Schools' (PPS) legislative strategy is grounded in the Board's commitment to eliminating inequities in student outcomes and ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive. That commitment is being challenged by a convergence of significant pressures facing students, families, and the district. Our students are facing extraordinary and compounding barriers: fear and disruption caused by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity in our communities; significant financial strain driven by declining enrollment, rising costs, and inadequate funding and uncertain funding levels from the federal government. As a result, PPS is confronting a \$50 million budget deficit for the 2026-27 school year, this comes after cutting \$30M (22-23), \$10M (23-24), and \$40M (24-25). Since the pandemic, PPS has made gains in student achievement. We are recognized statewide for implementing targeted, evidence-based interventions that meet students where they are, nurture their passions, and prepare them for success. These gains are the direct result of intentional investments in proven programs and supports.

Unfortunately, the scale of the proposed budget reductions threatens to undo this progress. Core programs that provide additional reading and math support are at risk, as are enrichment opportunities and college- and career-readiness programs that are critical to students' long-term success and transition into adulthood.

At this pivotal moment, students and families are relying on the Oregon Legislature to help alleviate these burdens. The Board urges lawmakers to center the needs of students and families during the 2026 short session by providing schools with the necessary resources. Oregon's strength depends on the well-being of all its communities, and as immigrant students and families face heightened federal attacks, the Legislature has an opportunity to advance a strong immigrant rights package. Finally, our schools are already asked to do far more than educate—providing nutrition, mental health support, and guidance toward college and careers. We respectfully urge the Legislature not to impose additional mandates or requirements on schools without the funding and support necessary to implement them effectively.

Fully Funding Public Schools to Prevent Additional Harmful Cuts

Federal tax legislation enacted in H.R. 1 is projected to reduce state revenues by approximately \$1 billion in the current biennium and by an estimated \$14 billion over the next four to six years. These impacts are driven in part by federal tax changes and by anticipated reductions in federal



funding for programs such as health care and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which serve many Oregon students and families. Under Oregon law, the state is not required to conform automatically to federal tax policy and has the authority to selectively disconnect from specific provisions of the Internal Revenue Code. By exercising this authority, Oregon could mitigate revenue losses associated with federal tax changes and reduce pressure on the state budget, helping to avoid potential reductions in school funding, instructional time, class sizes, student supports, and other essential education programs.

Additionally, the Board calls on the legislature to use the Education Stability Fund to protect vital supports and services. Students cannot learn when their basic needs are unmet, tapping into the education stability fund can prevent cuts to essential student health, nutrition and stability programs. Oregon's Education Stability Fund is projected to have more than \$1.25 billion available for the Governor and Legislature to use to prevent cuts to schools during the 2025-27 biennium. We urge the Legislature to access these renewable reserve funds, just like they did during COVID, to prevent the most devastating cuts to our public schools. The Education Stability Fund is meant to be used sustainably and has a permanent funding source to replenish it. We can both prevent cuts that hurt students now and still have ample reserves to plan for future budget challenges.

Protecting our Immigrant Students

No student can learn while living in fear. PPS calls on the legislature to safeguard immigrant students and families by:

- Protecting the data privacy and sensitive health information of our students and their families
- Passing legislation to allow people to sue federal agents for violating their constitutional rights, such as unlawfully entering their home or school grounds.
- Strengthening Oregon's anti-discrimination protections for immigrants
- Limiting mask use and standardizing identification for all law enforcement

No Additional Unfunded Mandates

Our schools are already doing more than ever - educating students while also providing nutrition, mental health care, and postsecondary guidance. Our school districts can not take on more requirements, reporting mandates, or compliance burdens without a dedicated source of sustainable funding. With so many districts facing cuts while also working to improve student outcomes, it is also not the time for significant changes to education policy.