



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2023

[Introduction](#)

It remains the core mission and responsibility of PPS to ensure that every student has opportunities to thrive and experience success. COVID-19 has exacerbated educational inequities for all students, especially our Black and Native students and students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, students with disabilities, English language learners, students experiencing homelessness, students in the foster care system, and undocumented students.

It is more important than ever that Oregon invests in education to address unfinished learning, invest in equitable learning opportunities, and prioritize the physical, social, emotional, and mental well-being of students as our state continues to navigate these unprecedented times. Here at PPS, we intend to eliminate gaps in opportunity and outcomes completely. We must accelerate achievement for students of color in order to eliminate the unacceptable gaps in **third-grade reading, fifth-grade math, high school graduation, and eighth-grade readiness.**

[Legislative Priorities](#)

[Invest in the Education System through Stable and Equitable Funding](#)

Portland Public Schools echo the Quality Education Commission's call for an \$11.889 billion investment in Oregon schools for the 2023-2025 biennium. PPS students, along with all Oregon children, deserve an optimal public education system rooted in equity. We urge the Legislature to allocate the resources necessary for school districts to deliver a high-quality education to each and every one of our students and to continue investing in support systems and learning opportunities for Oregon's students of color, English language learners, students experiencing disabilities, and students from low-income families.

- Investing in the State School Fund (SSF), Student Success Act (SSA), and other key education initiatives means that PPS takes tangible steps to achieve its goals of closing persistent achievement gaps.
- Maintain state funding for specialized programs including Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs and Arts education.

- Support increasing the federal investment in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to the guaranteed level of 40% in order to provide the resources necessary to deliver the mandated educational services under current federal law.
- Substantive increase in Title I categorical funding.
- Reform the Arts Tax to maintain arts programming despite declining enrollment.

Address Unfinished Learning and Increase Enrichment Opportunities

- PPS advocates for continued funding to provide robust academic and enrichment programming, support academic acceleration, additional instructional specialists who will be responsible for supporting students to meet grade-level expectations, and increasing support and the number of educators to ensure our high school students are successful and prepared upon graduation.
- Ensure that changes to our state education accountability system are focused on rigor for all, eliminating disparities based on race and economic circumstances, and supporting English language learners and students in special education.
- Dedicated and consistent funding for high-quality summer programming and high dosage tutoring.
- Expanded access to high quality preschool in underserved school communities
- Strengthening the SUN school system by expanding services to five days a week and offering a kindergarten option.
- Support investments in evidence-based early literacy professional development, culturally-responsive materials, high dosage tutoring and instructional coaches.
- Ensure that students who are chronically absent remain enrolled in PPS.
- Remove any barriers to delivering high-quality Career Technical Education (CTE) such as funding, accreditation and transfer policies and expand CTE programming.

Meet Child and Student Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health Needs

- Provide high-quality social, emotional, mental health, and wraparound supports for all students, including:
 - Access to a social worker and/or mental health professional at every school.
 - Access to athletic or recreational activities during and outside of the school day.
 - Cultivate an atmosphere of respect, non-discrimination, and belonging for all students and staff members.
 - Investments in security measures throughout schools that maintain a safe learning environment.
- Support efforts to strengthen the health care system's capacity to meet children's and families' mental health needs, connect more people to care, and create a continuum of support to address mental health comprehensively and equitably.
- Advocate for state and federal resources for the Ballmer Institute for Children's Behavioral Health.

Cultivate Safe Classrooms and Communities

- Work closely with state, county, and city officials to prioritize and invest in measures that keep students and communities safe and free of violence.
- Bias Crime Language (Possible fix to HB 2697).

Support a Strong Education Workforce

- Improve recruitment and retention practices.
 - Remove barriers to expand the educator workforce to meet evolving educational needs.
 - Increase the racial and cultural diversity of Oregon's educator workforce to better reflect our student population.
 - Align teaching and learning tools, practices, and expectations across every classroom and provide more opportunities for educators to participate in professional learning.
- Strengthen teacher preparation programs to best reflect student needs in collaboration with higher education institutions and community partners

Improve School Operations and Buildings

- Maintain a robust public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic
 - Enable districts to respond to and recover from disruptions from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- Dedicated state funding for capital improvements: School modernization grants; Seismic Rehabilitation Grant Program (SRGP).
- Provide universal school meals. All kindergarten through 12th grade public schools should provide two free meals – breakfast and lunch – during each school day to students requesting a meal, regardless of the student's free or reduced-price meal eligibility. Ensure that students enrolled in virtual learning have access to school meals.
- Support and promote green solutions for school design and operations that align with the PPS's Climate Justice Policy.
 - Build climate-resilient schools that can support communities during extreme weather events.
 - Green our schoolyards