

Fact Sheet

June 1, 2006

Oregon's Constitution:

- Article VIII, Section 3 requires the Legislature to “provide by law for the establishment of a uniform and general system of Common schools.”¹
- Article VIII, Section 8 requires the Legislature to appropriate in each biennium a sum of money “sufficient to ensure the state’s system of K-12 public education meets quality goals established by law.”²
- Article VIII, Section 8 was added to the Constitution in November 2000 as Ballot Measure I and was passed in every one of Oregon’s 36 counties and statewide by a 2:1 margin.³

Cost/Benefit to Oregon taxpayers:

- Each high school dropout costs Oregon taxpayers \$8,460 per year on average.⁴
- Nearly 80 percent of all prison inmates in Oregon are high school dropouts, at an average cost to taxpayers of more than \$23,000 per inmate each year.⁵
- A college graduate contributes \$8,250 annually to the state coffers.⁶

How Oregon compares:

- As of 2003-04 average administrative costs in Oregon’s school districts (district central administration plus school-level administration) statewide were 8 percent.⁷
- Between 1990 and 1998, despite a flourishing economy, Oregon’s per pupil education funding dropped by 20%, when adjusted for inflation.⁸
- In 2003 Oregon ranked 28th in per pupil K-12 funding among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, down from 16th in 1992.⁹
- When measured as a percentage of the average personal income of the state’s citizens, Oregon’s national standing in support of schools dropped from 11th in 1992 to 34th by 2003.¹⁰
- The 6.1% decline in Oregon’s K-12 funding per student between the 2002 and 2003 school years was the largest annual percentage decline measured by any state between 2002-2003, and the second largest year-to-year decline among the 50 states and the District of Columbia since 1989-90.¹¹ In contrast, in 2002, Oregon ranked 6th nationally in terms of per-capita expenditures on its corrections system.¹²
- Based on NAEP 2004 test results, only about one-third of Oregon’s 4th graders and 8th graders are proficient in math and reading.¹³
- Recent assessment tests administered in Oregon reveal that only approximately one-half of the state’s 10th graders are “meeting standards” in reading, math and writing.¹⁴
- As of 2002, the state’s 71 percent high school graduation rate ranked 32nd in the nation.¹⁵
- With an average class size of 23.9 students, Oregon elementary school classrooms were the 2nd most crowded in the nation as of 2000.¹⁶

¹ Oregon Constitution, Article VIII, Section 3

² Oregon Constitution, Article VIII, Section 8

³ *ibid*

⁴ Oregon Department of Education, 2004

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ Oregon Department of Education, Audited District Data, 2003-04

⁸ OR Legislative Council on the OR QEM, April 1999, www.ode.state.or.us/sfda/qualityed/docs/origqemreport.1999.pdf

⁹ US Census Bureau, 1992, 2005

¹⁰ US Census Bureau, 2003

¹¹ ECONorthwest, The Condition of K12 Education in Oregon, January 2005

¹² National Education Association, June 2005

¹³ National Association of Educational Progress, 2004

¹⁴ Oregon Department of Education, OR Statewide Report Card, 2003-04

¹⁵ www.edweek.org/rc/states/oregon.html

¹⁶ *ibid*