



February 4, 2010

Dear Oregon ESD Superintendents and Board Members:

We wanted to write you to update you on some recent events relating to ESD governance and fiscal management and ask for your assistance in identifying best ESD practices. As you may be aware, the Secretary of State's office has completed their performance audit of Willamette ESD. This audit was prompted by a number of issues that were identified last year. In August of 2009, the Oregon Department of Education, along with Willamette ESD, requested that the Secretary of State's office perform the audit. The audit report, along with the Willamette ESD response, is attached. The audit report is also available online at <http://www.sos.state.or.us/audits/reports/full/2010/2010-11.pdf>.

The Oregon Association of ESDs and the Oregon Department of Education see this as an opportunity to review and improve our practices. Even though ESDs, like school districts, business, etc., all operate differently, each of us can use this as an opportunity to measure ourselves against the audit report and identify changes that will enhance our work with our local school districts, communities, staff and students.

To enhance this learning process, and get the maximum value out of the investment that the Oregon Department of Education made in the audit, we are asking that all of Oregon's ESDs undertake the following:

- Have all ESD superintendents, board members, and administrative staff read the entire audit and schedule time to discuss its findings with regard to your own practices.
- Prepare a response to each of the audit's findings noting one of the following and providing appropriate detail (this is a template, ESDs may want to structure their approach differently):
 - Our ESD faces the same issue and here is our plan to improve;
 - Our ESD handles that approximately the same way but we believe it is the correct policy/procedure;
 - Our ESD does not have the same issue because....
- Each ESD should distribute the written results to their Board of Directors, the Oregon Department of Education, the Oregon Association of ESDs, and the superintendents and board members of each of their component districts.
- Through the Oregon Association of ESDs, each ESD would share their findings with the other 19 ESDs.

It is our plan to have the Oregon Association of ESD's share a collection of all of the responses produced with every ESD in the state. To provide that information in a timely manner, we ask that all ESDs begin this work immediately and set a goal to distribute your findings to the following contacts by April 30, 2010:

Ed Dennis
Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction
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Salem, Oregon 97310
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Jim Mabbott
Co-Chair
Oregon Association of ESDs
5825 NW Ray Circle
Hillsboro, Oregon 97124
Fax: 503-614-1283
Email: jmabbott@nwresd.k12.or.us

If you have any questions, please contact Jim Mabbott at 503-614-1401 or at the contact information listed above.

We believe this work will provide transparency and enhance your work with your school districts and the students of Oregon.

Sincerely,



Susan Castillo
State Superintendent of Public Instruction



Jim Mabbott
Co-Chair, Oregon Association of ESDs

Enclosures

cc:

President of the Senate, Peter Courtney
Speaker of the House, Dave Hunt
Senator Mark Hass
Representative Sara Gelser