

Knappa School Board Legislative Priorities

Establish More Accurate Methods for Calculating the Cost of Running Schools

1. We urge lawmakers to advance Governor Kotek's recommendations for the Current Service Level (CSL) calculation to more accurately account for inflation, employment costs, and other cost increases experienced by school districts. We also urge lawmakers to update the CSL calculation to reflect the increase in the final PERS rate adopted by the Board in October (a \$565 million increase to 2025-27 expenses from when the April rate was used for calculations).

The current methodology for computing current service level does not cover the real annual additional costs for Knappa School District.

2. We oppose unfunded mandates and urge lawmakers to address existing unfunded mandates – starting with unemployment insurance for classified employees.

As an example, the unfunded mandate related to unemployment insurance has cost approximately \$50,000 in the current fiscal year, and is anticipated to increase as rates increase, salaries increase, and more people apply for unemployment.

Support the Success of Students with Intensive Needs

1. We support an addition of \$500 million to the State School Fund to increase the cap for students in special education from 11% to 15%.

Knappa School District's current special education percentage is 18%. Some assert that increasing the cap creates an incentive to over-qualify students for special education. This is not true. Students can only be qualified for special education if they meet one or more of the 13 federally recognized qualifying factors. Additionally, for each student it costs more to educate the student than the additional resources districts receive. Over-qualification, even with the raised cap, is an economic detriment to the district's general fund budget.

2. We request an increase of \$150 million to the State School Fund to reimburse school districts for the full cost of students with high cost disabilities.

Knappa has eight current students who trigger high cost disability funds (>\$35,000/year for services), but the actual additional cost is only currently 40% funded. The proposed change would fund approximately 90% of the extra cost.

Maintain and Improve Support for Rural Schools

1. Ensure equity in resources provided for students in rural school districts, including recognition that a) rural school districts make up the majority of

districts in Oregon, b) reporting requirements create an undue burden on staff members in rural schools because there are less personnel, c) procurement of grants is more challenging in rural schools because there are not sufficient personnel to create grant applications and provide grant compliance reports, and d) staffing levels are often higher (and more costly) on a per-pupil basis in rural schools to maintain adequate programming.

2. Support decision making by local school boards to the highest degree possible, especially in situations where there are multiple perspectives on how to best educate children and administer schools and the belief structures of our citizens might be different from those in more urban or suburban areas of the state.
3. Consider efficiencies that might be found in the state's Educational Service District (ESD) structure with the goal of providing increased resources to local school districts.