

## SKCE Message to Schools, Parents and Other Partners

The Salem/Keizer Coalition for Equality (SKCE) seeks to focus and deepen its contribution to help improve the academic performance of English Language Learners (ELL students) in the Salem-Keizer School District

SKCE is interested in quality educational services and community-based supports that provide the environment, skills, and resources for all students to achieve to their greatest potential. Of greatest concern, however, is the achievement gap between ELL students and their peers. Results of Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) show local areas of improvement, as well as areas of decline and circumstances in which the achievement gap is actually widening.

SKCE acknowledges the findings of independent researchers and the view of education professionals, both in the United States and other developed nations, who have identified the single greatest determining factor for a student's academic success is the quality of their classroom teacher. SKCE applauds the Salem-Keizer School District's focus on professional development, as well as the implementation of effective curricula and strategies for ELL students. More work needs to be done as these efforts are brought to scale, particularly in high needs schools.

While the District works to sustain and expand its effective practices, the SKCE seeks to focus and deepen its contribution to help improve the academic performance of ELL students. The SKCE's primary avenue is working in culturally appropriate ways to engage and strengthen the skills of Latino parents to

- a) better understand the public education system, including the roles and responsibilities of teachers, students, and parents;
- b) provide high expectations and education-rich environments for their children; and
- c) work proactively with their child's teacher(s) to provide the focus and supports necessary for student achievement.

Parent involvement and skill-building occur through effective outreach strategies and parent participation in a series of workshops to empower Spanish-speaking/immigrant parents as advocates for their ELL students, and by building/fostering meaningful and culturally competent school-community partnerships focused on positive parent-teacher relationships.

The SKCE can be most effective working in partnership with schools that have the capacity to collaborate and are interested in greater parent involvement and raising the academic performance of ELL students. Currently, these include the following active and targeted schools:

|                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| McKay High School       | Parrish Middle School   |
| Waldo Middle School     | Houck Middle School     |
| Stephens Middle School  | Grant Community School  |
| Middle Grove Elementary | Four Corners Elementary |
| Swegle Elementary       | Highland Elementary     |
| Richmond Elementary     |                         |