



Chair Dembrow, members of the House Committee on Education,

The Oregon Education Association represents over 41,000 Oregonians from every community in the state; including K-12 teachers and education service professionals, and faculty and classified staff at most of Oregon's Community Colleges. The OEA supports SB 521.

Oregonians dedicated the corporate kicker to K-12 education. They did not specify how. For years, every corporate kicker has been placed into the School Support Fund, backing out general funds for use elsewhere. There are two fundamental problems with this: one, we believe voters' intent was for the corporate kicker to add to, not supplant general education funding; and two, best practice with one-time funds is to spend them on one-time expenditures (that said, we acknowledge that at times you have to make do with the resources you have in an emergency).

Which is why SB 521 is so critical. It allows for corporate kicker monies to be used as best fit by the legislature, rather than pigeonholing it for a single use. Let's take infrastructure needs for example.

Decades of under, or barely, funding education has left the school districts of the state with billions of dollars in deferred maintenance. As hoped, most districts have prioritized in-class instruction. However, after decades, this deferred maintenance is catching up with districts, with the only option to fix these issues is through passing general obligation bonds. For most districts, that isn't an option.

In the last four years, only 72 districts have attempted to pass a bond (36.5% of the state's 197 districts). Of those, only 46 of them passed. [[OSBA GOB Tracker](#)] The majority of districts do not even try to pass bonds, and the likelihood of success is so low. In these situations, the people who lose are our students.

Look at Roseburg as a prime example. Knowing that their infrastructure was borderline unsafe, the board made the brave attempt to put a bond on the May 2022 ballot, and then fought hard for it. [It lost by a ten percent margin](#). Later, [just this last September, the school district had to close schools because they were too warm for students, posing a safety concern](#).

Supporting districts in critical need of infrastructure money is just one way that corporate kicker funds could be spent. And granting the legislature the flexibility to make those decisions is critical.

OEA urges your support for SB 521!