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Senate Bill 540 -- Background & Summary

The Statewide Leaders Panel and the Center for Innovative School Facilities recommend to the Oregon Legislature a bill that provides for the efficient and integrated management of school real estate assets for Oregon. The primary goal of the proposed asset management work is to make a strategic investment that saves both the State and local districts money that can then be reallocated to the classroom.

Issue: A growing reality for almost all of Oregon's school districts is their increasing inability to address deferred capital maintenance, some of which is now being called "abandoned maintenance," or to improve the physical learning environments within school facilities to support new teaching practices and provide access to technology. The many unsafe, unhealthy and technologically archaic K-12 facilities reinforce the call for change aligned with the new 10-year Education Strategy. Oregon is one of seven states nationally that has no staff dedicated to capital programs and one of fifteen with under 5% state participation in capital costs. If the local school facilities can not be improved to support these students in getting a high quality education, it's doubtful that they will have the opportunity to break out of the cycle of poverty that handicaps one out of two students, and we certainly will not be able to achieve the 40/40/20 education goals we have as a state.

CISF Delivery & Barriers to the Future: The Center, its experienced staff and more than 100 volunteers statewide have been assisting school districts around the state for the last six years. Our mission is to *advance student achievement by improving place and community*. Work began with site-specific technical assistance to several districts and has expanded to reflect the 4 programs laid out in the 5 Year Strategic Plan including:

- **Research & Inventory** – This committee's work includes the completion and ongoing updating of the first statewide facility condition inventory and two research briefs establishing the specific impacts of facilities on student achievement. Currently regional Facility Condition reports that aid leaders in planning and prioritizing are being completed;
- **Standards & Technology** -- Baseline standards for safety, health, technology, energy efficiencies and impact on achievement based on national best practices are being drafted;
- **Education and Technical Assistance** -- Aids school districts directly, this committee has developed a Resource Website, Quarterly eNews, Webinars, Case Studies and specific missing resources like a Facility Funding and Surplus Property Guides – all focused on "Finding Funding and Savings for Facilities." They also involve volunteers in delivering technical assistance



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directly to districts on specific issues. They have served virtually every district in the state with one or more resources;

- **Advocacy and Funding** – This group focuses on regional and statewide discussions and provides leadership for facility funding. Their accomplishments include regional Issue Breakfasts and the 2013 Legislative agenda that reflects input for many Oregon school districts.

Overcoming the Barriers: National models indicate that statewide services are best provided from a state agency or department. While the Center has initiated many of programs that reflect a typical state structure, it is nonetheless, a non-profit without designation or authority to serve Oregon’s districts. This manifests itself in numerous ways including the extraordinary number of hours it takes to access “public” data, the time it takes as an “outsider” to coordinate with state agencies on policy, program delivery issues and avoid duplication of effort. Finally, to assure equity, resources for service delivery statewide need to be from a public/private partnership rather than wholly from the private sector.

It is critical that the 2013 Legislature provide the framework for State and local efficiencies and P14 integration. Specifically, the Leaders Panel and Center initiatives call for –

- 1) **Governor-Appointed Task Force** – This Task Force, drawing from the results of prior task forces and national best practices, would recommend to the OEIB, Governor and Legislature, a structure, programs and funding tools that will help districts and legislators set priorities and develop cost-saving partnerships. The strategy developed will allow Oregon education organizations to respond to the forthcoming changes to 21st Century education delivery and establish a more efficient, integrated P14 infrastructure system.
- 2) **PreK-14 Facility Information & Data Hub for prioritizing Safety, Health & Energy Savings** – This mechanism will help identify the large issues and promote a comprehensive view of school facilities, allowing identification of opportunities for savings and the leveraging of existing funds. The Data Hub will aid local, regional and state-level leaders in setting priorities, developing policy, planning and making decisions that integrate Early Learning, K-12 and Community College priorities to reflect the schools of the future and integrate facilities in an effective and efficient P14 system. This Information Hub should be anchored at the Department of Education and be launched with an existing statewide database that does not require additional time or resources from districts.
- 3) **Two Year Regional Technical Assistance** – This biennium of intensified technical assistance will not only move Oregon towards a new system that reflects the schools of the future and integrates facilities in an effective and efficient P14 system – it will also buy the State two years to develop a strategy for ongoing technical assistance that does not rely primarily on volunteers.

These three initiatives are the critical first steps toward a long-term strategy for Oregon schools to better manage their real estate assets. It allows efficient, effective and integrated management that finds savings, coordinates priorities, leverages assets and promotes success at a local level as well as regionally and statewide. Finally, the Center has demonstrated over the past six years not only the significant need in Oregon but also its ability bring the private and community sectors to a partnership with state government and assist in instigating change that benefits all Oregon students.