

newsreview.info

The News-Review *online*

Chalkboard Project: Innovative attempt to improve schools asks for public review

NEWS-REVIEW EDITORIAL

March 21, 2006

 [Comments \(0\)](#)  [Print](#)  [Email](#)  [Subscribe](#)

For two years, the Chalkboard Project has been collecting data, analyzing it, and developing suggestions to improve Oregon's K-12 public schools and stabilize funding.

Now it's your turn.

The project is a neutral independent collaborative by five independent Oregon foundations -- including the Ford Family Foundation based in Roseburg. They started by asking Oregonians what they wanted and expected from their schools, then set about coming up with proposals.

The Chalkboard Project is now going back to the public, including a visit last week to Roseburg School District's Sunnyslope Elementary.

In all, they have honed their suggestions to 13, and want the public's reactions. That should lead to proposed legislation for the state's political leaders to chew over.

Their suggestions include limiting class sizes in kindergarten and first grade, and providing reading tutors up through third grade. The proposals include incentive pay and performance audits. Income suggestions include a larger state school stability fund, more local funding options and additional school funding from mixed sources other than income tax.

For detailed information on the project and its recommendations, check out the informative Web site: chalkboardproject.org.

The beauty of the project is its potential to connect Oregonians with lawmakers. After years of struggles for funding and ever-changing curriculum and testing requirements, the public school situation is muddled at best.

On one hand, Oregonians are demanding good schools, but have also voted to restrict taxes. People told legislators they wanted more accountability from schools, but time-consuming, new demands were put in place without accompanying funding.

On top of it all, the state's Public Employees Retirement System imploded, with spiraling costs that take a larger and larger chunk out of budgets.

ADVERTISEMENT



[News Review \(The\)](#)
[VIEW FULL AD](#)

Legislators find themselves bracketed by anti-tax activists on one side and the powerful teachers union, the Oregon Education Association, on the other.

The question of the day is: "Just what do Oregonians want of their public schools and how will it be paid for?"

Enter the Chalkboard Project.

Now, two years in, the groups have some suggestions on the table, and it is again the turn of state residents to sound off on them.

The easiest way to comment is through the Web site. The toll-free number is 1-877-YOUR-K12.

Take some time to read the proposals and comment. Better schools should be the result.

[BACK](#) 