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NEWS RELEASE

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PRESIDENT COURTNEY CREATES EDUCATION COMMISSION

*Parents, Educators, Business Leaders, School Advocates
Join Legislators to Find Real Solutions for Oregon Schools*

HOOD RIVER—Senate President Peter Courtney today announced creation of the Senate Commission on Educational Excellence, a bipartisan, blue-ribbon panel of parents, educators, business leaders, legislators and other school advocates charged with recommending to the Legislature ways to improve the daily experience of Oregon students.

“The Senate is reaching out to an extraordinary group of people with a variety of perspectives to help us develop concrete solutions to specific problems,” said Courtney (D-Salem/Gervais/Woodburn). “We want to provide Oregon students with the best tools to compete successfully in our global economy. To reach this goal, we will work with parents, teachers and other concerned citizens to identify adequate and stable school funding.”

At today’s public announcement at the Hood River County School District office, Courtney named Sens. Ryan Deckert and Rick Metsger as commission co-chairs.

“Our goal is to develop legislation for next session that will make tangible improvements in the daily lives of students,” said Deckert (D-Beaverton).

(MORE)

“There is nothing more important to the future of our state than our children’s education,” said Metsger (D-Mt. Hood), who joined Courtney in Hood River. “Schools are struggling with growing class sizes, shrinking school years and severe cuts to key programs and activities. We must reverse these trends.”

Members of the new Senate Commission on Educational Excellence are:

CO-CHAIRS

- **SEN. RYAN DECKERT** (D-Beaverton): State senator representing Beaverton. Serves on the Joint Task Force on the Reserve Fund. Since January 2005, has chaired the Senate Revenue Committee. Elected to the Oregon Senate in 2000. Elected to the Oregon House in 1996.
- **SEN. RICK METSGER** (D-Mt. Hood): State senator representing Hood River, Sandy and surrounding areas. Serves on the Joint Legislative Committee on Information Management and Technology. In the 2005 legislative session, chaired the Senate Business and Economic Development Committee. Elected to the Oregon Senate in 1998.

VICE CHAIR

- **SEN. JEFF KRUSE** (R-Roseburg): State senator representing Douglas, Coos and Curry counties. Vice-chair of the Senate Public Health Committee. In the 2005 legislative session, served on the Senate Education and Workforce Committee. Elected to the Oregon Senate in 2004. Elected to the Oregon House in 1996.

MEMBERS

- **ALLAN BRUNER**: 2006 Oregon Teacher of the Year. Colton High School teacher for the past 16 years. Teacher for 21 years. Oregon Education Association board director.
- **KELVIN CALKINS**: May Street Elementary School teacher for the past 15 years. Hood River Education Association president. Oregon Education Association regional vice president.
- **JEROME COLONNA**: Beaverton School District superintendent. School administrator for 21 years with Eugene, Corvallis and Redmond school districts. Former classroom teacher in Alaska, California and Corvallis. Vice chair of the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory board. President-elect of the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators. Member of the American Association of School Administrators National Governing Board and the Oregon Literacy Task Force. 2001 Oregon Superintendent of the Year.
- **SEN. RICHARD DEVLIN** (D-Tualatin): State senator representing Lake Oswego, Tualatin, West Linn and part of southwest Portland. Chairman of the Emergency Board’s Education Subcommittee. In the 2005 legislative session, chaired the Joint Ways and Means Education Subcommittee. Elected to the Oregon Senate in 2002. Elected to the Oregon House in 1996.

- **SEN. DAVID NELSON** (R-Pendleton): State senator representing Umatilla, Union and Wallowa counties and part of Morrow County. Current vice-chair of the Senate Economic Development Agency Oversight Committee and the Joint Legislative Committee on Information Management and Technology. In the 2005 legislative session, served on the Senate Budget Education Subcommittee. Elected to the Oregon Senate in 1996.
- **ANITA OLSEN**: President-elect of the Oregon PTA. Former Oregon PTA vice president and treasurer. Former stockbroker and licensed tax preparer. Oregon native. Educated in Portland public schools and Oregon University System. Married with two children, both educated in Portland public schools.
- **GRETCHEN PIERCE**: President and General Manager of Hult & Associates, LLC, a commercial and industrial real estate development company in Eugene. Serves on the boards of Peacehealth, University of Oregon Foundation, Oregon Community Foundation, Associated Oregon Industries and Summit Bank. Former co-chair of the Higher Education Roundtable and vice chair of the Governor's Task Force for Education and the Economy.
- **LORENZO T. POE, JR.**: Director of Multnomah County's Department of School and Community Partnerships. Served on Portland School Board for four years. Currently serves on Oregon's Quality Education Commission. Founder and past president of Portland's House of Umoja. Member of Oregon's delegation to President Clinton's Summit for America's Future and delegate to the Governor's Summit on Over-Representation of Minorities in the Juvenile Justice System.
- **WILLIAM D. THORNDIKE, JR.**: President and Chairman of Medford Fabrication/CSC, Inc. Former chairman of Oregon's Quality Education Commission, Coalition for Schools, Oregon Community Foundation, Oregon Business Plan Steering Committee and Southern Oregon University Foundation. Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco director.
- **SEN. VICKI WALKER** (D-Eugene): State senator representing Eugene, Junction City and surrounding communities. In the 2005 legislative session, chaired the Senate Education and Workforce Committee and served on the Joint Ways and Means Education Subcommittee. Elected to the Oregon Senate in 2002. Elected to the Oregon House of Representatives in 1998.
- **SEN. JACKIE WINTERS** (R-Salem): State senator representing west and south Salem, Aumsville, Independence, Monmouth and Turner. Currently co-chairs the Marion County Methamphetamine Task Force. In the 2005 legislative session, served on the Joint Ways and Means Public Safety and Human Services Subcommittees. Elected to the Oregon Senate in 2002. Elected to the Oregon House of Representatives in 1998.