

MEMORANDUM

TO: Co-Chair Rod Monroe
Co-Chair Betty Komp
Joint Ways & Means Subcommittee on Education

FROM: Sue Hildick, President of the Chalkboard Project

DATE: May 8, 2013

RE: Chalkboard's Role in Achievement Gap Study with the Indian Tribes of Oregon

Background on Chalkboard:

The Chalkboard Project, the sole project of Foundations for a Better Oregon, was founded in 2003 to help create systemic reform in the quality, accountability and stable funding of Oregon's public K-12 schools. We do so by providing independent research and leadership that supports proposed changes; by designing and implementing pilot programs with school district leaders to test best practices; and by serving as an independent voice to citizens, educational stakeholders and decision makers. **Our vision is that Oregon's K-12 schools be among the top ten in the nation as measured by student achievement and educational equity.** Education equity is measured by the closing of the gaps in achievement and opportunity between more and less privileged populations of students.

Previous Research on the Achievement Gaps in Oregon:

Aligned with our primary role of providing good data upon which policy makers can act, we have conducted several studies of the academic achievement gaps in Oregon over the years. In 2009, we worked with ECONW on two informative studies: the first took a deeper look at the Black-White achievement gap in Multnomah County ("A Report to the Black Parent Initiative", Winter, 2009), and the second took a statewide look at the Hispanic-White achievement gap in Oregon ("A Report to the Salem-Keizer Coalition for Equality", Summer, 2009). In October 2010, we worked with ECONW on a white paper entitled, "The Economic Impacts of Oregon's Student Achievement Gap". We have also conducted deep analysis of the achievement gaps within each of the 23 school districts that participate in Chalkboard's CLASS Project. Nearly thirty- percent of the children in Oregon reside in those districts that are working to raise student achievement by providing better tools and supports to educators. We have developed, over the years, a strong track record of elevating key information into the policy debates and have successfully enacted many policy bills in K-12 devoted to improving the quality of teaching in Oregon's schools.

Interest in the Condition of Education for the Indian Tribes in Oregon:

The leadership of Chalkboard (board and staff) has wanted to look more closely at the achievement gaps in the Native American populations in Oregon since 2009 when we initiated discussions with ECONW and others to determine what such a study would look like and cost. We took the proposal that emerged to friends at the Government-to-Government Tribal Education Cluster and the Spirit Mountain Community Fund, to determine interest. We are thrilled to learn that there is interest among the tribes to look more deeply and we believe that ECONW and Chalkboard are the right team to oversight that process. Chalkboard has been pivotal in advocating for, and funding the data sharing agreement that ECONW has with the Oregon Dept. of Education to receive student data and to maintain that confidentially for the purposes of the types of studies outlined above. We maintain and make sure that all student privacy protections are followed in the work we do with ECONW and we use these studies solely for the purpose of advancing critical policy issues in the state education arena.

In terms of the current proposal to research achievement levels and produce a summary of the condition of education for the Indian Tribes of Oregon, we are eager to be in partnership. This proposal has been born from a long-standing interest and desire to have all the data on the table as we confront the needs of **all** of the children in this state and how we intend to meet them.