

# Local P.-T. A. Will Hear Discussion Of Proposed State "Basic School Support" Initiative, Of Coming Election

## State Schools Face Crisis Unless Proper Measure Is Passed To Assure Future; People Urged To Attend P.-T. A. Meeting, Thursday Evening.

Coming up for discussion at the forthcoming P.-T. A. meeting, is the "Basic School Support" bill, which is considered a "must" for future welfare of the state's elementary schools. Take from the Oregon Educational Journal is:

School financing today is a difficult and uncertain business. The harassed Oregon school boards know that. It is their difficult and often unappreciated duty to obtain the revenues to maintain good educational facilities for the youth of their districts. School teachers and administrators are well aware of these problems. The general public is becoming increasingly cognizant of the fact that "something must be done!"

That "something" which can be done is to enact into law the

State Basic School Support Fund initiative measure in the general election this coming November. The measure, its sponsors believe,

### Endorsers of the Bill

Original sponsors of the state basic school support fund measure are being joined by an ever-increasing number of interested groups. The last report shows that these are endorsing:

Oregon Federation of Women's Organizations.

Oregon Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs.

Oregon State Grange.

Oregon Department of American Legion.

Oregon Department of Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Oregon Junior Chambers of Commerce.

Oregon Farmers Union.

Original sponsors of the measure are the Oregon Congress of Parents and Teachers, the Oregon State Association of School Boards, The Oregon Educational Association, and Ronald E. Jones.

is a workable solution to many of the school financing difficulties of the present time. Their belief is shared by the important statewide groups which have already endorsed the measure. Now, as the election approaches, teachers and interested laymen can help to secure its passage by banding together to present the facts to all the voters. General understanding of the needs should assure its enactment.

These needs are all too apparent to school boards and Oregon teachers. Within their local districts, they know that sound school financing is essential. Are these needs widespread, or are they purely local? Some of the incontrovertible facts pointing to current needs for statewide school support are indicated:

Increasing costs are forcing the school districts to exceed their 6% limitations.

For the school year 1946-47, 42 out of Oregon's 45 first class school districts found it necessary to hold special elections to exceed their constitutional 6% limitations, according to questionnaire returns compiled by the Research Department of OEA. The picture for all school districts was hardly better. Reports showed that 86.6% of all school districts were forced to vote special levy elections for the 1946-47 school year.

Seven million dollars is a conservative estimate of the amount which Oregon school districts were forced to levy beyond the 6% limitation in 1945-46 to meet increasing costs.

The situation is difficult throughout the state. Rapidly mounting

costs have made it impossible for communities to maintain their schools within the limitations normally imposed. State support eliminate the necessity of most of these expensive special levy elections.

The current teacher shortage reflects the instability of school financing in the past.

Teacher-education graduates of the institutions of the state system of higher education have declined steadily in numbers or several years. In 1931, the state system reported the graduation of 1,177 teacher trainees. In 1934 there were only 716 teacher graduates; in 1938, 701; in 1942, 368 and in 1945, 171. By June of 1946 it was estimated that only 102 teacher trainees would be graduated.

Graduates are now far below normal replacement requirements. The result has been the extensive use of emergency teaching certificates. Reports from the state department of education show that more than 2500 of Oregon's 8,254 teachers in 1945-46 were teaching on emergency certificates. This shortage has been increasing for the past ten years and is expected to be an acute problem for years to come unless more incentives are developed to attract people to the profession.

Teacher turnover is also an indication of financial unrest. The OEA research department, on the basis of a sampling of half of Oregon's first and second class school districts, found a 24.2 per cent turnover of the teaching staffs throughout the state in 1945-46. The turnover in third class districts is always much higher than in the larger districts.

The Portland schools experienced a turnover of 795 persons during the 1945-46 school year in maintaining a teaching staff of 1722 persons.

Oregon lags behind its neighbor

states in the percentage of state support of the public schools.

Throughout the nation, trend in school financing in recent years has been toward increasingly more state support. Despite changes made in the fiscal picture in the last four years, Oregon still lags in this respect.

On the coast, per capita state aid to the schools of Washington is \$16.14; of California, \$8.97, and of Oregon, \$6.04. Expenditures per class room unit vary even more widely, being as follows: California, \$3,500; Washington, \$2,200 and Oregon, \$1,800, according to figures published by the American Council on Education.

The variation in school support by districts in Oregon is tremendous and does not give every Oregon youth equality of educational opportunity.

The assessed valuation of property behind each child in daily attendance throughout the state varies greatly between districts. The highest district in the state has \$2,122,900 valuation per child as contrasted to the lowest. Concluded on Page Six

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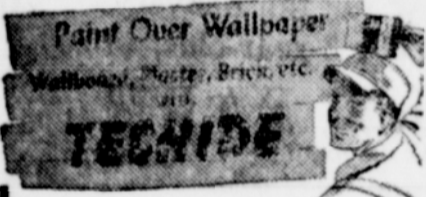
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