



OREGON RURAL
School Board Members Caucus

1201 Court Street NE, Suite 400, Salem, OR 97301
503-588-2800 | 800-578-6722 | orsmbc@osba.org | www.osba.org

From the Desk of:
State Representative
Anna Scharf - HD 23

AS

June 3, 2025

LEADERSHIP ASSEMBLY

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

President
Nichole Schott
Candon SD

Vice President
Tracy Adeval
Glide SD

Secretary-Treasurer
Mary Anne Crandall
Pinehurst SD

REGIONAL MEMBERS

MacKenzie Rodgers
Enterprise SD

Nichole Schott
Candon SD

Willi Cahill
Lake CSD

Risteen Follett
Alsea SD

Tracy Adeval
Glide SD

Kris Lachenmeyer
Tillamook SD

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Mary Anne Crandall
Pinehurst SD

Edward Dressel
Dallas SD

Anber Nelson
Scio SD

RE: Opposition to Senate Bill 916 B

To: Members of the House

As representatives of Oregon's rural school communities, we write to express our opposition to Senate Bill 916 B. While we deeply value our educators and staff, and share in the commitment to fair and respectful working conditions, we are concerned about the consequences this bill would have for small and rural school districts.

We believe SB 916 B will cause disproportionate harm to rural schools in four key ways:

1. Unfunded and Unpredictable Financial Burden

SB 916 B extends unemployment benefits to striking workers. School districts reimburse the state, dollar-for-dollar, for unemployment benefits paid. School districts are already navigating tight budgets. For small rural districts with fewer revenue sources, this mandate could destabilize already fragile financial conditions and force painful trade-offs, such as staff reductions, program cuts, or shortened school years.

2. Administrative Complexity and Strain

The bill introduces new administrative tasks that our limited staff simply do not have the capacity to absorb. Managing reimbursements, processing unemployment claims during a labor dispute, and reconciling benefits with payroll systems would require legal and financial expertise that many small districts do not have on staff. This places a heavy logistical burden on rural superintendents and business managers who already wear many hats.

3. Widening Inequities

Districts in rural areas already face challenges that include staffing shortages, transportation barriers, and aging infrastructure. SB 916 B could inadvertently widen disparities between well-resourced urban districts and smaller rural ones. In communities where every dollar must stretch farther, diverting funds away from instruction to cover the costs of

a labor dispute erodes our ability to meet the educational needs of students.

4. Impact on Collaborative Labor Relations

In our districts, positive working relationships with teachers and classified staff are built on trust and shared community values. This legislation risks inserting new tension into that dynamic by financially penalizing districts during a strike. Instead of encouraging resolution, it may prolong disputes or push districts toward legal defensiveness rather than collaboration.

We recognize and respect the goals of this legislation, but urge you to consider its real-world impacts—especially on rural schools operating in areas with fewer economic and administrative resources. These are not abstract concerns; they are practical limitations that could compromise our ability to educate children and fairly support staff alike.

We ask that you prioritize investments and policies that directly benefit students and ensure that all schools, rural and urban, have the capacity to thrive.

Thank you for your time and service.

Sincerely,

Oregon School Board Members' Rural Caucus