

## SCHOOL: Home-school students must pass the GED

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fully accredited by the Oregon Department of Education that offer full-time enrollment to students anywhere in the state.

There are no online schools targeted specifically to Eastern Oregon students, but academies like Oregon Connections Academy host field trips and other face-to-face events for students in the region.

### Open enrollment

In Oregon a student is allowed to transfer to a different school district only if both the receiving school district and the student's home district agreed. But starting in 2012-2013, under HB3681, school districts can now choose an "open enrollment" policy, allowing them to accept students whose home districts didn't want to lose them, but also allowing their own students to leave without their permission.

Area districts chose not to implement an open enrollment policy. The law is set to expire in 2017.

Whether they choose open enrollment or not, districts are required by law to allow their students to attend charter schools, including online academies.

### Charter school

Charter schools are free public schools that are granted more independence and local control in exchange for being held to extra standards of accountability. They operate under the umbrella of a school district but exist without geographic boundaries and include students from outside the umbrella district. Only two charter schools exist in the Umatilla-Morrow County area.

Nixyaawii Community High School is a charter school on the Umatilla Indian Reservation. It is part of the Pendleton School District but has a special focus on native culture and language.

Ione Charter School, which is the only school in Ione School District, serves the district's entire 200-plus student population from kindergarten through graduation.

### Private school

A few private schools exist in the area as an alternative to public education.

Blue Mountain Valley Adventist School in Athena, Harris Junior Academy in Pendleton, Hermiston Junior Academy in Hermiston and Milton Stateline Adventist School in Milton-Freewater are all private schools serving kindergarten through eighth grade and run by the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Hermiston Christian School, run by Hermiston Christian Center, offers "Biblically-based and academically sound" classes from preschool to 12th grade.

### Magnet Schools

Magnet schools are public schools with a specific focus. Students still fill state requirements for classes in every subject but the classes revolve around the school's theme (for example, a magnet school for the arts might center a geometry class around taking measurements to create lighting and build sets for plays).

There are no magnet schools in Umatilla County or Morrow County.

### Home Schooling

Parents who aren't happy with any of the above options are allowed to home-school their children anywhere in the country, including Oregon.

Compulsory school attendance laws in Oregon dictate that parents who choose to homeschool must register their child with the local Education Service District within 10 days of withdrawing them from school. The Inter-Mountain ESD, which covers Union, Baker, Umatilla and Morrow counties, currently has 853 home-school children in its database.

Home-school students are still required to take the same state tests as their traditional school peers in third, fifth, eighth and 10th grade. The Oregon Department of Education provides information about the standards tested — now the Common Core standards — on its website.

Education service districts do not award high school diplomas, meaning home-school students must either pass the GED test or obtain a diploma through an accredited correspondence course.

Contact Jade McDowell at [jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com](mailto:jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com) or 541-564-4536.

## MARIJUANA: Possessing up to 8 ounces of pot and four plants in your home becomes legal July 1

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clear packaging, limiting pot advertising and stiff penalties for selling to minors.

Most participants also wanted some kind of educational advertising and said the state needs to promote parents as responsible to educate children about pot. Some stressed education about marijuana should be unbiased and fact-based.

Patridge, who in his day job is the district attorney of Klamath County, explained to the audience that the law gave the liquor commission the job of regulating recreational pot and approving retail pot sales licenses for the new market. Possessing up to 8 ounces of pot and four plants in your home becomes legal under the state law July 1, but Patridge said



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

**Audience members hold up green cards to show they favor an education program concerning edible marijuana products during an Oregon Liquor Control Commission listening session on the state's recreational marijuana law Thursday in Pendleton.**

OLCC rulemaking will take place March through October, and the commission must start approving retail sales licenses Jan. 4, 2016.

"As you can see, we're on a pretty tight timeline,"

he said.

Some in the crowd, including Pendleton City Councilman Chuck Wood, lamented what they saw as a backward approach of allowing marijuana before

rules are in place.

Thursday's gathering ended with a question and answer session, and the big takeaway is that a lot of unknowns remain. Patridge said there are people already lobbying for a change to the law in the forthcoming Legislature.

Before the public session, Patridge and staff had a closed-door meeting with local law and enforcement and city leaders, including Pendleton police Chief Stuart Roberts, Hermiston police Capt. Travis Enyon and Umatilla County Sheriff Terry Rowan. After the public session, Patridge said cops and civic heads were like the rest of Oregonians: seeking to understand what the law means. He said the OLCC will help local governments "draw clear lines" regarding the law.

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