**Agenda/Notes**
**Office of Governor Tina Kotek**
**RJC Education Committee**
**August 24, 2026 – Zoom**
**1:00 – 3:00 pm**

**MEMBERS**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| X | Angela Uherbelau | X | Jennifer Simonson | E | Marie Chisholm-Burns |
| A | Aryn Frazier | X | Jennifer Wilson | E | Mark Jackson |
| X | Cynthia Richardson | E | Jimmy Howard | X | Nelly Patiño-Cabrera |
| X | George Mendoza | E | Lyn Tan | A | Sonya Moody-Jurado |
| A | Shazia Abdulla | X | Sandra Yokley | A | Lizette Aguero |

**OTHER ATTENDEES**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| X | Andre Bealer | E | Johnna Timmes | X | Yasmin Solorio |
| X | Javier Cervantes | | | | |

| Topic/Lead | Notes/Main Points | Decisions/Action Items |
|---|---|---|
| **Priorities Discussion** | *Meeting starts at 1:09pm. Javier announces Rachael Moser has left the Governor's Office for a new role at Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Javier shares "Education Priorities Discussion Template 2026".*<br><br>**Javier**: Hope these priorities give information to help dictate Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB). These are items brought up as priorities for the committee.<br><br>**George**: Poverty calculating is its own bucket. Online school is separate but about funding too.<br><br>**Cynthia**: Poverty weight was one.<br><br>**George**: Special Education (SPED) funding has been capped at 11% for 20 years. Most districts average 15-20% now. Longterm high-cost disability is another one that hasn't gone up.<br><br>There are so many models with online school, would be best if it was ran by state and coherent way with a synchronous learning. Online students should be the responsibility of the district where they live. A lot of families and students are not getting equitable experiences throughout the state with the online platform.<br><br>**Cynthia**: Charter schools vs traditional schools.<br><br>**George**: We have 20 years of online and its crumbling. School shouldn't give a parent $2,500 to be part of their program. It's a de | |

facto voucher. Parents then come to our district asking for funds and we don't do that model.

**Angela:** Agree with more clarity in buckets vs individual discreet things. Oregon is one of the worst states in the country to be a student of color when it comes to reading, science, and math. Pushing for systemic solutions and urging legislature and Governor to tie student outcomes and tie it to students and schools who need it most.

Poverty weight is a morale issue, needs changing. George, I appreciate the comments on how inconsistent online vs brick and mortar learning is.
Push for systemic solutions as opposed to one-offs. Would love to hear comments on getting rid of opt-out of state testing.

**Javier**: What would we call that bucket?

**George**: Accountability. Back to expectation, everyone does science, reading, etc. If you don't do well in that model, you're going to be held back based on assessment results. Parents will feel pressure of it and teachers will implement and there needs to be coaching and support for that level of rigor. You make a kid pass a GED and they have to pass questions. They don't have to pass state test.

**Cynthia**: Length of the school year is another item for accountability.

**George**: You need professional development so teachers can increase structural quality. Bad to add time with poor instruction. Taking away parent teacher conferences, which is something Governor has recommended, that's time well spent.

**Javier**: More hours or more days, with targeted funds for that.

**Cynthia**: There needs to be a better way to structure professional development.

**George**: I have 2 days of professional development, teachers have 5 workdays to get ready, work, grade etc. If you're taking away professional development, that is the wrong step and strategy for greatness.

Governor is wanting to take out professional development that districts count for 30 hours of it. Less professional development and do school days. If I do more professional development, will need to add those 30 hours to do that professional development and they have to agree to do that with Union. They won't say "ok" just because we tell them to say ok.

If you do targeted investments, sometimes is easier than trying to negotiate it in.

**Jenn**: Is the number of hours for an online student the same as brick and mortar?

**George**: That's another inequity, they can check in for a few seconds and it counts as attending. For in-person, you have to have completed a certain amount of periods per day to count it as a day.

**Jenn**: Is online the same as homeschool?

**George**: No, it's different.

**Jenn**: Couldn't the funding piece tie back to enrollment. If hours aren't same for brick and mortar vs online, shouldn't funding be different?

**George**: They don't have bus drivers, custodians, cooks, etc.

**Angela**: Want to push forward with idea of our new teachers that Oregon has a test that measures if they understand how to teach. As of now, there isn't such test. Was recommended but was recommended with caveats. Worried that teachers aren't prepared.

**Javier**: That is a different bucket

**George**: Proficiency exam for science and reading.

**Angela**: For general teaching certificate for k-12, don't know if there's another

**George**: K-5 is a potential. For veteran teachers you'd have to have science or reading element to have course or classes completed to so whole system can ramp up to something in 5 year period. Think that's a great goal.

**Nelly**: I do appreciate the goal of improving reading outcomes. Not convinced that requiring additional assessments for new teachers is the right solution. A concern I have is new teachers reading assessments before they teach it can be a barrier for them. Instead of becoming another hoop to jump, maybe we should focus on professional development. Oregon is facing a lot of barriers with recruiting and retaining teachers, it can be another barrier for teachers especially for those who are ready to teach or going through a program to work in the field. Salaries aren't super promising. Something to consider.

**George**: Don't mind if it doesn't happen, but we need to get to

that point.

**Javier**: We've identified accountability, funding, and assessment.

**George**: Poverty calculation would be number one.

**Cynthia**: Poverty or whole state funding?

**George**: Would start with poverty. Would recommend phases, all at once would be complex. Phase 2 could be looking at system and see where it needs to be updated.

SPED Funding would be second, would like to see high cost disability and SPED cap change from 11% to 15%, or at least more than what it is.

Third, sustainability for science and reading. We have to keep investing in reading so there's lots of requirements for professional development, and expectations for students and holding them accountable for results.

**Cynthia**: We have to update curriculum for professional development.

**George**: Opt out and online. Our state is letting it get out of control, can't have systems in place like we have. Should be ran by the state and be consistent. Opt out needs to be where if you take the test and if you don't pass, work samples until you do pass it.

**Angela**: Agree with George on poverty weight being number one and idea of phasing it. Would want clarity to see if ODE has authority to change it so we don't have to go through legislature.

**Javier**: Advocacy in that way, asking ODE, is an outcome we can measure.

**George**: Think they would say it's a state school board to act funding. State board has to approve law, the ODE has to act afterwards.

**Nelly**: I do support reading instruction, but concerned about one size fits all approach. Doesn't work for multilingual learners. Need to have strengths and needs. Theres a lot of emphasis in reading, science. Concern is adding another barrier and maybe we can invite Teachers Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC) so we understand the process. Let's not put to much emphasis that isn't going to cure what were experiencing as a state.

**George**: Happy if it isn't a state law. Do think course content is a good step for new k-5 teachers.

**Angela**: Maybe it's something we can get more learning on. Share concern to not create more barriers for our teachers but do think Oregon is far and needs to come to a closed system so teacher and kids can be successful.

**Jennifer Wilson**: Do we have data on the impacts of technology on reading learning outcomes? My husband teaches high school and those kids are so addicted to technology.

**George**: More anecdotal. Screen time is something we should study, how much should a primary student be on a screen. When you use iReady math and reading, its part of the school curriculum and they use it for 15-20 mins per day. It's an approved Oregon curriculum. Almost every company has online curriculum.

**Javier**: We need to prioritize what our top thoughts are. What are we trying to solve with regards to online school funding (run by ESD or the state), advocacy regarding poverty weight (admin change or policy change at legislative level), SPED cap changes, student proficiency courses to teach K-5, professional development and leadership.

**George**: Raye Ette Newman can be a good person who can talk on TSPC and implementing it on a standpoint.

**Javier**: Poverty weight is one we will continue to work on. What is the secondary item were interested in looking towards?

**Angela**: On accountability bucket – with literacy dollars with Oregon spends, were spending $90M every biennium on literacy funding. That was supposed to be prioritized for lowest proficiency schools. Right now literacy funding isn't being distributed equally. We should be spending the money we have with the students who needs it most.

**Javier**: I hear it as an inequity practice.

**Angela**: We do have title 1 schools doing fairly well.

**Javier**: Advocacy might be part of being of that conversation.

**George**: HB141 goes into effect this year now with requirements.

**Angela**: Other states have done a roll out releasing funds based on needs. Money goes to highest need but still goes to other schools to address needs there too.

**Sandra**: This is perfect example of equity and equality. For equitable you want to start with highest need. There is research supporting this as well, starting from highest need it will trickle down to schools or populations who still may have needs but not

as high of needs.

**Javier**: For SPED, what would advocacy look like.

**George**: This is from 2025,

- **Special Education Cap** - The 11% cap was put in place in 1991 – over 30 years ago – after the passage of Measure 5 and has not been changed since. Additive funding is needed to ensure school districts have the financial resources to serve students with disabilities. The statewide average is about 15% and some of our districts are approaching 18+%. (Estimated cost to eliminate the cap is $425-$450 million for the 2025-27 biennium)
- **High-Cost Disability Account** – Current funding for students with the most significant special education needs only reimburses about 40% of costs, or just 40 cents for every dollar of eligible school district expenditures. We need to reimburse 100% of the costs to pay for critical academic and support services for our students with disabilities. (Estimated cost is growing and may exceed $200 million for the 2025-27 biennium)

**Angela**: Things like educator advancement council – could be another place to take funds and put it towards SPED.

If there is no new money, sense from this committee is redistribute money we already have. That is part of that poverty weight advocacy is.

**Javier**: Who or what or what are we taking from?

**Cynthia**: Looking at online operating costs for online school compared to traditional schools.

**George**: Have to not be afraid to talk about rainy day. We leave billions off the table by not taxing. Have to find ways to create revenue in the future. Rainy day hasn't been used. Education Stability Fund hasn't been used. It's an investment.

**Angela**: Oregon opt out of federal tax - It's over a million dollars that would've funded into schools. Worried she made the decision without consulting RJC and Education Committee.

**Cynthia**: We took it to RJC.

**Angela**: Didn't feel like there was a full discussion. To me its not a full enough answer. Concerned she didn't weigh the impact of the decision. Don't know if she has a chance to revisit and discuss it again.

**Cynthia**: Maybe we can add this conversation with Johnna T. for

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | agenda item for next time.<br><br>**Javier**: We can also add to next RJC meeting as well.<br><br>**Cynthia**: What do we need to know on action teachers are taking.<br><br>**Angela**: Changes within the state where quotes like "strike is always as good idea". In some leaders rhetoric strikes are a way people are pushing for more funding. Speaking for myself, union leadership has fought reforms with money we have that would be good for teachers. More we know that its happening – just being ready.<br><br>**George**: Access to resources is finite. We make laws and say go on strike and we'll give you unemployment, Paid Leave Oregon is about 1%. You don't have teachers in classrooms as much. Impact is hard on structure of the organization.<br><br>**Cynthia**: If they strike, they reduce school days again.<br><br>**Javier**: Will offer you an opportunity to edit/revise what I capture. We will need to have a special meeting in Sept to get everyone together to vote. Yasmin can get a poll together.<br><br>*Next meeting is October 26th. Meeting concludes at 2:52pm.* | |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Meeting Materials** | RJC-Education Committee Priorites<br>Education Priorities Discussion Template |

## Zoom Chat

2026-08-24 13:07:20 From Angela Uherbelau to Hosts and panelists:
Thanks Javier

2026-08-24 13:10:53 From Sandra Yokley (she/her) to Hosts and panelists:
Are you hiring for the role that is now vacant?

2026-08-24 13:50:48 From Jennifer Wilson to Hosts and panelists:
do we have data on the impacts of technology on reading learning outcomes? My husband teaches high school and those kids are so addicted to technology.

2026-08-24 13:51:21 From Jennifer Wilson to Hosts and panelists:
sorry for not chiming in. I am in a noisy place.

2026-08-24 13:58:01 From Nelly Patino Cabrera to Hosts and panelists:
Here are the new frameworks: https://oregoninstructionalframeworks.org/

2026-08-24 13:59:15 From Angela Uherbelau to Hosts and panelists:
There's been a wave of lawsuits against tech companies on behalf of kids - I've heard some groups in Oregon might be exploring that. I hope that any settlement money would be directed to support the students most impacted, including students of color.

2026-08-24 14:00:14 From Nelly Patino Cabrera to Hosts and panelists:
There are also new/updated literacy program standards: https://secure.sos.state.or.us/oard/viewSingleRule.action?ruleVrsnRsn=326460

2026-08-24 14:00:27 From Jennifer Wilson to Hosts and panelists:
I think that is my concern. Technology should be a tool so if it isn't generating the desired outcomes we should recognize it isn't a good tool.

2026-08-24 14:01:55 From Angela Uherbelau to Hosts and panelists:
Thanks Nelly for the new program standards - unfortunately those are mostly self-certified and experts who've reviewed them say many Oregon prep programs aren't actually changing their practice

2026-08-24 14:03:56 From Nelly Patino Cabrera to Hosts and panelists:
Sad to hear 😳 At OSU we had to go through our curriculum and syllabi to make sure we were actually addressing the new standards...

2026-08-24 14:04:14 From Sandra Yokley (she/her) to Hosts and panelists:
Im here! Sorry — took a quick bio break

2026-08-24 14:04:44 From George Mendoza to Hosts and panelists:
Steps to take regarding Online: Conduct a statewide cost study comparing brick-and-mortar, district online, charter online, and hybrid models.
Compare graduation, completion, attendance, mobility, course completion, and dropout outcomes across online programs.
Map exactly where each student dollar goes—instruction, administration, management fees, marketing, technology, resident district, and student services.
Review all existing district-provider agreements to identify how widely pass-through percentages and responsibilities vary.
Establish a statewide definition of the minimum services every online student should receive.
Review Oregon's current oversight structure for financial conflicts, related-party transactions, enrollment marketing, stipends, and purchasing practices.

2026-08-24 14:05:11 From George Mendoza to Hosts and panelists:
Online Recommendations:
Establish a statewide online education model with common expectations for enrollment, instruction, communication, student support, accountability, and outcomes.
Consider state or ESD oversight/chartering rather than having individual districts compete to sponsor or attract statewide online enrollment.
Limit or prohibit for-profit entities from controlling core public-school functions, including enrollment, finances, staffing, administration, and school operations.
Prohibit enrollment incentives and loosely controlled parent spending accounts, particularly cash-equivalent stipends or purchase cards.

2026-08-24 14:05:16 From Nelly Patino Cabrera to Hosts and panelists:
I'll be back... quick break

2026-08-24 14:05:36 From Angela Uherbelau to Hosts and panelists:
Can we also discuss the current escalation in rhetoric around teacher strikes ahead of the legislative session and how RJC Education might help advise the governor on this?

2026-08-24 14:26:48 From George Mendoza to Hosts and panelists:
Special Education Cap - The 11% cap was put in place in 1991 – over 30 years ago – after the passage of Measure 5 and has not been changed since. Additive funding is needed to ensure school districts have the financial resources to serve students with disabilities. The statewide average is about 15% and some of our districts are approaching 18+%. (Estimated cost to eliminate the cap is $425-$450 million for the 2025-27 biennium)
High-Cost Disability Account – Current funding for students with the most significant special education needs only reimburses about 40% of costs, or just 40 cents for every dollar of eligible school district expenditures. We need to reimburse 100% of the costs to pay for critical academic and support services for our students with disabilities. (Estimated cost is growing and may exceed $200 million for the 2025-27 biennium)

2026-08-24 14:29:58 From George Mendoza to Hosts and panelists:
Our Students with Disabilities Deserve Every Opportunity to Succeed in School.
But Our Funding Model for Special Education is Inequitable and Needs Updating. The 11% SPED cap was put in place after the passage of Measure 5 in 1991.
Funding Has Not Kept Up With Caseload Growths. We have more students with disabilities who need highly specialized services and well-trained staff. We must have the funding to meet these growing needs.
Current Special Education Funding Is Inadequate. Funding for the staff, services, and programs that serve our students with disabilities does not account for the real costs our school districts incur. Districts must cover these costs by redirecting general fund dollars to cover inadequate state funding.

2026-08-24 14:30:12 From Andre Bealer (he/him) Gov. Office to Hosts and panelists:
Apologies but I have to hop to another meeting. Thank you all!

2026-08-24 14:41:18 From Yasmin Solorio, Gov Office (She/her) to Hosts and panelists:
July RJC
https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policies/Racial%20Justice%20Council%20Meeting%20Materials/07.16.2026%20RJC%20Meeting%20Minutes%20and%20materials.pdf

2026-08-24 14:42:25 From Angela Uherbelau to Hosts and panelists:
Thank you

2026-08-24 14:47:26 From Angela Uherbelau to Hosts and panelists:
https://katu.com/news/project-education/portland-middle-schools-double-digit-gains-what-harriet-tubman-is-doing-differently-grades-proficiency-education-statistics-students-teachers-parents-local-community

2026-08-24 14:47:41 From Nelly Patino Cabrera to Hosts and panelists:
Thank you! See you soon!

2026-08-24 14:48:06 From Angela Uherbelau to Hosts and panelists:
Ending on a positive note! HTMS is my daughters' former middle school

2026-08-24 14:50:20 From George Mendoza to Hosts and panelists:
Need to get to my next meeting. Be well!

**Education Priorities Discussion-2026**

In preparation for Committee priorities discussions please evaluate the following tables. Table 1 is a summary of the Education Committee's current work as well as other possible priorities/themes that have emerged since January of 2026 (in blue). The themes may also serve as potential advocacy area for the Committee.

The second table encompasses the Govrnor's priorities, areas of legislative focus within legislative workgroups, and early childhood priorities. Table 2 can also be used as a springboard for possible future advocacy positions for the Committee.

When thinking about Committee advocacy think about a problem statement for each item you are identifying (i.e. what is being addressed?). What is the goal and objective of your problem statement? What might advocacy look like (draft a letter, testimony, meeting requests during Legislative Days)?

**Table 1**

| Committee | Current Work | Possible Priorities/ Themes | Problem Statement: Goal, Objective, & Advocacy |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Education** | • Current Learning: Poverty Weight & Adjustments<br>• Current Learning about DELC: Better Support Preschool for All and Preschool Promise Providers<br>  ○ Licensing Day Care Businesses<br>• Previous: Continue Accountability Updates | • Multilingual Learners: offering a Spanish assessment as was done with the OAKS system (reinstitution of the assessment)-Jaclyn Caires-Hurley.<br>• HR1 will put impact on higher ed. Specially grad plus loans. Thers a gap to what student can pay and cost of attendance-Marie Chisholm-Burns.<br>• Online School Funding vs Brick and Mortar School Funding reforms<br>• Immigrant Student Safety<br>• Reimbursement Model<br>• Civil Rights and hiring of new | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | positions. Back log on civil right cases.<br>• Workgroup recommendations that were not acted upon (Rep Ruiz worked on this)<br>• Cost savings-Orgs that partner with multiple school districts (multiple fees for background checks)<br>• Local control and cultural specific services and the diversity of ideological approach | |

Table 2 can also be used as a springboard for possible future advocacy positions. When thinking about Committee advocacy think about a problem statement for each item you are identifying (i.e. what is being addressed?). What is the goal and objective of your problem statement? What might advocacy look like (draft a letter, testimony, meeting requests, meeting with agencies, meetings Legislative Days)?

**Table 2**

| Committee | 2027 Legislative Concepts/POPs | Advocacy Considerations: Problem Statement: Goal, Objective, & Advocacy |
|---|---|---|
| **Education** | **K-12 Legislative priorities:**<br>• Funding State School Fund (SSF) at the current service level (CSL)<br>• Continued implementation of SB 141<br>  ○ Fiscal transparency and | Andrea Castaneda: has recommendations and co-chair would like to hear about. She recommendations modernizing funding (COSA endorsed as well). |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | next steps for chart of accounts<br>○ Enhanced resources for summer and extended learning<br>○ Pathways to graduation requirements<br><br>**Legislative workgroups:**<br>• Modernizing the SSF distribution model- Rep Hudson/Ruiz<br>○ QEM (adequacy of funding model)- Rep Ruiz<br>• Accountability/SB 141- Rep Bowman<br>• Instructional Time- Rep Dobson<br>• Chronic Absenteeism- Rep Wise<br>• Directed Spending of SSA and/or SSF- Rep Kropf<br><br>**Early Childhood Priorities:**<br>• Childcare Infrastructure Fund grants<br>• Salary pot for provider rate bargaining<br>• Alignment between early learning system and K-3rd (P-3rd alignment), including EI/ECSE<br>• Requiring School Districts with Pre-K classes to register with DELC<br>• Codifying Baby Promise in statute | Alignment of all the workgroups impact the others and how they communicate and share information |

The following are priorities the RJC-Education Committee discussed at its August 24th meeting. Below we identified three "buckets" with priorities under each. Please review the items and take a moment to rank order the priorities. There will be a special meeting called in September for the committee to finalize the top priorities and next steps.

| RJC-Education Committee | Priority | Rank order the priority from most important to least on scale 1-4 (1=Highest, 4=Lowest). |
|---|---|---|
| | **A. Funding Bucket**<br>1. Poverty Weight Reform<br>a. Goal: Clarify from Oregon Department of Education (ODE) if reform can occur through an agency administrative change or a policy change at the legislative level.<br>• Create engagement plan and connect with agencies or legislature.<br>• Work on recommendations from the committee for either the agency or legislature.<br>2. Special Education (SpEd) and High-Cost Disability Education<br>a. Goal: Adjust SpEd Cap from 11% to 15%.<br>• Question: Are there reallocation opportunities within Current Service Level (CSL)?<br>3. Online School Reform<br>a. Goal: Standardized education standards for online vs brick and mortar.<br>• Study cost of operating brick and mortar schools vs online schools.<br>4. Targeted investments for increased school days<br>a. Goal: Increase opportunities for additional professional development for teachers. | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **B. Accountability Bucket**<br>1. Opt-Out of State Testing<br>a. Goal: Remove the option to opt-out of state testing and assessment.<br>• Also offer opportunities to provide work samples as an alternative. | |
| | **C. Assessment Bucket**<br>1. Learn more about how reading and literacy for K-5 are assessed.<br>a. Goal: Improve literacy funding and prioritizing Title I schools and schools with lowest literacy proficiency.<br>• Invite Teacher Standards and Practice Commission (TSPC) to present to understand the process for licensing for reading instructional literacy proficiency.<br>• Invite Eastern Oregon University Professor, Rae Ette Newman to share how potential teachers are prepared, curriculum that is used | |