



To: Senate Education Committee

Date: Feb. 19, 2015

RE: Support for SB 519

The Oregon Education Association supports SB 519 as an important step in improving the transparency, accountability, and uniformity of public education budgets.

Over a decade ago, educators supported the legislature's efforts to improve public accounting in the public school system, with a uniform budgeting standard that applied across every school district in the state. Today, if a parent, student, or other member of the public wants to scrutinize a school district's spending and see how their budget choices compare with other districts around the state, they can easily do that.

Currently, there is no uniform accounting standard for individual community colleges, and there is no single location where a member of the public could find that data. That needs to change. A member of the public should be able to hold accountable their community college board. It is time the same improved transparency that exists for K-12 schools also applies to community colleges.

Oregon has made great strides in public transparency. A number of new tools have been created in recent years that gives citizens the ability to track the spending of the public institutions they count on and examine choices made when utilizing public dollars. Community colleges are one of the few remaining state institutions that lack a uniform standard for transparency, and the Oregon Education Association urges you to create one this session.