Two decades of funding increases not helping students: Oregon ranks 14th in survey

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Over the past 20 years education funding in America has increased by almost 80 percent so that today school systems spend an average of more than $9,000 per student. Despite this record of growth, student achievement has remained stagnant. However, pockets of success do exist and can help guide policy makers and educators in the right direction towards better schools. In 2005 Oregon expended less per pupil than the national average but managed to keep standardized test scores as well as instructional staff salaries above national averages.

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) has recently released the 13th edition of the Report Card on American Education: A State by State Analysis: 1983-1984 to 2003-2004, which ranks the educational performance of the school systems in the states, and the District of Columbia according to several criteria including National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), SAT, and ACT scores.

"Raising student achievement levels and improving our schools is not a matter of spending more money doing the same things as before but rather using the resources we have available in better and more innovative ways,â€• said ALEC Education Task Force Chairman Rep. Jane Cunningham from Missouri. â€œWe need to hold our schools accountable and demand results, and we need to give parents more choices when it comes to their childrenâ€™s education,â€• she added.

The ALEC 2006 Report Card on American Education found, among other indicators, that 71 percent eighth graders taking the NAEP mathematics exam in 2005 performed below the â€œproficiencyâ€• level. ALEC also found no direct correlation between spending per pupil or teacher salaries and achievement.

To obtain an electronic copy of ALEC's 2006 Report Card on American Education or to schedule an interview on the report's findings, please contact Jorge Amselle at (202) 742-8536 or email jamselle@alec.org. A PDF of the report is available online at www.alec.org.

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) is the nation's largest nonpartisan, individual membership organization of state legislators, with over 2,400 legislator members from all fifty states, and 88 former members serving in the U.S. Congress.