

# Oregon School Employees Association picks new director

Rick Shidaker will succeed Steven Araujo as executive director of Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA). Shidaker, OSEA's current director of field operations, will start Oct. 1. Araujo, who is retiring, will stay on until Dec. 31.

OSEA has close to 19,000 members statewide — school secretaries, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, non-certified instructional assistants, and others. Most are employees of K-12 public school districts, but the union also represents workers at three Head Start programs as well as four units of bus drivers employed in Oregon by UK-headquartered school bus contractor First Student. OSEA, which affiliated with American Federation of Teachers (AFT) in 2008, is also known as AFT

Local 6732. Executive director — OSEA's top staff position — is responsible for overseeing 39 staff at a Salem headquarters and eight field offices around the state.

Shidaker, 61, grew up in Greene Township, Indiana, and worked for a time on an auto parts assembly line, where he was a member of United Auto Workers. He earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Oregon in 1983, and became an OSEA member that year, working as a community school coordinator at Eugene School District. In 1986 he was elected president of OSEA's Eugene chapter. He served as chapter president until 1991, then joined the staff of OSEA as a field representative handling bargaining and grievances, and later directing other field representatives.

Shidaker takes the lead at a time when OSEA and other unions are under political attack. One top concern will be an anti-union ballot initiative that would make Oregon a so-called "right-to-work" state for public employees. The initiative — which hasn't yet been approved for circulation — would remove any requirement that public employees pay any share of the costs that unions incur to represent them. It's aimed at the November 2014 ballot, but Shidaker said OSEA has already begun discussing strategy.

And the measure comes in an era of public-employee bashing, Shidaker said.

"There's no reason anybody in America who's working shouldn't have a health and retirement benefit," Shidaker said. "But because public



RICK SHIDAKER



STEVEN ARAUJO

employees have those benefits, they're being blamed for what's happening to budgets."

Shidaker also serves on the 10-member Oregon Educators Benefit Board, and in July was elected chair by fellow board members. OEBB, formed in 2008, purchases health insurance on behalf of 170,000 people — school employees and their dependents. Shidaker was appointed as one of the board's union representatives by then-governor Ted Kulongoski, and was reappointed by John Kitzhaber.

Shidaker's predecessor at OSEA is retiring after 12 years at the helm. Araujo, 59, said he's moving on in order to bring new blood into the organization. He'll be relocating to Maricopa County, outside Phoenix, Arizona, and plans to get involved with local labor and immigrants rights groups.

Araujo, who is Latino, grew up in the Los Angeles area. He trained at the Rio Hondo Police Academy. In 1982, as a school police officer at El Rancho Unified School District in Pico Rivera, California, he got involved with the California School Employees Association. He rose through the union ranks, winning election as chief steward, state board member, first vice president, and

state president. He was then hired by the union as a field representative.

Araujo applied for a job as OSEA's executive director in 1995 and again in 1998, and didn't get the position, but OSEA hired him as director of field operations in 1998. In 2001, his third time seeking the job, he was hired as OSEA executive director.

Araujo says when he took the job, OSEA was a stand-alone organization with a self-image more along the lines of an association than a union. It's been very satisfying to watch OSEA grow into a true labor union, Araujo said, especially as it affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers and took a

seat at the table with other unions in the state AFL-CIO.

"Our members are some of the lowest paid, least respected workers in the state," Araujo said. "It has been great to watch them come to understand they have value, that they're career employees; they're not just a custodian, not just a school bus driver."

To find Araujo's replacement, OSEA hired a consultant and conducted a nationwide search. A hiring committee interviewed finalists from around the country, but in the end recommended Shidaker, a 22-year employee of OSEA, to the union executive board.

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# Local Motion

## August 2013

A list of Oregon and Southwest Washington workplaces deciding whether to be union-represented — as reported by the National Labor Relations Board and the Oregon Employment Relations Board.

## Voting in union elections

Date	Workplace (Location) Union	Yes	No
8/20	Lafarge (Vancouver) Boilermakers Local D-37 <b>DECERT</b>	0	4

## Requesting a union election

Workplace (Location) Union	Number of workers in unit
Legacy Good Samaritan drivers & mailroom (Portland) Operating Engineers Local 701	8
ATI-Pacific Cast Technologies (Albany) United Steelworkers Local 6163	240

### LEGEND

: workers will be union-represented : workers will be on their own  
**DECERT** : A decertification election occurs when some union-represented workers declare that the union no longer has majority support. A 'yes' vote is a vote for the union.



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