

Theodore R. Kulongoski
Governor



Governor's Report on Education for 2009-2011

The mission of the Education Enterprise is to ensure that Oregonians possess the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in learning, work, and citizenship to create prosperity and opportunity for Oregon in the global economy.

By the Year 2025, Oregon aims to have 40 percent of Oregon adults with a four year college degree or higher; 40 percent of Oregon adults with an Associates degree, professional certificate or equivalent; and the remaining 20 percent of Oregon adults with at least a high school diploma or equivalent.

Oregon statute ORS 291.228 requires the Governor to submit a report on the adequacy or inadequacy of the recommended budget on K-12 education. Historically, these reports have only focused on K-12 because Oregon did not have post secondary goals. And, while we have had a K-12 Quality Education Commission, we have not had a similar commission for the post secondary system. By Executive Order I have also created the Post Secondary Quality Education Commission and so this report will include more details on the entire Education Enterprise, PreK through adult/workforce education and training.

We have all watched and felt the national and worldwide economic downturn develop. This has put the state's revenues in jeopardy and thus our ability to make the kinds and level of investments we would all like. I have prioritized the 2009-2011 budget to again focus on the needs of children, education, healthcare and putting Oregonians to work.

So my answer to the core question is, "no" my proposed budget is not adequate in meeting the funding levels outlined by the Quality Education Model, but it does continue the progress we've made over the last several years to ensure schools stay open for a full school year, class sizes remain reasonable and students can afford a post-secondary education.

Due to uncertainty about the course of the present economic crisis, my budget preserves education funding at every level for the first year of the biennium, leaving the need for an additional \$225 million in the second half of the biennium to keep education at full funding across the board.

My plan calls for working with the legislature in February of 2010 to allocate the necessary \$225 million from the Education Stability Fund if other revenues are not available to ensure a full school year and a no-cuts budget to education for the 2010-11 school year.

Additionally, my budget includes several very specific and strategic investments to ensure students at every stage of their education have opportunity, including:

- 1) Continue efforts toward funding 100% of eligible 3 and 4 year olds in Head Start as well as beginning support for Early Head Start – expanding this program to 700 new eligible students.
- 2) Continuing the K-12 mentor teacher/administrator program.
- 3) Enhance Career/Technical Education opportunities for students of all ages.
- 4) Implementing the new Oregon Career Readiness Certificate.
- 5) Improving student retention and success in our post secondary institutions.
- 6) Maintaining the promise of the Oregon Opportunity Grant/Shared Responsibility Model.

The K-12 Quality Education Commission recommended a series of investments for moving forward on the new high school diploma. While we do not have the resources to implement all of their recommendations, I have reviewed their recommendations carefully and agree we must provide school staff with time and resources to plan for the implementation of the new requirements. The enhanced high school graduation requirements will mean professional development for math and science teachers to enable them to teach more of the advanced and career related classes. The current economic crisis does not allow for this level of investment in the current budget without making other reductions in critical areas, such as class size and length of school year.

To ensure that Oregon continues to move forward in implementing these new standards, I have asked school districts to focus their professional development funds on providing time for school staff to analyze the data and plan for the changes that will be needed as the new diploma requirements phase in.

The Post Secondary Quality Education Commission has recommended increased support for the Shared Responsibility Model – Oregon Opportunity Grants and for improving student retention and completion. They also recognize that while we must always look at improving the traditional pipeline of education and training, the Oregon adult workforce will play a key role in meeting the 40-40-20 goal and must be reengaged in the education process.

My strategic post secondary investments are designed to address these recommendations. The investments include maintaining the support resources for both Oregon's seventeen community colleges and Oregon's seven public universities and expanding career technical education. Additionally, I have proposed increased resources for the Engineering & Technology Industry Council (ETIC) and funds to rollout the new Oregon Career Readiness Certificate statewide.

Both Commissions have done exceptional work and I thank them. They have begun developing a PreK-16 model that will assist are education and training strategy for years to come.

By continuing the commitment to funding education in this budget, Oregon will move closer to achieving this vision, while speeding economic recovery and producing better educated workers who will infuse the economy with new energy and talent.

This priority does not come without difficult choices or significant consequences in other program areas, but I believe strongly that education and job training are the core investments that will help Oregon emerge stronger and better prepared to take advantage of the economic recovery when it does occur.