

May 1, 2015

Testimony before the Ways and Means Subcommittee on
Capital Construction: In support of SB 447

Co Chair Girod and Co-Chair Read:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today in support of SB 447. My name is Don Grotting and I am the Superintendent of the David Douglas School District. We are home to Oregon's largest high school, David Douglas High School with over 3000 students. The campus was first opened in 1954.

I had the privilege and honor to serve on the Task Force for School Capital Improvement Planning, whose recommendations formed the basis of Senate Bill 447. Along with the other 11 Oregonians on the task force who volunteered many hours to research this topic, we are proud of the recommendations and excited that SB 447 will put in place a statewide facilities program for Oregon's schools.

Oregon is only one of 9 states in the country that does not have a statewide system for planning, funding, and tracking its school facilities. SB 447 will change that.

SB 447 puts in place several tools to help school districts help themselves in upgrading their facilities.

First, a matching grant program that will encourage district voters to invest in their local school facilities. The Task Force recommended \$125 million dollars to be distributed in grants that range from \$4 million to \$8 million dollars in size. Key to our recommendations is a funding formula that is weighted in favor of school districts with a high percentage of students in poverty and a limited local tax base.

Second, technical assistance and planning and assessment grants for districts to manage their facilities needs. This is a

particular need for our smaller school districts who do not have full time facilities management staff.

And third, an Office of School Facilities to manage these programs, provide technical assistance to districts, and coordinate statewide school facility planning and information gathering.

Oregon's K-12 schools reflect a pattern of under-investment that includes crumbling and outdated buildings and significant deferred maintenance. The recent recession has only exacerbated the disrepair across Oregon.

SB 447 provides a great incentive for local communities to invest in their schools by passing local bonds. This creates a multiplier effect at the local level. For a modest state investment, individual school districts will be able to leverage tens of millions of dollars in local investments.

The Task Force believes that the SB 447 will put Oregonians to work improving learning environments for all Oregon schoolchildren and the educational professionals that work with them. Thank you for your time and I would greatly appreciate your support of the bill.