TO: Oregon Education Investment Board

FROM: Chalkboard Project
Stand for Children

RE: OEIB Report to the Legislature

DATE: December 9, 2011

Chalkboard and Stand for Children believe the impact on student achievement is the most important measure of success for any educational improvement efforts. While the Oregon Education Investment Board is making progress on issues surrounding governance and funding for Oregon's education system in the draft report to the legislature, it must also recognize the critical role of the educator workforce in improving student achievement. We know – from research and from our own work with educators throughout Oregon – that the effectiveness of the teacher is the most important in-school factor on a student's success. Therefore, we believe this report must include workforce excellence and creation of a strong professional climate for educators as a guiding principle if we are to achieve the 40/40/20 achievement goals set forth in SB 909.

We would propose the following for the final report:

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These comments are based on the draft report provided at the OEIB meeting on December 7th. They are in chronological order, NOT order of importance.

1. Section 1, Pg 6 - Addition: …At every level, educational leaders and teachers are challenging the status quo and shifting their funding "**and practices"** to deliver services, programs, and efforts that do better for our learners.

2. Section 1, Pg 8-11: In the description of "What It Will Take," the report should include an emphasis on educator workforce development and professional supports across the education spectrum. The success of Oregon's P-20 educational system rests on the shoulders of the professionals in the system – the report should address how they will participate and be supported, including:

- Strategies for recruiting and retaining effective educators at all levels
- District plans to implement a professional, collaborative environment
- Strengthening of teacher performance assessments
- Increasing and targeting professional development opportunities
- Mutually established educator improvement plans
- Educator designed incentive plans and career pathways
- School district goals for teacher placement in high-needs schools
- Strategies for serving under-served student populations
- Improved preparation of educators, including cultural competency issues

3. Section 1, Pg 15 - Addition: …For performance to be better, the system must support motivation and talent among teachers and students. "**It must set expectations for a strong professional climate and provide teachers with quality professional development that is relevant and job-embedded."**

4. Section 2, Pg 2 - Addition: Add a fourth strategy addressing workforce/professional climate: **"We recognize that our workforce of educational leaders in the state is the critical ingredient to the outcomes we seek. We recognize that teaching and learning in Oregon will be best supported by educational institutions developing and implementing a plan for recruiting and retaining effective educators and administrators by providing evidence of a strong professional climate at the local level."**

5. Section 2, Pg 9 - Addition: In the first paragraph under local control, include at the end of the paragraph: *"***We will be tight on the standards of excellence (i.e. Common Core) and expectations for a professional climate. But we will be loose by empowering educators at the local level to determine the evidence of a strong professional climate."**

6. Section 3, Pg 1 - Addition: Fifth bullet: **"Conduct a professional climate/working conditions survey statewide." (**Tools to do this have been developed by organizations like the National Education Association and recently, the State of Illinois launched a statewide assessment of professional supports as part of adopting a new education report card.)

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At the end of the day, the work of the OEIB will be implemented by our educational professionals. We must make sure that there is a constant conversation about effectively supporting them with strong professional environments. We cannot overlook their critical role by omitting principles and strategies from this report that are dedicated to their success. We would suggest that the OEIB take the additional step of creating a subcommittee on the education workforce and determine if there is 2012 legislation required to support workforce development and professional climate supports. We cannot ensure "that all public school students in this state reach the education outcomes established for the state" without addressing the primary delivery pool – the many talented and passionate educators throughout our state.