

Education initiative petitions underway

By **DICK MASON**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — A drive is underway to get a pair of initiative petitions on Oregon's November 2024 election ballot to make it easier for parents to send their children to any public or private school in the state.

Tualatin-based Education Freedom for Oregon is organizing the efforts.

One initiative petition calls for an open enrollment constitutional amendment and another would call for a school choice constitutional amendment.

Open enrollment

The open enrollment amendment would put a ballot measure before voters to give parents the right to send their children to any public school in Oregon. The proposed ballot measure would amend the Oregon Constitution so a child could attend any public school in Oregon that has room for additional students.

For example, if a public school has room for five additional second graders and there are five applicants from outside the school's district, the school would have to accept all five of the students, said Donna Kreitzberg, one of three chief petitioners for the initiative petitions and a member of the executive committee of Education Freedom for Oregon.

Under the proposal, should there be more applicants than openings, the school district would be required



Ronan MacDonald, a student at La Grande Middle School, works on an assignment during class April 7, 2022. A Tualatin-based group is spearheading a drive to get a pair of initiative petitions on Oregon's November 2024 election ballot to make it easier for parents to send their children to any public or private school in the state.

The Observer, File

to conduct a lottery to give each of the applicants an equal opportunity to be selected and enrolled.

School districts would not be required to accept students for openings if they had been expelled from their previous school. Kreitzberg said the leaders of the Open Enrollment amendment drive don't want

problem students to be handed to other schools.

The rules of the proposed initiative petition would give priority to students of families living in each school district. This means that if there are 25 spaces available for third graders in a school district and there are 25 third graders living

within the school district whose families want them to enroll there, these children would fill all the slots and the outside students might have to be put on a waiting list.

Kreitzberg said the Open Enrollment amendment would empower parents.

"This would give parents a

choice and put them back in the driver's seat," she said.

School choice

The school choice constitutional amendment would make it easier for parents to afford to enroll their children in any private school in the state if there is space available.

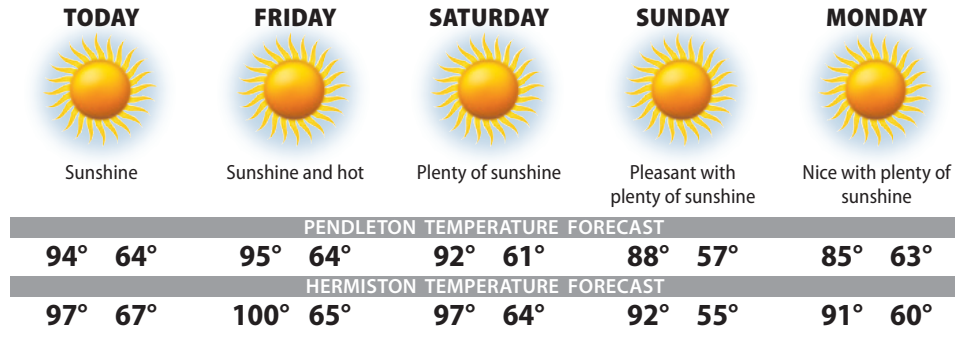
The amendment calls for a school choice account to be created for students attending or planning to attend private schools. A portion of the state money that public school districts receive whenever a student attends a public school would go into this account. The funds would go directly to private schools, Kreitzberg said.

Kreitzberg said the drive to get the amendments on the 2024 ballot are in its very early stages. Sponsorship signatures are being collected throughout the state. Once the required number is gathered, the drive's petitioners will be closer to getting ballot titles from the state and the necessary permission to begin collecting the signatures needed to get the initiative petitions on the 2024 ballot.

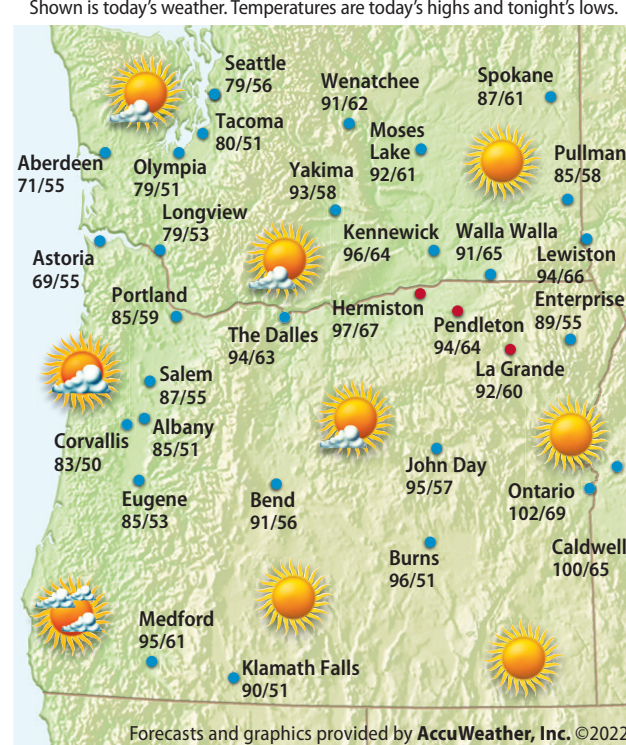
A belief in the importance of fairness in education is part of what Kreitzberg said is motivating her to take on this project.

"We believe that all Oregon K-12 students deserve the opportunity to receive a great education," she said. "Oregon's education dollars are meant to educate all Oregon K-12 students, and our amendments will make sure that happens in a fair manner."

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST



ALMANAC

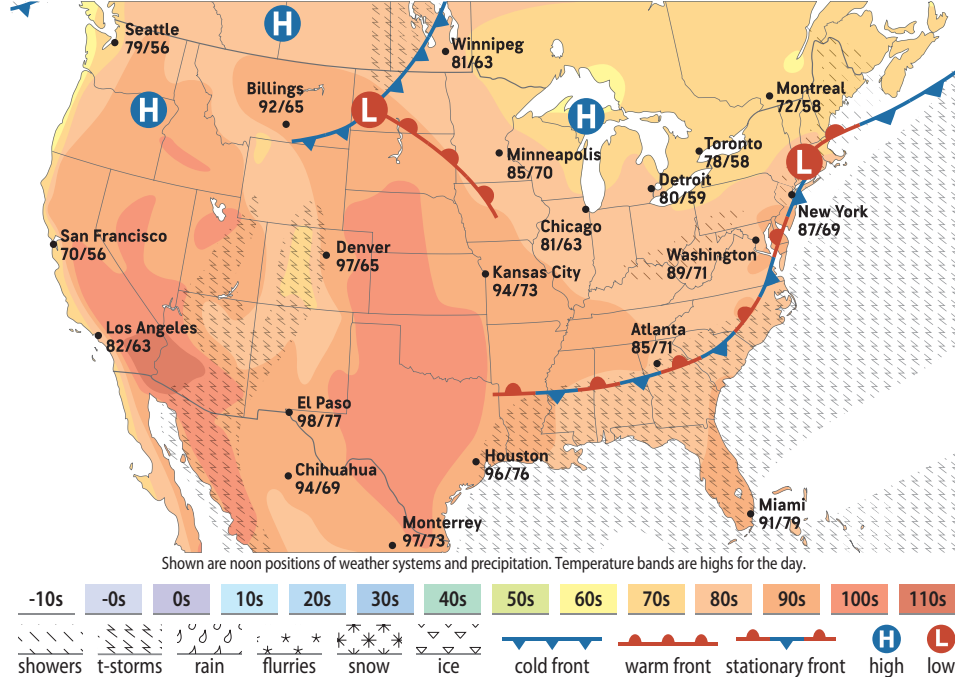
PENDLETON through 3 p.m. Wed.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Wednesday	93°	68°
Normals	90°	58°
Records	109° (1930)	40° (1917)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	Trace	
Month to date	0.31"	
Normal month to date	0.18"	
Year to date	11.13"	
Last year to date	4.32"	
Normal year to date	8.13"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. Wed.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Wednesday	93°	72°
Normals	93°	58°
Records	108° (2002)	44° (1950)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.03"	
Normal month to date	0.05"	
Year to date	7.48"	
Last year to date	2.46"	
Normal year to date	5.07"	
WINDS (in mph)		
Today	SW 6-12	WSW 8-16
Boardman	SW 4-8	W 7-14
Pendleton	NW 4-8	W 7-14
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	5:19 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	8:42 p.m.	
Moonrise today	10:09 p.m.	
Moonsset today	6:01 a.m.	

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 113° in Needles, Calif. Low 35° in Yellowstone N.P., Wyo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Wallowa County may get BLM land

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — The Wallowa County Board of Commissioners heard a brief presentation from Wayne Monger of the federal Bureau of Land Management in Vale who discussed possibly divesting the BLM of its minimal holdings in the county.

Monger, who is relatively new to the position, said he wished to become known to the board. He said he will be implementing a quarterly report from his district.

He emphasized that fire season has started, mentioning a 4,000-acre blaze that burned north of Vale. "Just be aware, it is coming," he said of the fire season.

Monger said his district covers about 5.1 million acres and Commissioner Todd

Nash said the BLM holds less than 30,000 acres in Wallowa County.

However, several parcels are in key places and Commission Chairwoman Susan Roberts asked Monger that if the BLM wishes to divest itself of some of its holdings in the county, the county or private landowners might be interested in purchasing it or accepting a donation of the land.

"We'll have to look at parcels we'd consider for disposal, so if you have any suggestions, by all means," Monger said. "We do," Roberts

said. "There aren't very many acres in Wallowa County and they're located in spots that are more conducive to private ownership, if we can get that — or county ownership — so if you need to dispose of parcels, the county would like to offer."

Roberts and Monger agreed they would keep in touch over possible transfer of ownership.

Nash said his main concern is along the Minam River down to Troy.

"The use of it has ramped up considerably," he said, "that being a wild and scenic river and everything reverts back to BLM, but there really isn't a presence of BLM here in the county. I'm like Commissioner Roberts in that either you need to have a presence and help us through some of the concerns that arise or wash your hands of it."

Roberts said the county has a permanent easement with BLM for Wildcat Road that the agency has land along.

Commissioner John Hillcock agreed, saying county access is crucial.

"The last time there was a flash flood, we couldn't get in to do work on the road," he said.

Roberts said the easement that has since been arranged is the solution to that access.



Hillock



Nash



Roberts

IN BRIEF

Shooting in Baker City leaves juvenile dead

BAKER CITY — A male juvenile was shot and killed in the parking lot at the Baker Technical Institute on the Baker High School campus early on Wednesday, July 13, and another juvenile has been arrested in connection with the shooting.

The shooting was reported at 12:25 a.m., according to a press release from the Baker County Sheriff's Office.

The caller told a dispatcher the shooting suspect had fled.

Baker City police officers responded and found a male juvenile with a gunshot wound. Efforts to save the victim were not successful.

Police also found a female juvenile at the scene who was not hurt.

Baker Technical Institute is at the northwest corner of the BHS campus, north of the gymnasium.

The Major Crime Team, which includes representatives from the Baker City police, Baker County Sheriff's Office and Oregon State Police, is investigating.

Employees from the Oregon State Police crime lab worked throughout the early morning hours to collect evidence and process the scene.

There is no danger to the public at this time, according to the press release.

The Baker School District sent out a notice, stating, "Activities scheduled on the main High School campus will continue. Please use the main entry of the building. Any activity scheduled in the BTI wing is cancelled until further notice."

—EO Media Group

CORRECTIONS: The *East Oregonian* works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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