

July 2009

The Oregon legislature finished its 75th session one day ahead of schedule. The legislative session was characterized by work to deal with a huge budget shortfall. As required by the Oregon Constitution, the legislature balanced the state budget using billions of dollars in cuts, some federal stimulus money and state savings and new revenue. The cuts to schools and programs came on top of the cuts made to rebalance the 2007-09 budget.

In the end, the legislature passed a K-12 schools budget of \$6 billion for 2009-11, with \$5.8 billion appropriated with an additional \$200 million automatically appropriated from reserves if economic expectations are met. The budget was passed over Governor Kulongoski's veto (see PTA in the news below for the full article from the Statesman Journal about the veto)

What this means for your district depends upon the level of confidence you school board and superintendent have in the state money arriving. Many districts cut staff and some even plan on cut school days depending upon the money they believe will be available.

The K-12 and other budgets all depend upon \$733 million in new revenue, taxes on high income individuals and corporations. If the new revenue is referred to the ballot it is expected that all Oregonians will have to decide between the new taxes or the cuts that will be required if the new revenue is rejected by the voters. The anti-tax advocates have announced their intention to put the tax plans on the ballot. That election could occur as early as January of 2010. Oregon PTA and our coalition partners expect to defend the new revenue to protect our schools and services to children.

The legislative session produced many other bills and a bill summary can be found at our partner OSBA when they are posted at:
www.osba.org/leginfo/legnan/updates/index.asp.