

Education: 'It gives us a bigger picture'

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topics, such as the fisheries technology program at Astoria and vocational programs, keep them interested in school.

Educators weigh in

"We don't want to sit in Salem and design systems in isolation from you and other Oregonians and other communities," Noor said to a group of mostly local educators gathered at the Barbey Maritime Center.

Those gathered split off into groups, discussing Noor's questions and reporting back.

As for the most important characteristics in a school, respondents focused on the need for more resources to help students learn in different styles, an environment in which their minimum daily needs are met and acknowledgment that many students are bound for vocational rather than college education after high school.

Melissa Linder, the curriculum director for Astoria, said teachers need the time and resources to prepare quality instruction, while students need more hands-on experi-

ences in the community. Dr. Bruce Bobek, the Republican challenger to state Rep. Deborah Boone, D-Cannon Beach, said there needs to be more feedback from higher education and employers on how prepared students are after they graduate.

"What I would like to see is each district create their own accountability system that the state can approve," Astoria Superintendent Craig Hoppes said, noting the Smarter Balanced Assessment is only given once a year, while the district has come up with several measurements of success in its strategic plan.

To ensure all students are successful, said soon-to-be Seaside Superintendent Sheila Roley, schools need to engage local nonprofits, businesses and other groups to ensure wrap-around services.

Patsy Oser, a former teacher and librarian and volunteer in local elementary schools, said schools should also connect with new parents to help prepare children for school from birth.

Summer assignment

The federal No Child Left



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian
Larry Johnson, right, a retired industrial arts teacher of more than 30 years, said he came to the education forum Thursday to stump for more career-technical education in schools. Behind Johnson is Derek Brown, the director of assessment for the state Department of Education, gathering local feedback for a new education plan the state is creating.

Behind Act, the education reform plan that began under President George W. Bush, is being replaced by the Every Student Succeeds Act, President Barack Obama's revision to education law that gives states more flexibility to improve student and school performance.

Noor has been to 11 forums

so far in Oregon and ends his tour Monday in Coos Bay.

So far, he said, he has heard a consistent focus on the need for student and teacher engagement, a variety of high-interest, hands-on programs and close relationships between students and faculty.

"We're hearing consistencies about the ... mental health needs of students, and the social/emotional needs that have to be addressed," he said.

After the tour, Noor said the state will try to synthesize the information into themes to inform the education plan that education officials are drafting in July and August. The state receives federal guidelines for its education plan in October, he said, and will turn in a final draft by November. While not all feedback will be reflected in the plan, he said, the information he's gathered at the forums will continually inform the state's work on education.

"It gives us a bigger picture and a broader perspective on what's actually needed and what's happening in schools and communities across the state," he said.

Brown: 'The time to build the boat is before the tide rises'

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tax credits for low-income households; and establishing tax credits for corporations that dedicate a portion of their tax bill to the Oregon Growth Fund for small and minority businesses.

Cost estimates weren't immediately available as discussions with lawmakers, who will ultimately decide the plan's fate, were just beginning. But officials in Brown's office say it's a framework to start with, an effort to look away at least some of what'd otherwise be discretionary money for the Legislature.

"The time to build the boat is before the tide rises," Brown, who remains neutral on IP 28, said in a statement. "As I consider the development of budgets and policies for 2017-19, my Corporate Tax Implementation Plan provides a framework for planning that advances my priorities: improve our high school graduation rate, continue economic growth statewide and protect Oregon jobs."

The measure — a gross receipts tax hike proposal that would apply to businesses with \$25 million-plus in annual sales and is awaiting final approval for the November ballot — specifies that all revenue it generates would fund education, health care and senior services.

But there aren't any guarantees. Lawmakers can spend the revenue however they want because IP 28 would change state law, not the Oregon Constitution — a structure that its public union-backers say they chose to avoid pigeonholing future budget decisions.

Education, health and senior services would almost certainly benefit from IP 28. It sends proceeds to the general fund, the bulk of which already funds those areas,

especially education. But what portion of the proceeds — especially with other funding challenges facing the state, such as pensions and transportation — and how it'd be spent beyond that is unclear.

Katherine Driessen, spokeswoman for Our Oregon, the union-backed nonprofit behind IP 28, said Brown's proposal is a good first step that "addresses education, and we look forward to working with the governor on an implementation plan that addresses health care and senior services as well."

Rebecca Tweed, campaign coordinator for the business-backed opposition campaign, said Brown's proposal doesn't address the broader issues with IP 28 and instead, "demonstrates that IP 28 includes no strategy and no accountability for how the state would spend the \$6 billion it would generate."

Brown also needs the support of the Legislature, where feelings on IP 28 are mixed, even among Democrats.

State House Speaker Tina Kotek, who supports IP 28, was out of town and unavailable for an interview, but her spokeswoman Lindsey O'Brien issued a statement on Kotek's behalf.

"If Oregonians approve the measure in November, legislators will work with the governor in 2017 to make sure it's implemented as voters intended," O'Brien said.

Senate President Peter Courtney said they'll tackle budget and revenue issues next session, as they do every year, but he still opposes policy-making through citizen ballots.

"I'm still hopeful that all the players will get in the room," Courtney said in an interview. "I know time's running out, it doesn't look very good ... I just want to avoid the battle. I admit today it would be a miracle."

Shipyard: Closure could hamper commercial fishing, economy

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Leahy sent the letter Wednesday to Robert Williams, the state's project manager for the Astoria Marine cleanup, and to local, state and federal legislators.

Wartime contamination

The 90-year-old shipyard gathered most of its contamination during contracts to build vessels for the U.S. Navy during World War II and the Korean War. Since the wars, it has primarily worked on fishing boats.

In 2012, the shipyard avoided a listing as a federal Superfund site when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency gave the state cleanup oversight. The cleanup, which includes capping contaminated soil at the shipyard and removing contaminated sediment from the ship-

ways, is estimated to cost more than \$2 million and is expected to close Astoria Marine.

Leahy's letter referenced another written last month by Denise Löfman, director of the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce and a member of the community advisory group overseeing cleanup options for Astoria Marine. Her letter said the shipyard's pollution is isolated and does not affect surrounding property or the Lewis and Clark River.

Leahy wrote that a moratorium would allow time to study the costs, funding needs and options for moving a service like Astoria Marine to a short-term or permanent location while the business continues operating.

Leahy wrote that Clatsop Economic Development

Resources supports the efforts of Port of Astoria Executive Director Jim Knight, who is seeking state support to study the feasibility of moving the agency's Pier 3 boatyard — and potentially the shipyard — to land the agency leases from the Department of State Lands on the Skipanon Peninsula in Warrenton. Knight recently sent a white paper explaining the need for the shipyard and said he is meeting again with the state next week.

Building support

Leahy said he put Astoria Marine at the top of the agenda at the most recent board meeting of Clatsop Economic Development Resources, where members decided they needed to do something. His letter was endorsed by a broad swath of county business and govern-

ment leaders who serve on the group's board, which includes Clatsop County Commissioner Dirk Rohne.

Rohne said the county commission had, under Peter Huhtala's leadership, worked to move Astoria Marine's cleanup from federal to state hands in the hopes of having more influence over the process.

"The environment is not going to improve by virtue of it being closed," Rohne said. "There's no benefit."

Rohne and Leahy said the county would face a cascading impact without a service like Astoria Marine. Many fishermen have said they might have to leave without a shipyard nearby to get their boats repaired. If the boats leave, Rohne said, that could cause seafood processors to follow suit.

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