



THE OREGON SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character- that is the goal of true education.”

Martin Luther King Jr.



UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Law Conference

Oregon Law and Finance 2 Credit Graduate Course

OACOA Seminar Series

When the Heat is On Webinar

Winter Conference

WITH NEW VOCATIONAL TECH BUILDING COMPLETE, THE POSSIBILITIES ARE LIMITLESS FOR ALSEA STUDENTS

This month's Education Expedition took us to Alsea, a tight-knit district of fewer than 200 students nestled along the Alsea River, where a long-awaited community bond project has come to life. In place of a “swimming pool” of stalled construction, a state-of-the-art vocational tech building now stands, fully equipped with tools for welding, woodworking, and more.

Superintendent Krista Nieraeth, who led the project, worked closely with Alsea natives and project managers Chris and Nancy Giggy from IMS to unite the community and prioritize the district's needs within budget. For Alsea, this CTE building represents more than just new equipment; it reflects a commitment to offering students opportunities often only available in larger districts.

Alsea School is the heart of this small community, and it shows: from packed bleachers at six-on-six football games to hallways lined with photos of alumni from as early as the 1930s, many of whom are ancestors of current students. Nieraeth hopes this new building will “allow us to think even more outside the box” so that Alsea students can have experiences that equal those of their peers across Oregon.

As students filed into the new building to start welding projects, their excitement was clear. Alsea has replaced that “swimming pool” with a foundation that supports the ambitions of every student who walks through its doors.

To experience the journey and see the building in action, [check out the full video on our YouTube channel](#) and read the complete article on our website.

Got a positive story about public education? [Let's hear it!](#)



Dear Education Leaders,

Over the past seven weeks, it has been a true pleasure to engage with more than 325 school leaders across 11 regions in Oregon. This year set a record for participation, with 70 more leaders involved than the previous year. The robust engagement was invaluable as we conducted a final review of COSA's workgroups' 10 priorities, laying the groundwork for action plans as we head toward the 2025 legislative session.

One thing stood out across all regions: the striking alignment and synergy, regardless of geography. Whether in rural or urban districts, the top challenges were nearly identical. This commonality reinforces that we, as educational leaders, are facing many of the same barriers and opportunities statewide. As we finalize our report, we will be organizing advocacy efforts that include conversations with legislators, testimonies at hearings, and letter-writing campaigns to legislative leaders. It is crucial that school and district leaders communicate these priorities regularly within their communities to keep everyone engaged and informed.

Each of our regional meetings began with leaders sharing positive news from their districts. I was uplifted by the stories of success and innovation taking place across the state. Oregon educators are leading inspiring work on behalf of students, and COSA is committed to highlighting these efforts. We encourage you to continue sending in newsworthy stories so we can celebrate the transformative work happening in K-12 public education.

COSA remains active in advocating for our priorities with state leaders, including ongoing collaboration with ODE and the Governor's team. We are working to ensure our initiatives are reflected in the Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB). Areas of alignment include improving the Current Service Level (CSL) calculation, the Statewide Literacy Initiative, addressing Chronic Absenteeism, and bolstering support for Extended and Summer Learning programs.

We're also increasing our focus on Special Education. With the addition of Dr. Candace Pelt Perez to our team, COSA is stepping up its support for districts facing complex challenges in this area. Last week's statewide Special Education Conference was a tremendous success, and we received an outpouring of positive feedback about the professional learning it offered.

Lastly, I invite you to join us at the statewide [Law Conference in Eugene from December 4-6](#). This will be an invaluable opportunity to gain critical legal insights from our K-12 legal partners, ensuring that you are equipped to navigate the ever-evolving legal landscape in education.

Thank you for your continued dedication and leadership. Together, we are making a significant difference for students across Oregon.

In Leadership,
Krista

EMPOWERING FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS: FREE RESOURCES TO COMBAT FENTANYL CRISIS FROM SONG FOR CHARLIE

The COSA team recently met with Brylle Digman on behalf of Song for Charlie, a national non-profit dedicated to raising awareness about fake fentanyl pills.

We asked for some resources for our districts and ESDs and wanted to share this great summary we received listing free materials and supports available for parents, schools, and staff.

“The impact fentanyl has had on our state is widely recognized, but the impact to Oregon youth is lesser known. Despite teenage drug use being on the decline for the past 20 years, Oregon youth drug deaths are at an all-time high, almost entirely due to fentanyl and counterfeit pills. It is clear though that many youth deaths could be prevented through education about the dangers of fentanyl and the fake pills made of this deadly substance.

Parent conversations can protect kids from drug use and nearly 80% of Oregon teens say that parents are their preferred source of drug information about the risks of fentanyl and fake pills. Yet many parents and caregivers do not have the information they need to feel comfortable having ongoing conversations about the current drug landscape with their kids.

Song for Charlie and Trillium Community Health Plan have teamed up to launch [The New Drug Talk: Connect to Protect Oregon](#) program, a new FREE resource to help parents with these conversations. The New Drug Talk empowers families with the knowledge and tools necessary to address the rising tide of fentanyl-related incidents, reflecting our state-wide commitment to safeguarding our communities.

The New Drug Talk Oregon brings together experts in youth mental health, addiction science, adolescent medicine, and drug education to create a comprehensive resource hub for families. Through engaging exercises, [interactive scenarios](#), [educational videos](#), and an expertly vetted [information library](#), TNDT empowers parents and caregivers to facilitate supportive conversations with kids about these challenges.

This program complements existing prevention initiatives and aligns with the fentanyl education requirements under SB 238, as well as the Oregon Department of Education’s synthetic opioid prevention lessons. By fostering consistent messaging at home, TNDT strengthens prevention efforts and encourages protective conversations to the family environment.

The New Drug Talk is excited to offer schools funding and free resources to support fentanyl awareness through our [Community Investments program](#). Until supplies last, resources include funding for film screenings of our [The New Drug Talk Film](#), sports banners, free printed outreach materials, and an [outreach toolkit](#). This program helps schools educate and engage their communities on the dangers of fentanyl. [Apply now!](#)”

WEBINARS



When the Heat is On: Communicating Through Conflict

- Master Tough Conversations: Boost your communication skills and confidently navigate challenging discussions with ease.
- Stay Calm Under Pressure: Discover practical strategies to keep your cool when tensions rise—and help others do the same.
- Deescalate and Connect: Learn effective techniques to de-escalate conflicts and foster meaningful connections in divisive times

Dates:

November 14
December 12
January 9

Times:

4-5:30pm PST (Zoom)

Cost:

Members: \$249
Non-Members: \$349

[Register here](#)

CONFERENCES

October's **Special Education** conference was a great success. Special thanks to our keynote speakers, comedian Kathy Buckley, Tenneal Wetherell and Ramonda Olaloye from ODE, Dr. Kathy Ludwig and Dr. Jennifer Spencer-Iiams from West Linn-Wilsonville, and Dr. Ryan Carpenter and Jason Hobson from Estacada.



Looking ahead, December's **44th Annual School Law Conference** is gearing up to be a big event with over 400 people registered already. Make sure you secure your spot by [registering here](#) so you don't miss out hearing from educators, administrators, and legal professionals to discuss the latest developments and challenges in school law.

Save the Date!

Reminder that the OACOA/OASE **Winter Conference** will be put on in partnership with OASBO from February 11-12, 2025 at the Salem Convention Center. Registration will open in November, stay tuned!

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION RESULTS

COSA's associations recently elected new members to fill vacancies on their executive committees. Join us in welcoming these new leaders to their respective positions and don't hesitate to reach out to the representatives in your region. Click on the association for the full executive committee list.

OASE

President-Elect
Aaron Duff
Milton-Freewater
SD

Zone XI

Casey Hallgarth

OESPA OASSA

Votes will be finalized this month, stay tuned!

OACOA

Region A Representative
Tim Crider
North Bend SD

At-Large Members
Rachel Aazzerah
Reynolds SD

Scott Carpenter
La Grande SD

Carmen Xiomara Urbina
Eugene SD

Collaborative Corner

COSA Partner Programs Powering Student Success

COSA is partially supported by Partners that provide many important goods and services for education. The Collaborative Corner will feature partner highlights and resources in each monthly communication.

THOUGHTEXCHANGE

ThoughtExchange has just launched its **Small District Success Plan**, specifically designed to help K-12 districts with fewer than 5,000 students access the high-quality engagement tools and data analysis that larger districts use.

This plan is tailored to meet the unique needs and resources of smaller districts, and ThoughtExchange is eager to spread the word to those who could benefit.

[Learn more here!](#)

The District Leaders' Guide to Budget Success, which offers key insights for district leaders looking to:

- Inform their budget with community input,
- Identify budget goals using the right engagement tools, and
- Follow effective budgeting engagement pathways for annual success.

[Learn more here!](#)



Do you have information you'd like to feature in *The Oregon School Administrator*?
Contact Cate Study at cate@cosa.k12.or.us