



Chalkboard Project Focus Group Highlights

– PARENTS –

Summary of research methodology: Three focus group discussions were held during May 2004 with 23 parents of children in public school from three regions: Southern Oregon and Willamette Valley (including Medford, Corvallis, and Eugene), Central and Eastern Oregon (including Bend, Pendleton, Baker City, and Klamath Falls), and the three county Portland metropolitan region.

Highlights of research findings: The findings emerge from the major areas discussed with the parents.

Student Achievement Assessment

Parents were positive when assessing student achievement in their district. Their comments reflected the good and bad things going on in their children's schools. They were clear that the quality of teachers and individual contact with students were key factors in student success. Portland metropolitan area parents were slightly more pessimistic in their assessment, noting particular concern with the impact of budget cuts and economic status on student achievement.

Problems with the K-12 System

"Funding stability, especially for rural areas, the availability of programs (and) being cut to bare bones."

Parents expressed two primary frustrations with the K-12 system:

- ◆ Inadequate and unstable funding
- ◆ Cuts to specific programs and activities, including arts, music, sports, low and high achieving student programs, and extra-curricular activities

-PARENTS Continued-

Best Practices

Teachers who “really care,” “enjoy teaching,” and are “good educators.”

When asked, parents identified these best practices:

- ◆ Quality, caring teachers who have compassion for students and are high performing
- ◆ Parental involvement
- ◆ High achievement standards
- ◆ An array of program choices for students

Role for Chalkboard

Two key themes emerged for a role for Chalkboard from these parents:

- ◆ Program enhancements for schools
- ◆ Increased teacher collaborations

In the metropolitan area, parents also saw a role for Chalkboard in “getting a handle on funding.”

Role for Parents

“Learn what your kids are learning.”

When looking at their own role, parents focused on their particular child. While there was some reference to involvement at the school and PTA, the consistent message was the importance of parents’ attention to their child’s experience in school:

- ◆ Helping with homework
- ◆ Making a commitment to their education