

School: ‘It’s more of an opportunity gap than it is an achievement gap’

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Aguilera said she enjoys the activities teachers do with their kids in America, the materials students are provided and the spacious classrooms. Quarters are cramped in her schools in Mexico, Aguilera said, and English instruction is mostly available to only those who can afford private schools and teachers.

Closing the gap

A gap in academic achievement between the general student population on one side, and economically disadvantaged and ethnic minorities on the other, pervades Oregon’s schools. The migrant summer school, largely serving the Hispanic minority on the North Coast, is one

of many efforts to close the gap.

Each student coming into the migrant education program undergoes a pre-assessment of their academic skills, and a post-assessment gauging their academic growth. Tucker said 95 percent of students who attended the migrant summer school in 2014 showed growth in reading and math scores based on their assessments.

“It’s more of an opportunity gap than it is an achievement gap,” Hoppes said in January, updating the Astoria School Board on the district’s efforts to make education more equitable. “We have some kids who don’t have the opportunities of other kids.”

During the January presentation, Astoria’s Curriculum

Director Melissa Linder said faculty at Astoria often lack the Spanish to adequately help students.

This year, the district is starting to embed English as Second Language teachers into two or three targeted classrooms per grade level, kindergarten through fifth grade.

“Through research and training, we feel the push-in model is more effective over time,” Hoppes said, adding it won’t affect non-ESL students.

Success story

Gema Garcia, one of the two teaching assistants this summer, could be considered a success story of the migrant school.

A graduate of Astoria High School this year, Garcia was



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From left: Cassandra Valadez, Xochitl Perez, Sergio Cipriano, and Nadia Lopez, work on constructing a pinata during a migrant summer school class at Astoria Middle School Thursday.

recently named Oregon’s migrant student of the year by the Northwest Regional Education Service District’s migrant education program.

Like Borja, Garcia said she attended the migrant school

around the time she was transitioning from elementary to middle school. “I guess I was shy, and the school helped me” make friends, she said.

Garcia now heads to Portland State University, where she

will study chemistry in hopes of becoming a nursing anesthetist. Like her older sister Rosalita and brother Salvador, Garcia said she plans on returning in the summer to help at the migrant school.

Road plan: ‘The transportation system is not going to fix itself’

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“Elements of the proposal that emerged late in the legislative session represent an encouraging starting point for future discussions, especially the proposed \$80 million in funding for transit systems,” said Chris Rall, Northwest field organizer for Transportation for America, a national group that backs state and federal funding.

The proposal attempted to couple funding for road and bridge work, and for public transit operations, with alternatives for greenhouse-gas reductions from transportation.

The funding for road and bridge work would have come from a 4-cent increase in Oregon’s gasoline tax — now 30 cents per gallon — and increases in vehicle registration fees. Under the Oregon Constitution, those sources are earmarked.

For transit operations, a tax on employee wages was proposed for districts that already have authority to levy a payroll tax on employers. It would have raised \$80 million annually for two of Oregon’s largest systems, TriMet and Lane Transit District, plus smaller systems in Wilsonville, Sandy and Canby.

Last year, the League of Oregon Cities and Association of Oregon Counties issued reports saying they are a combined \$500 million short each year of what they need to maintain roads and bridges.

The Oregon Department of Transportation maintains 8,000 miles of highways that carry about 60 percent of Oregon’s traffic. The department reported in 2014 that 87 percent of its pavement was in fair or better condition. While that is above its goal of 78 percent, the department also said it is unlikely to remain there without an infusion of cash in the next couple of years.

A sticking point

But the legislative proposal foundered on the alternatives proposed to a low-carbon fuel standard, which Democratic majorities pushed through over Republican opposition. While senators from both parties were willing to craft alternatives, House Democrats and environmental groups were unwilling to jettison the standard after just three months.

“I was assured there were alternative ways of approaching this issue that would be acceptable, but that turned out not to be true,” said Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, one of the bipartisan negotiators.

One of the alternatives, which mirrors a potential 2016 ballot measure sponsored by



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Several Clatsop County bridges, such as the West Broadway bridge in Seaside, are in need of repairs.

fuel distributors, would have proposed graduated reductions in the carbon content of fuel. But the total reduction would have amounted to 5 percent, less than the 10 percent set by the standard over a decade.

Another alternative overstated the reduction of greenhouse-gas emissions projected through improved traffic flows to relieve congestion.

“Given more time, we could have refined the numbers and shown a carbon reduction that would have beaten the low-carbon fuel standard,” said Sen. Jeff Kruse, R-Roseburg, another negotiator. “But now we have not been given that opportunity.”

Republicans argued that the standard would result in higher fuel prices, which they said would be too much on top of a smaller tax increase. A tax increase requires 60 percent supermajorities for approval, and that means at least one Republican in the current House.

“I think the most important thing for us to know in advance is how much give there is in the standard,” Bentz said. “If they are going to refuse to modify it in any way, this conversation is going to be pretty short.”

But Andrea Durbin, executive director of the Oregon Environmental Council, said Oregon needs both the standard and a funding plan put forth by the Oregon Transportation Forum, which it is a member of.

“To put one against the other is a false choice and helps no one,” Durbin said.

State Sen. Lee Beyer, D-Springfield, said the dispute may be resolved outside the Legislature.

Fuel distributors have gone to U.S. District Court with a lawsuit that asserts the standard violates the federal constitutional guarantee of interstate commerce, although a similar argument failed to persuade the U.S. Supreme Court to hear a challenge to California’s standard in 2014.

Fuel distributors also have filed two ballot measures, al-

though neither has received enough signatures to start the petition-circulating process for the 2016 general election ballot.

“I think you will not see much of an effect on the cost of fuels,” said Beyer, one of the bipartisan negotiators, who also was the floor manager for the fuel-standard bill. “The environmental groups have the skin they want to hang on their wall.”

A turning point?

In the 2013 Oregon Values & Beliefs Project survey conducted by DHM Research of Portland for a coalition of public and nonprofit agencies, 72 percent of those sampled say road and highway maintenance is very or somewhat important — fourth of 20 government services.

New roads and highways, on the other hand, ranked 19th.

One economist said Oregon, like other states and the federal government, must consider that fuel taxes alone can no longer shoulder the costs of road and bridge upkeep.

“When you adjust it for inflation, you are lowering it, and it’s not generating as much revenue,” said Joe Cortright, who leads the Portland consulting firm Impresa, and is a former legislative staffer. “People also are driving more fuel-efficient vehicles and they are driving less.”

Multnomah and Washington counties levy their own gasoline taxes, and so do 22 cities. Among them are Canby, Milwaukie, Sandy and Tigard; Pendleton and Stanfield, and Astoria and Warrenton.

But there has been local resistance to increasing fees for street and road repairs, most recently the shelving by the Portland City Council of a proposed street fee and voter rejection in Washington County last year of a registration fee increase.

“What people are saying when they oppose higher gas taxes is that they hate being stuck in traffic, but they do not stick a value to it,” Cortright said. “We do not want to spend

more money to get more roads.”

Public opinion may be changing, however, at least in the Portland area.

Asked in a fall 2014 survey conducted by Oregon State University for the Oregon Department of Transportation how serious traffic congestion was to them, almost 60 percent of the 1,288 respondents said it was minor or nonexistent. But 43 percent said it was somewhat or very serious — up 7 percentage points from two years ago.

In Portland, 63.4 percent of those sampled called traffic congestion somewhat or very serious — far more than in any other area of the state.

What’s next?

Gov. Kate Brown acknowledged that there is “significant statewide support” for transportation spending, “and I am willing to continue those discussions.” But she has not specified when or how they will happen.

While Beyer thinks there’s little chance of anything happening before the 2016 election — when Brown will be up for the two years remaining in the term she assumed when John Kitzhaber resigned in February — he said there may be some hope in the blue-ribbon panel Kitzhaber named to look at Oregon’s system over the next 30 years.

“I was originally skeptical when he put it together, but actually, a couple of the meetings of the group that I was at were pretty productive,” Beyer said.

Also on that panel is Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, who was one of the bipartisan negotiators. She thinks there is still value in having the group of eight resume meetings.

“We were briefed so thoroughly on many of the elements that would have to be included in a comprehensive transportation package that I think it would be a shame to start all over again,” Johnson said.

“This group spent so much time together and is now so knowledgeable.”

AAA’s Campbell said the recent closed-door talks in the governor’s office did not allow participation by many of the transportation users and local government members of the forum.

“If you do not get the right people in the room for the discussion, you can make mistakes that cost you time,” he said.

“But I am sure this will be just as important in 2017 as it is now. The transportation system is not going to fix itself.”

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Dunning: ‘The support from the community is phenomenal’

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The world’s cultures are connected by water. “It goes beyond borders,” Smith said.

Pilot logs

The museum contains books, photos, newspaper clippings, charts, maps manuscripts and more, including pilot logs from the Columbia River Bar Pilots dating back to the 1940s. The oldest of those records had been turned into scrapbooks, the logs serving as the templates with additions glued over them.

That history-rich environment is where Dunning has found herself.

“I’m learning a lot about submarine captains in World War II,” she said. “Who was doing what, where and when.”

Dunning also sometimes recognizes street and local names from the histories of the area.

She’s found memoirs of sailors and older naval histories. She’s even seen some fictional works among the collection.

“There’s always another story to find,” she said.

Walks dogs

When she’s not knee-deep in history, there’s a good chance that she’s pursuing her other passion by volunteering to help man’s best friend.

She walks dogs three afternoons a week for the Clatsop County Animal Shelter Volunteer Group, where she’s volunteered for six and a half years. The group received the accolade of Outstanding Volunteer Group this year from the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners after being nominated by Animal Control Supervisor Stephen Hildreth. Dunning was one of the many volunteers included in the honor.

Dunning said that she can be having a horrible day, but when she takes a dog for a walk, they’re both happy.

The second half of her devotion to animals is her work with Clatsop Animal Assistance, which helps

support the shelter. The nonprofit funds veterinary care for shelter animals, helps get animals adopted and helps pay for pets to be spayed and neutered. Dunning has worked with the group for five years and is the group’s president.

“I’ve found that a lot of the skills I developed in running a small business are helpful in being the president of a nonprofit,” she said. She helps maintain the nonprofit’s website, assists with fundraising and event planning and writes grants.

“It’s a lot of fun — I love it,” she said.

Community support

The group is currently running a GoFundMe campaign to raise \$4,000 for L’il One, a dog who needs surgery to repair his shattered kneecaps.

Community involvement and support has helped buoy the group. Dogs Allowed Cannon Beach and The Wine Shack are among local businesses that have contributed to the nonprofit. They donated all proceeds from their collaborative “Dogs Allowed Wine” line to the group. The Inn at Cannon Beach also has sponsored a fundraiser, “Mutts and Moms,” to help support the group. Warrenton Kia and Lum’s Auto Center both sponsored adoption events.

“The support from the community is phenomenal,” she said.

Clatsop Animal Assistance also brings adoptable animals to their booth at the Astoria Sunday Market every other week from May through part of September. Their next appearance is Aug. 9.

“All our pets have been either strays or rescues,” Dunning said.

Dunning and her husband, Bob Potter, have one dog of their own, an 18-year-old terrier mix rescue. He’s named Yogi after baseball hall-of-famer Yogi Berra. They’ve had him nearly 17 years.

“He’s a pistol,” Dunning said.

— *McKinley Smith*

Hayne: ‘He seems to be at war with law enforcement’

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Hayne was arrested in 2014 at his mother’s home in Svensen, where he moved in uninvited. His mother, who was 87 at the time, had been subjected to threats and physical contact, including being put in a headlock by her son, who screamed

in her face. She told police she feared for her life.

“Our intention was to protect his mother, and the bigger issue is protecting the community,” prosecutor Scott McCracken said. “He seems to be at war with law enforcement. He doesn’t seem to think they are human beings just because they are officers.”

When deputies arrived to arrest Hayne in May 2014, he attacked them by punching a deputy in the face and kicking a police dog.

Hayne has a history of such crimes. He was sentenced to prison in 2000 for third-degree assault on a public safety officer. In 2011, he was arrested when

he scuffled with police while holding a knife. Similar assaults on public safety officers were how he was arrested in 2013.

In addition, investigators found several rantings on Hayne’s Facebook and YouTube accounts where he threatens to kill police, and offers anti-Semitic and neo-Nazi statements.

Clatsop County District Attorney Josh Marcken applauded his deputy, McCracken, for prosecuting the case that resulted in a 29-year sentence. He said the prison sentence could likely save people’s lives, including Hayne’s.

“This guy is really dangerous,” he said. At a hearing last month,

Hayne requested a delay for sentencing so he could obtain a lawyer.

He was appointed defense lawyer Thomas Freedman Jr., who represented Hayne at sentencing.

Hayne declined to speak Friday, and only asked the court to “get on with it.”