



KATE BROWN
Governor

January 9, 2019

Mr. Colt Gill
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Oregon Department of Education
255 Capitol St. NE
Salem, OR 97310

Mr. Anthony Veliz
Chair
State Board of Education
255 Capitol St. NE
Salem, OR 97310

Dear Director Gill and Chair Veliz,

As Governor and Superintendent of Public Instruction, it is my highest priority to ensure that the administration of our system of public education is effective, equitable, and student-centered. This requires responsiveness to the needs expressed by our students, families, communities, and our educators. It demands sound governance that ensures accountability and transparency in our actions at all levels of leadership.

The audit report issued today by the Oregon Secretary of State, "*ODE and PPS Must Do More to Monitor Spending and Address Systemic Obstacles to Student Performance, Particularly at Struggling Schools*," highlights policy, processes, and practices at the State and school district level in critical need of improvement.

The report provides recognition of the role of the State Board of Education and the Oregon Department of Education to provide active leadership, set direction and policy, and provide necessary guidance to school districts to implement several of the recommended actions under the audit.

A good education brings a priceless return on investment. We must ensure that we are being accountable for every taxpayer dollar so that each Oregon student gets the highest-quality instruction and educational experience.

Although the state is responsible for funding about two-thirds of Oregon's education system, as the audit highlights, the Department of Education's authority to provide a critical oversight role of how taxpayer dollars are spent is limited. I still believe it is incumbent on us to use every tool we have.

The recommendations pertaining to the fiscal management of Portland Public Schools have applicability to the processes and practices of all school districts. These include ensuring that district administrators prioritize key steps to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of district



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operations; providing transparency of the school district budget to the public, including staffing and spending by program over time, key performance indicators, and analysis of key initiative outcomes; and the adoption policies and practices that ensure strong management of contract and grant performance.

In my capacity as Superintendent of Public Instruction, I am immediately convening school, district, and other leaders statewide to identify strategies to ensure the public dollars they are entrusted with are well managed to best serve students. The feedback from this group will inform the development of a set of rigorous guidelines for the state to implement to improve fiscal management at the district level. ODE Director Colt Gill and I will convene a special session of the State Board of Education next month to discuss the proposed recommendations. At the special session, the State Board and I will receive a report from the Department of Education on the Division 22 standards, including whether there should be additional standards and whether the standards can be made more specific and enforceable in areas such as instructional rigor, curriculum standards, and performance standards.

I know that local and state education leaders all share the same goal of improving outcomes for Oregon's children through education, and I know that we can and will do better for our kids.

I look forward to engaging with you and the State Board of Education in this critical process, and advancing continued reform, accountability and transparency across our public education system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kate Brown". The signature is written in black ink and includes a horizontal flourish at the end.

Governor Kate Brown