

Summary of School Efficiency and Quality Advisory Council 2004-2005 Report

The Multnomah County Income Tax

On May 20, 2003, Multnomah County voters approved Measure 26-48, a temporary local income tax designed to provide three years of bridge funding for Multnomah County schools. In addition, the measure provided funds for senior and low-income health services and public safety needs.

In the 2004-2005 school year, the Multnomah County Income Tax is providing \$94 million, distributed on a per-pupil basis, for Corbett, Centennial, David Douglas, Gresham Barlow, Parkrose, Portland Public Schools, Reynolds, and Riverdale school districts. These local income tax funds represent about twelve percent of the total funding for the eight school districts and about 16 percent of the funds they expect to spend on direct instruction.

The goals of the local income tax for schools are:

- To promote a full school year.
- To promote current or improved student-teacher ratios.
- To fund programs designed to achieve improvements in academic success for all students.
- To fund key student support programs and services that provide a quality school experience and retain students in school.
- To provide for independent oversight for the use of the funds.

Independent Oversight

To ensure that the local money benefits students in the classroom and that the new local tax dollars are well spent, Measure 26-48 created the School Efficiency and Quality Advisory Council (the “Council”) to provide independent oversight. The Council includes parents, educators, taxpayers, and business, and governmental leaders. The Council was directed to provide annual reports to residents in the community and to the Portland City Council and Multnomah County Board of Commissioners about the use of these tax dollars.

This is the second full report of the Council. It focuses on how the Multnomah County school districts are using the local tax funds during the 2004-2005 school year. It also reports on the school performance plans of the eight school districts. For more information on the Council please see www.seacinfo.org.

The Measure also directed the Multnomah County and Portland Auditors to conduct performance audits of the school districts. For more information on the auditors’ reports please see www.multnomahschools.org.

How Schools Are Using the Multnomah County Income Tax

In 2004-2005 Multnomah County school districts are using the local tax to:

- Maintain a full school year at all Multnomah County schools.
- Maintain or restore approximately 880 teaching positions to maintain or reduce class size.
- Maintain or restore a number of academic and student programs that are detailed in this report.

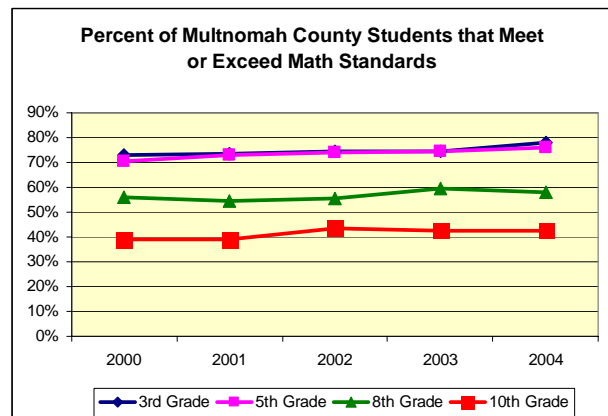
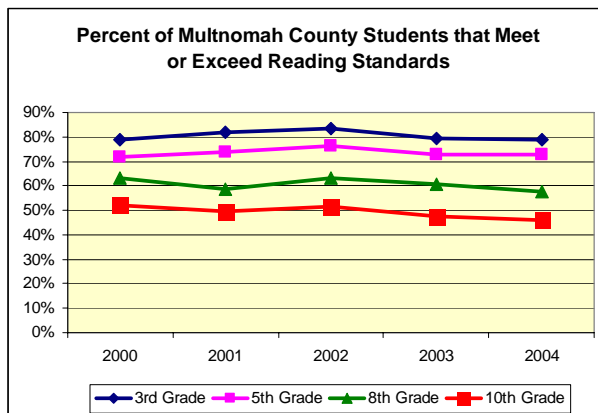
The Council did not identify any uses of the funds that were inconsistent with the purposes of the local income tax. The Council found that the school districts are using 98 percent of the local income tax for instruction and school based support. The rest of the funds are used for central support to operate school buildings over the full school year, to purchase books and computers, and to improve instructional services. This report details how the school districts are using the funds.

Without this additional funding from local voters, existing state budget allocations would have forced all the school districts in Multnomah County to take a variety of actions, including reducing the length of the school year, cutting teachers (increasing class size), eliminating school programs, and drawing down their operating reserves.

Improving Student Achievement

This report also includes analysis from the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) on how the Multnomah County school districts are doing to meet the state and federal standards for student achievement. The report also includes the school performance and achievement plans for each district.

ODE has prepared historical data for each of the Multnomah County schools that show the percentage of students that meet or exceed the state standards for math and language since 2000. The figures below show the results for all Multnomah County students.



The data from the Oregon Department of Education is the most detailed analysis of student achievement for the Multnomah County school districts ever developed. The student achievement section of this report provides information on each school district and shows the total results and results for subgroups including African American, Asian, Hispanic, Multi-racial, Native American, White, and special education students.

New technology at ODE provides the tools to examine the same students from one benchmark year to the next. This analysis provides a detailed look at the progress of a district in increasing student achievement and in reducing the achievement gap. The data presented represents “matched pairs” of students. For example, the analysis tracks the same students moving from the third grade assessment to the fifth grade assessment and an older group of students moving from the eighth grade assessment to the tenth grade assessment.

Student achievement is improving:

- Overall, the Multnomah County school districts are generally showing growth in the percentage of students that meet or exceed the state student achievement standards; however, there has been a slight decline in the percentage of students that meet the eighth and tenth grade reading standards.
- The percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standards is much higher at third and fifth grade than eight and tenth grade.
- The matched pairs data also shows improvement for individual groups of students.
- In 2004, a slightly lower percentage of Multnomah County students met the standards than the percentage for the entire state.

The data also shows some progress in closing the achievement gap:

- The gains for African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Hispanic subpopulations generally exceed the increase in the white student population.
- The gains for limited English proficient, special education, and economically disadvantaged subpopulations generally exceed the increase in the student population that does not include these sub-populations.
- There are stronger gains at the elementary level than at the middle to high school levels.
- While the data shows progress, the achievement levels for the some of the sub-populations are significantly below the majority population.