



SCHOOL EFFICIENCY AND  
QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

## Summary of 2005-2006 Report

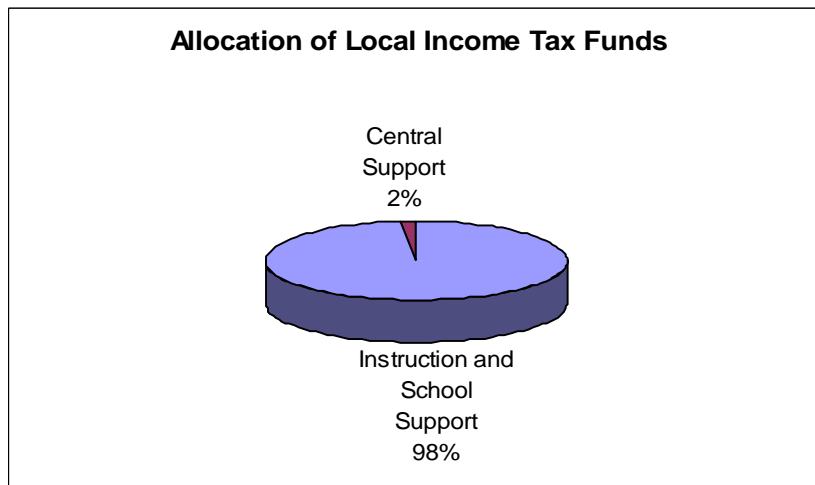
### How Schools Are Using the Multnomah County Income Tax

In the 2005-2006 school year, the Multnomah County Income Tax is projected to provide \$91 million for Corbett, Centennial, David Douglas, Gresham Barlow, Parkrose, Portland Public Schools, Reynolds, and Riverdale school districts. These local income tax funds represent about 13 percent of the total funding for the eight school districts and about 25 percent of the funds they expect to spend on direct instruction.

In 2005-2006 Multnomah County school districts are using the local tax to:

- Maintain a full school year at all Multnomah County schools.
- Maintain approximately 920 teaching positions.
- Maintain a number of academic and student programs.
- The Council did not identify any uses of the funds that were inconsistent with the purposes of the local income tax.
- The school districts budgeted 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.

The report details how the school districts are using the funds and is available at [www.seacinfo.org](http://www.seacinfo.org).



## **Impacts of the Expiration of the Multnomah County Income Tax**

The report also provides detailed analysis of the impacts when the Multnomah County Income Tax expires. That analysis is summarized here. We found that some of the school districts will be able to partially offset the loss of the local income tax revenue over one or two years by using some portion of their reserves. Other districts will experience the full impact of the expiration of the local income tax in the 2006-2007 school year.

This reduction in revenue, once fully in effect, will be significant. While none of the districts have made final decisions on what cuts they would make, it is clear that the level of cuts required would adversely affect student performance by eliminating teaching positions, increasing class size, shortening the school year, and/or eliminating programs.

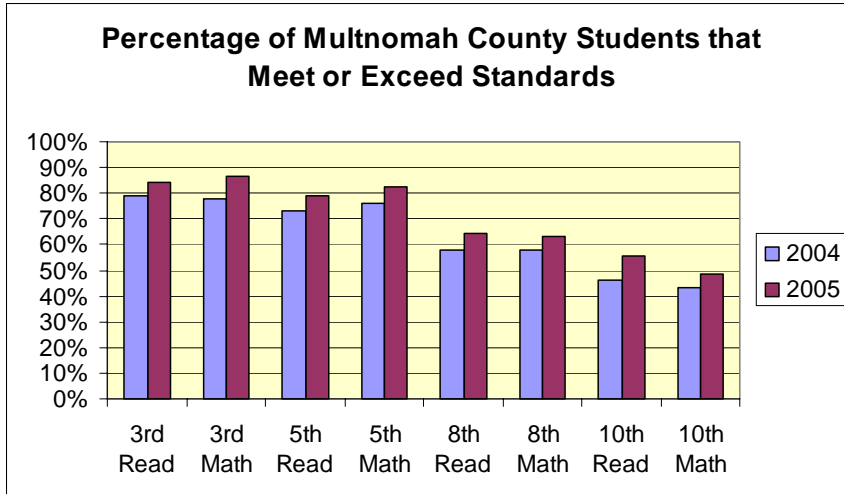
To provide a comparison that conveys the magnitude of the potential cuts, the lost revenue would be equivalent to approximately 1,360 teachers; this is about 30 percent of the teaching staff in Multnomah County. This comparison focuses on the number of teachers that are equivalent to the revenue from the local income tax; in reality, the cuts would be allocated district-wide and could affect a wide variety of school activities.

## **Improving Student Achievement**

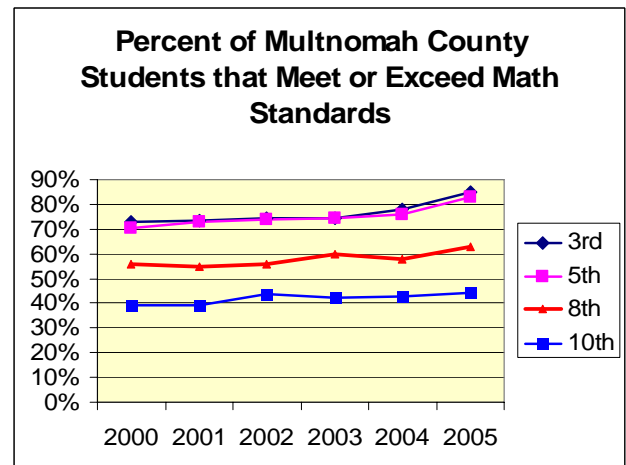
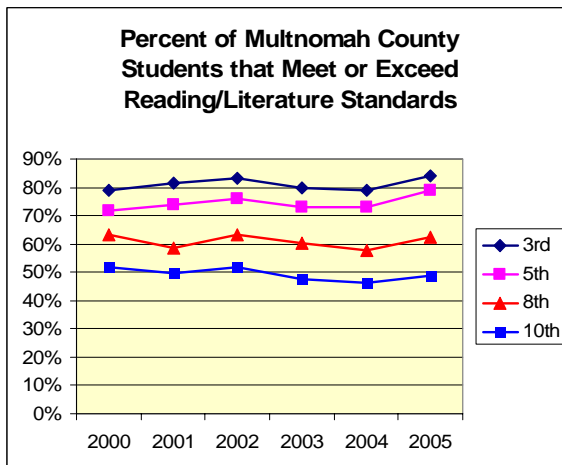
The Multnomah County Income Tax did not provide additional funds for improving student achievement. The local income tax funds were intended to maintain a full school year and avoid increasing the number of student in each classroom that would result from cutting teachers. Most of the funding went to maintain school district operations. The school districts reported that this funding stability allowed them to focus more attention on student achievement and this report shows the positive results of those efforts.

This report provides 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. 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.

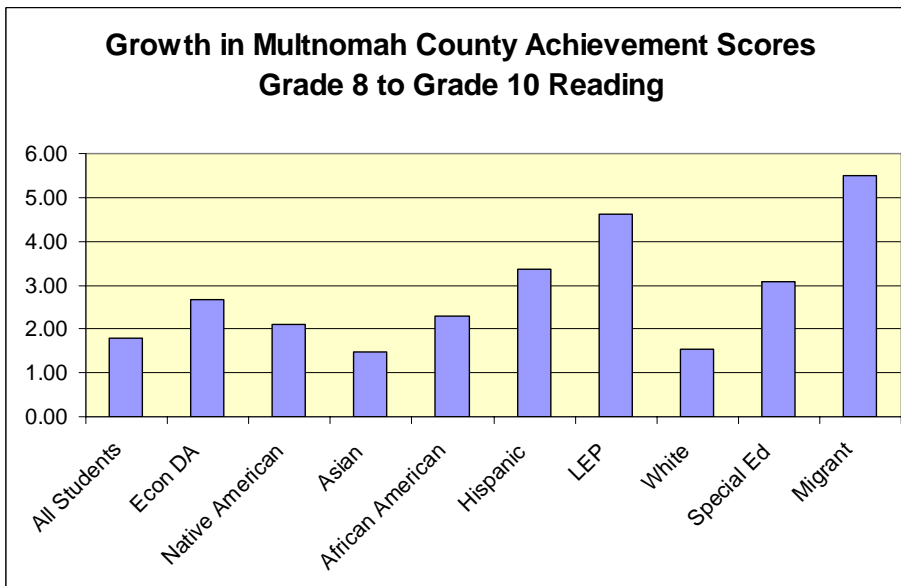
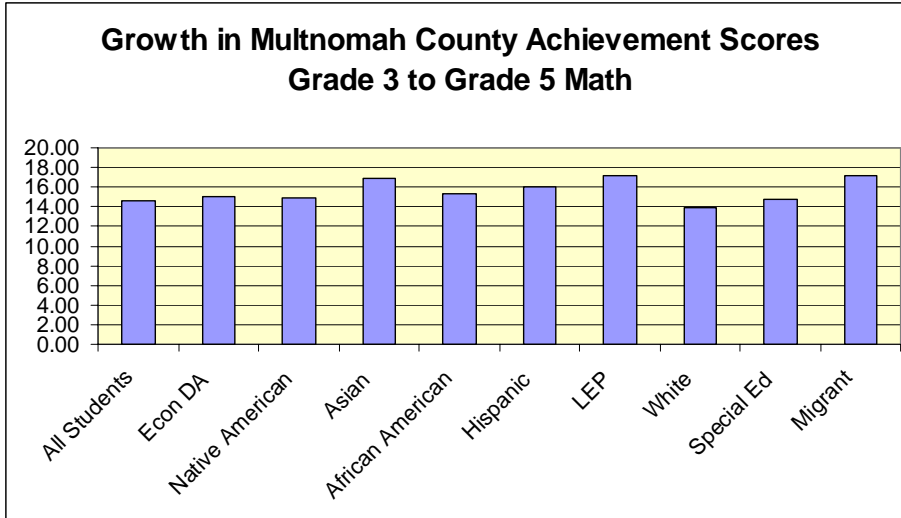
The figure below shows the results for all Multnomah County students. It shows that the percentage of students that meet or exceed the state standards increased in 2005 for all the benchmarks in both reading/literature and math, when compared to 2004. The increase in the percentage of students that meet or exceed the standards was significant—an increase of seven percent on average between the 2004 and 2005 test results.



The figures below show the history of student achievement for the Multnomah County school districts. They also show that the percentage of third and fifth graders meeting the standards is much higher than eighth and tenth graders.



The report provides information on the progress in closing the achievement gap. Our analysis focuses on the results of the Oregon Department of Education analytical tools that examine the same students in each district from one benchmark year to the next. This analysis looks at the progress of nine subpopulations in increasing student achievement and in reducing the achievement gap. The charts below show some of the results for Multnomah County.



The analysis prepared by the Oregon Department of Education shows the progress of nine subpopulations: Economically Disadvantaged, Native-American, Asian, African-American, Hispanic, Limited English Proficiency, White, Special Education, and Migrant. The results also show the average growth for all students. The data provides the growth in achievement scores for math and reading as the same students move from third grade to fifth grade and a separate group's growth from eighth to tenth grade. We analyzed the results for all eight districts.

The data shows progress in closing the achievement gap:

- All of the districts showed growth in achievement scores for every subpopulation.
- The school districts are closing the achievement gap. The analysis shows that the gains for economically disadvantaged, African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, limited English proficient, special education, and migrant

subpopulations exceeded the increase in the white student population in almost all comparisons.. This is an improvement over the 2004-2005 Report.

- 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 some of the sub-populations are significantly below the majority population.

## **Challenges Facing Multnomah County School Districts**

The improvements in student achievement are even more impressive when viewed in the context of the challenges facing the Multnomah County school districts. State and federal achievement standards have increased the requirements placed on the school districts; however, state funding per student is actually less than it was in 1990-1991 when adjusted for inflation.

The Council was particularly struck by the impact that demographic changes are having on the school districts. The total number of students in Multnomah County has increased by about 10,000 over the past 20 years, but the impacts on the school districts have been very different.

The six districts in east-county (Centennial, Corbett, David Douglas, Gresham-Barlow, Parkrose, and Reynolds) have increased enrollment by approximately 12,000 students. These districts are working to add teachers, classrooms and schools to accommodate the growth. These districts are also experiencing significant impacts from the increase in Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students—these students speak English as a second language or don't speak English at all when they start school. Several districts reported that their students speak more than 50 different languages. One district reported a 275 percent increase in LEP students since 1997. The population shifts have also increased the number of low-income students in the east-county districts.

At the same time, Portland Public Schools has seen a reduction in the number of students. Portland has fewer families with children and each lost student means a reduction of \$5,000 in state funding, but only \$2,500 in reduced costs. The loss of students means that Portland has too many buildings; the district has 23 percent more students than Beaverton and 85 percent more buildings. Portland's schools are also old—half were built before 1935—so they are more expensive to maintain. Portland has more experienced teachers than most districts; 60 percent of the teachers are at the top end of the salary range. Portland is also dealing with low-income and Limited English Proficiency; Portland has 6,000 LEP students—this is double the number in 1990.

Given these challenges, the expiration of the Multnomah County Tax will make it more difficult to deal with students that need additional help to meet the student achievement standards.