



everychild. onevoice.

4506 SE Belmont, Suite 108B
Portland, Oregon 97215
Office: 503-234-3928
Fax: 503-234-6024
or_office@pta.org
www.oregonpta.org

Chair Gelser, Members of the Education Committee, my name is Carol Wire and I am the Executive Director of Oregon PTA. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you on behalf of parents in support of HB 2640. The Oregon Education Investment Board, nicknamed the "super board" in the media, wrestles with the great challenges of education in Oregon. Superintendents, business interests and community organizations are well represented. Yet, parents, whom Dr. Crew notes are the primary consumers of education, the people responsible for deciding if their children will be educated in public schools, are not represented. We ask you to remedy this oversight by assuring that a member of the OEIB represents the concerns, hopes, and visions of parents.

Oregon PTA and its local affiliates comprise the largest and oldest child advocacy organization in our state. We have a long record of legislative activism in Oregon to improve conditions for children. The history of PTA reads like a chronicle of education in our state: we worked to bring free textbooks to schools, hot school lunches, free milk, school nurses, minimum teacher salaries, in-service teacher training, school bus safety and bus driver training. In the sixties we were advocating for issues that unfortunately still seem current: preschool education, physical fitness, mental health services, elimination of teen smoking and monitoring of television violence. We have a history of showing up and working for Oregon's children; our goal has always been to preserve and improve public education in our state.

Our national organization partners with Harvard Family Research Center to develop seminal research on parent engagement. National PTA works at the highest government levels to advocate for national education reform and is a partner with the Department of Education in Common Core implementation. PTA materials are available in Spanish, and we are working diligently to be inclusive of diverse populations at every level. Both nationally and in our state, PTA is actively involving fathers in education through the Watch D.O.G.S. program, which by the way, has a significantly positive impact on school safety.

An article this week in the Portland Tribune quoted Dr. Crew. *"Parents must advocate for their children, demand better schools and be vocal about their children's needs. They must also understand the leverage points within the community that can help bring about change. Without parent and community involvement, the efforts of superintendents and educational leaders will make some gains but will not reach the ultimate goal of achieving sustainable progress."*

We could not agree more. Parent involvement is essential to student success; the real achievement compact in education is the compact between student, teacher and parent because that is where children learn. Public schools are a tool to help parents educate their children; parents must be involved in the policy decisions that impact that education.

Our Legislative Director Otto Schell and I have attended almost every OEIB meeting and I sit on a rulemaking subcommittee. Our Legislative Vice President serves on several Department of Education Committees and has been intimately involved with the initiation of Common Core Standards and the State Report Card. Our members throughout the state receive briefings on state activities and our regional coordinators work with local PTAs to keep them apprised of state and legislative priorities. We are well situated to represent parents across the state. We urge you to pass HB 2640. Thank you.

*Since 1905 Oregon PTA has been serving children, families and communities in Oregon.
The only volunteer organization with no vested interest other than the welfare of all children everywhere.*