THE CHALKBOARD PROJECT

Education Messaging
Focus Group Research

Key Findings

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dhm RESEARCH
DAVIS, HIBBITTS & MIDGHALL, INC.

Free Association: "Public Education in Oregon"

What comes to mind when you think of education in Oregon?

- ***"Standards-merit based pay for teachers, not years of service." – Portland***
- ***"Needs to be better. Academically as well as for people not destined for college." – Medford***
- ***"Underfunded. Education should preserve all basics of our culture – including arts, PE, some citizenship principles." – Bend***
- ***"Inadequate and inconsistent funding equals poor quality." – Portland***
- ***"Bloated with management. Too many education dollars are not making it to the teachers and classrooms." – Bend***
- ***"Rote; dumbed down." – Bend***
- ***"Overworked teachers equal a loss of creativity." - Medford***

Disturbing Education Factoids

Statements	TOTAL	Portland	Medford	Bend
1. Only 2/3 of Oregon students graduate from high school with a regular diploma (even within five years).	**19**	4	5	10
2. Community colleges spend 20 percent of their time on remediation—teaching subjects and skills students could have mastered in high school.	**11**	6	1	4
3. Oregon math and reading scores have fallen from top tier to middle and bottom tier.	**11**	2	7	2
4. This generation of Oregon youth (age 25-34) is less educated than their parents, the US average, and students in other developed countries.	**39**	12	14	13

Disturbing Education Factoids

- ***"As a non-parent, these are all very disturbing." – Portland***
- ***"It is difficult to choose among the top four as they are intimately related." – DHM Panel***
- ***"I am surprised that students are less educated than their parents. I always assume education is getting better." – Portland***
- ***"Not everyone wants to or should go to college." – DHM Panel***

Ready To Learn Proposal

Do you support or oppose a plan to assure that every child enters school ready and able to learn? Forty percent of children born in Oregon are considered at risk: They live in poverty, and may have an unstable family, or a parent who abuses drugs or has a criminal record. Under the plan, those families and others with needs would have case workers—known as family support managers—to get them the support and services they need so the children are ready for kindergarten.

Ready to Learn Proposal

	TOTAL	Portland	Medford	Bend
Strongly support	**4**	0	2	2
Support	**13**	8	3	2
Oppose	**6**	1	1	4
Strongly oppose	**2**	0	1	1
Don't know/Not sure	**3**	0	2	1

Ready to Learn Proposal – Questions And Concerns

- ***"Can adding more social workers to an already over burdened system really correct the problem?…Can we afford the expense?" – DHM Panel***
- ***"This plan advocates for children who have no control over their circumstances." – Portland***
- ***"This appears to be a praiseworthy, yet expensive unmanageable plan." – Portland***
- ***"I don't support government doing more than what they already are doing within schools. It seems to take responsibility from parents." – DHM Panel***
- ***"It sounds like a nice idea in theory, but it will cost more money and now the government is giving parenting classes?" – Medford***
- ***"Can you imagine people going into these homes facing stress and hostility? How would you implement these goals?" - Bend***

Coordinated Education Spectrum Proposal

Q. Do you support or oppose the creation of an educational system that is coordinated across the education spectrum, from early childhood through high school and to college and careers?

	TOTAL	Portland	Medford	Bend
Strongly support	**8**	4	1	3
Support	**8**	3	3	2
Oppose	**6**	1	1	4
Strongly oppose	**3**	0	2	1
Don't know	**2**	0	2	0

Coordinated Education Spectrum Proposal – Questions And Concerns

- ***"This statement veered too much on the side of college; should be more geared to finding a job." – Medford***
- ***"It struck me we will need a huge bureaucracy to cover that span of time." – Bend***

- ***"This statement veered too much on the side of college; should be more geared to finding a job." – Medford***
- ***"It struck me we will need a huge bureaucracy to cover that span of time." – Bend***

- ***"I believe the creation of another education bureaucratic organization would be a complete waste of money." – DHM Panel***
- ***"We essentially already have a continuum from K to college." – Medford***

Coordinated Education Spectrum - Description

Q. Regardless of how you feel about the proposal, which of these is the best description/second best? (2 points for best description; 1 point for second best description)

	TOTAL	Portland	Medford	Bend
1. Age 0 to 20	**2**	0	1	1
2. Pre to 20	**5**	0	4	1
3. Pre K to college/career	**25**	9	6	10
4. Early childhood to college/career	**15**	4	4	7
5. Cradle to career	**7**	7	0	0
6. Birth to success	**8**	2	1	5
7. Pre-school to graduate school	**6**	0	5	1
8. Pre-school to college	**12**	2	5	5

Coordinated Education Spectrum - Description

Q. Which word best captures the goal? (2 points for best word; 1 point for second best word)

	TOTAL	Portland	Medford	Bend
1. Seamless	**6**	0	2	4
2. Unbroken	**1**	0	0	1
3. Unified	**2**	0	0	2
4. Integrated	**19**	8	4	7
5. Coordinated	**15**	6	3	6
6. Streamlined	**0**	0	0	0
7. Networked	**8**	0	2	6
8. Continuum	**12**	3	7	2
9. Aligned	**4**	3	1	0
10. Life-long	**7**	3	4	0
11. Collaborated	**4**	1	2	1

Proficiency Learning Proposal

A new way of teaching and learning is emerging in some Oregon classrooms. It has three key parts:

1. ***More individualized education, where teachers understand the skills and knowledge of each student and can offer the support and rigor to help them learn at their best rate and pace.***

2. ***More flexible use of time – rather than rigid "seat time" and credits earned, students would advance as they master a certain level of learning. Ultimately, for example, this could mean more students graduate from high school in four years with a year or more of college credit, while others would take five years to earn a high school diploma.***

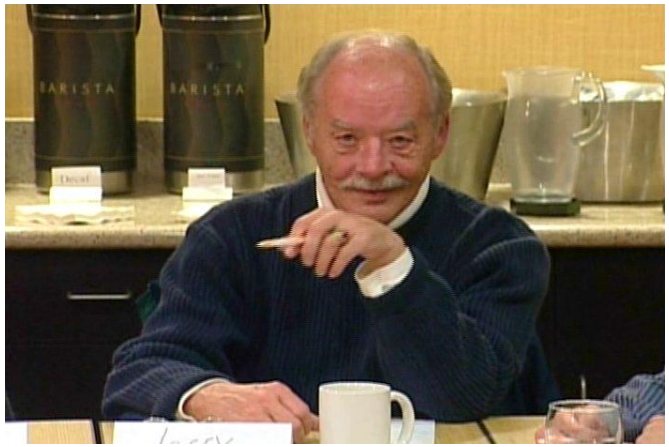
3. ***Better assessments – unlike statewide standardized tests – that help teachers determine more often and more accurately where individual students are in their learning, and how they can effectively target instruction. This also helps students, and their families, understand and take charge of their own education.***

Proficiency Learning Proposal

Q. Do you support or oppose this new way of teaching and learning?

	TOTAL	Portland	Medford	Bend
Strongly support	**15**	5	5	5
Support	**10**	3	3	4
Oppose	**0**	0	0	0
Strongly oppose	**0**	0	0	0
Don't know/Not sure	**1**	0	1	0

Proficiency Learning Proposal



- ***"I love the idea of rate and pace education." – Portland***
- ***"Yah! Something that is attainable!" – Bend***
- ***"Sounds wonderful – so good that I wonder what downside there may be here – and what has prevented such a system from being implemented before now." – Portland***
- ***"How is this going to be accomplished with huge classes and constant cutting of programs and teachers?" – DHM Panel***
- ***"I like the idea of working toward college in high school." – Medford***
- ***"I like it. If it can be funded and bought into, it will work (I hope)." – Portland***
- ***"Education is only one part of the equation. This model will only work if it includes the social services that some of these kids and their families desperately need." – DHM Panel***

Proficiency Learning Proposal - Description

Q. Regardless of how you feel about the new way of teaching, which is the best description? (2 points for best description; 1 point for second best description)

	TOTAL	Portland	Medford	Bend
1. Proficiency-based learning	**5**	0	0	5
2. Competency-based learning	**10**	5	4	1
3. Demonstrated learning	**5**	2	0	3
4. Self-directed learning	**4**	2	0	2
5. Mastery of skills	**16**	3	11	2
6. Proceed at own pace/ Proceed at own rate	**4**	1	1	2
7. Learner-created approach	**25**	7	6	12
8. Flexible pathways	**11**	4	4	3

Teacher Retention

Q. Across the country we lose about 40% of new teachers within their first five years. What is the most important thing to do to prevent more teachers from leaving? Second most important thing? (FG: 2 points for most important; 1 point for second most important)

Statements	TOTAL	Portland	Medford	Bend
1. Better preparation for the demands of the classroom	**15**	5	5	5
2. Better feedback from peers and supervisors about the teachers.	**4**	1	2	1
3. Having experienced teachers spend time in their classroom and offer them advice and strategies.	**12**	6	6	0
4. Providing higher salaries for new teachers.	**12**	3	4	5
5. Providing opportunities to earn more money for taking on new responsibilities and demonstrating success with students.	**13**	2	6	5
6. Providing relevant training to help them improve throughout the first five years.	**17**	7	3	7
7. Other	**10**	2	1	7

Teacher Retention

- ***"We ask them to do too much with too much education for too little money." – Portland***
- ***"Get rid of tenure. This would allow schools to get rid of dead wood and keep the younger more energetic teachers." – DHM Panel***
- ***"Higher salaries. Most are woefully underpaid." – Medford***
- ***"The key is to provide salaries based on a merit system." – Bend***
- ***"Responsibilities of teachers far outweigh the scope of their jobs." – DHM Panel***
- ***"In all honesty I know a lot of people who shouldn't be teachers." – Medford***
- ***"Every teacher I know is asked to do more with less." – DHM Panel***

Student Help

Q. Which is the most important thing to do to help students who are furthest behind catch up? Second most? (2 points for most important; 1 point for second most important)

Statements	TOTAL	Portland	Medford	Bend
1. Give them more time in the classroom	**5**	3	0	2
2. Provide one-on-one tutoring	**27**	9	13	5
3. Ensure they have the most effective teachers	**17**	1	7	9
4. Requiring parents to be more involved	**22**	10	5	7
5. Hold them back in school until they catch up	**5**	1	1	3
6. Other	**5**	0	1	4

Student Help

- ***"I liked require parents to be involved, but I don't know if it is possible." – Bend***
- ***"Holding back in the current system wouldn't work, but the concept of kids learning at their own rate…means 'you need more time on this.'" – Portland***
- ***"Teach to their learning style." – DHM Panel***
- ***"I wouldn't have gotten anywhere in college without tutors." - Medford***
- ***"And provide social service support to at-risk families to stabilize children's homes and life networks." – DHM Panel***

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