



Equity in Education

Lynn Baker

The Portland League committee that has been studying the issue of equity in our public schools, along with the structures and processes impacting it, has concluded its work. How do school districts use the resources available to them to help every child succeed? On February 8, the general meeting will present a panel discussion of these issues. We will hear from speakers from three organizations that have contributed to the study and have varied perspectives on the issues (see February General Meeting box for details).

Unit meetings in February will seek consensus on some of the questions raised by the study. The following LWV positions have been discussed in the study and may be impacted:

Public School Districts in Portland

- The first position, dealing with language used;
- The second position, dealing with the grade organization of education for elementary students;
- The third position, dealing with high school curriculum;
- The sixth and seventh positions, dealing with racial integration and equal access to programs;

School District #1

- The second position in the School District #1 section dealing with project funding.

See pages 5-6 for the discussion and consensus questions. We hope everyone will plan to attend both of these events.

February General Meeting



Equity in Education: A Level Playing Field?

Tuesday, February 8, 7:00 pm
Board Room, Mult. County Building,
501 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Portland

Speakers:

- **Dan Jamison**, Vice President of Education Policy, Chalkboard Project
- **Nicole Maher**, Executive Director, Native American Youth Family Center
- **Doug Wells**, Past President, Community and Parents for Public Schools

Parking: Ample street parking.

Transit: Plan your route with TriMet's Trip Planner at www.trimet.org.

March Focus

The Portland Economy – Today and Tomorrow

Ann Mulrone

Portland industry leaders will join the Oregon Business Council and the Portland Business Alliance at the March General Meeting to discuss the Portland economy and outlook for the future. Companies will discuss what it will take for them to continue to grow and prosper in Portland, what support is most important for their success, and their biggest competitive hurdles.

At Units: A Board of Directors Meeting of Berries Unlimited, a small Portland food processing company. Members will learn about the challenges facing this small company and role play as the leadership team deciding its future. We're aiming for fun and understanding.

**League of Women Voters
of Portland, OR**

Board of Directors

President
Betsy Pratt

1st Vice President
Mary McWilliams

2nd Vice President
Barbara Fredericks

3rd Vice President
Ann Mulroney

Secretary
Claire Corwin-Kordosky

Treasurer
Carol Wilson

Voter Editor
Pat Chor

Action
Debbie Aiona

**Naturalization Ceremony
& Schools Study**
Lynn Baker

Web Editor
Kathleen Hersh

Voter Service
Debbie Kaye

Special Projects
Marnie Lonsdale

Public Relations
Don MacGillivray

Voter is produced 9 times a year by the League of Women Voters of Portland. We welcome your comments, suggestions, story ideas and submissions. Please contact Pat Chor or Heather Drake at the League office, 503-228-1675. Submissions must be received no later than the Friday before the board meeting each month.

February 2011



League of Women Voters
of Portland, OR
310 SW 4th Ave. Suite 520
Portland, OR 97204
Phone & Fax: 503 228-1675
Email: info@lwvpx.org
Web: www.lwvpx.org

President's Column

Betsy Pratt

League members know that our families and friends are affected by our League activities. One of my early childhood memories is going door to door to drop off Town Meeting notices on behalf of my mother's League outside Boston (and being clearly instructed that mailboxes are only for US Postal Service use). As my husband, Philip, gets dragged to many League events, I thought this month I would let him share his perceptions of being a League spouse. So here are Phil's observations:

Well, Betsy's work with the League has offered opportunities I never would have expected. For example, my beer pouring expertise has resulted in me being asked to serve as bartender at several League events, including a celebration at a prestigious downtown law firm.

I've followed her across the country as she attended League meetings in Washington, D.C. and Atlanta, Georgia. And I have enjoyed both the tasty food and the chance to chat with the ladies at League gatherings. I've shaken hands with a few politicians, several inspirational advocates, and many good people who are trying to help others.

The general meetings I've attended have been very interesting and have occasionally prompted lunchtime

discussions at work. I also appreciate the candidate forums and ballot measure presentations (if I hadn't already been a test audience for Betsy as she prepared for a Speakers' Bureau engagement). Gaining the knowledge about both sides of an issue has made my voting decisions easier, and hopefully, more informed.

If Phil's example inspires you, our February events would be a great time for you to share your League interests with your nearest and dearest. Anyone with children who are (or who could be) in the public school system will want to hear our February 8th panel. Our speakers will be sharing their views on the best ways for the school districts to allocate their resources to help every student achieve his or her full potential.

On a less serious note, your families can meet a sampling of our newly elected public officials at our February 12th coffee at the Metro Building. We will be celebrating the latest edition of the best-selling League publication, the *Directory of Elected Officials*. We hope to have a good turnout for some mutual back-patting, since our candidate's forums helped the community learn about these people, and the updated *Directory* will let citizens know how to stay in touch with them.

LWV Portland gratefully acknowledges these thoughtful gifts:

In Memory of Ray Steed
from Jeanne Steed

In Honor of Darleane Lemley
from Jane Maynard

November 2010 General Meeting Cable Sponsorship
from Anonymous

Special League Event: Meet Your Newly Elected Officials!

Mary McWilliams

League members, donors, your extended family of friends and relatives including adult children and their children, are cordially invited to attend this coffee to meet with our newly elected officials and celebrate our democratic elections process. Metro President, Tom Hughes, will make opening remarks welcoming everyone to the Offices of Metro (around 10:00 am). Newly elected officials will be introduced and have the opportunity to speak briefly.

At this coffee we are launching our 2011-13 version of the *Directory of Elected Officials, Multnomah County Edition*, with the LWV of East Multnomah County. We plan to mail copies of the *Directory* to all League members and donors prior to February 12th. The *Directory* will also be available at the coffee. A purpose of the *Directory* is to help citizens communicate and inform their elected officials about current issues.

Sponsors of the *Directory* include Wells Fargo, the Sara Frewing Fund of the LWV of Portland Education Fund, and the LWV of East Multnomah County.

We hope that you will join us for this special LWV of Portland event.

(This article was adapted from the press release prepared for the League by Don MacGillivray.)

New Member

Esther Muller

Meet Your Newly Elected Officials!



When: Saturday, February 12
9:30 – 11:00 AM

Where: Metro Council Chambers,
600 NE Grand Avenue, Portland

What: Coffee and light refreshments will be provided

Who: League members, donors, and their family and friends, other officials, our community partners, and the general public.

Parking:

- Star Parking Garage at Metro - enter from Irving Street off Grand Ave. Star Parking is doing some construction at the garage which may mean no parking. But if they are working in another area of the garage, the first floor of parking MAY be available for free. A League member will be at the entrance of the parking garage to advise attendees.
- Metered parking around Metro. Plenty of meters available on a Saturday. Cost is 25 cents per 15 minutes.
- Other pay lots nearby.

Transit: It's a short walk from the MAX line Convention Center stop to Metro. Take any of the MAX trains that run by Lloyd Center. Get off at the Convention Center stop on Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Walk one block east to Grand Ave., and then two or three blocks south to Irving Street.

February Action Committee Meeting

Portland Public Schools Bond Measure and Possible Local Option Levy

Friday, February 25, 1:00 pm

Room 433, Board of Trade Building,
310 SW 4th Avenue, Portland

All members welcome. Questions? Contact Debbie Aiona.

January General Meeting

Which Way Do the Political Winds Blow?

Pat Chor

Adam Davis' presentation at the League's luncheon January 11, entitled "A Spy Who Came In From The Cold, Public Opinion About Government And Politics in Oregon – The Ugly, The Bad, and The Good" definitely delivered the goods on his subject.

After a brief post-mortem on the unfortunate outcome of the BCS game (Oregon has a great coach, but Auburn's defense was difficult to beat), Davis gave a great presentation, packed with a huge amount of information. Fortunately, he has graciously provided his presentation materials to the League (posted at www.lwvpx.org).

Davis began by describing the methodology employed in his firm's studies. Their studies are independent and non-partisan, and are designed to obtain both quantitative and qualitative results: How people feel about government, politics, public policy and planning, and why. He is finding that it is necessary to use focus groups to gather information because it is increasingly difficult to keep people on the phone long enough to obtain adequate information. When evaluating survey results, it is important to ask: "Who was questioned?" and "How will the data be used?"

The pollsters look at demographic and psychographic factors. As the population becomes more diverse, many different combinations of values and issues emerge. The polling

data indicate that there has been a massive shift in the political winds. Davis likened the political climate three years ago to the perfect storm. Today, he describes it as a category 5 hurricane. People feel cut off from the process of government now more than ever.

While there are many reasons for the dreadful climate, one major factor is low awareness and low knowledge of political processes. Davis states that it is crucial to put Civics back into education. Surveys find that the public is incredibly ignorant on political matters. In his view, the League can make a major contribution in this area. To do this, the League must take its message to people where they work, play and pray. To reach the public effectively, we must use social media (1st tier); television (2nd tier); and print media (3rd tier), though print is becoming much less important. Davis says that in order to have the greatest influence, the League must revisit its message and make clear to people that we advocate for their values, beliefs and issues. The League is viewed as an impartial source of information and as such has credibility in the community. Davis believes that the League is a powerful tool to make progress in increasing public awareness and knowledge. In his words, "The League must be the conscience of the state."

Be sure to review Davis' presentation materials at www.lwvpx.org, where you will find fascinating, detailed results of his recent studies.

Directory Updates

Lynn Baker

Thank you, Members!

Debbie Kaye

Membership Committee

I want to appreciate you and all you do. Over one third of you give your time and talent to our League, helping it to thrive. Members do so in such a variety of ways. You help with mailings; greet guests and other members at general meetings; interview our legislators as the session begins; follow current, local issues with the Action committee; educate voters in the community through work on the Voters Guide and with Speakers Bureau; participate in studies, and share your skills and interests in many additional areas.

As we move forward, it is important that our League continue to promote the non-partisan political education of our community and help involve citizens in good government. Do you belong to other organizations that would welcome League members discussing voting process, good government, or current issues? Would your work colleagues appreciate an election season Speakers Bureau presentation? We will have an election in May. Please contact Heather Drake in our office to pursue these opportunities. Remember to bring friends and colleagues to general meetings and other League-sponsored events; share the wealth.

New Member

Martha Simpson

Public School Districts in the City of Portland: Equity, Governance and Process

Discussion & Consensus Questions: Please bring this page to your Unit Meeting!

Question 1

Discussion question:

What are the basic obligations of a public education system? What are the issues to be considered when advocating for an equitable public education?

Consensus question:

One of the obligations of public education is to distribute its services in an equitable way so that all students with the same needs have access to comparable services regardless of circumstances such as income, race/ethnicity, geographical location, or family background.

- Agree with the statement.
- Don't agree with the statement.
- Agree in principle but prefer the following wording:

Question 2

Discussion question:

Students have different needs, yet all students need a basic education. Should all schools have the same offerings, or should schools be able to offer differing choices? Are there enough outside opportunities that schools can concentrate on core subjects? Do some students need vocational training rather than a college-bound focus? How do you balance autonomy vs. consistency? Is individual choice more important than equity of opportunity?

Consensus question:

Do you agree with one or more of these statements? (Mark all that apply.)

- All schools at the same grade levels should provide the same core curriculum.
- All schools should be able to choose what to offer

students, based on student needs and available resources.

All schools should have a core curriculum, with room for courses based on student interest and available resources, including a strong mix of off-site and on-site vocational programs.

Districts should have some schools or programs that offer a different approach or focus for students with different learning needs.

Other (please state)

Question 3

Discussion question:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of K-8 grade configuration compared to 6-8 middle schools?

Consensus question:

Elementary schools should be structured to include K-8 grades.

Elementary schools should be structured to separate K-5 students from middle school (6-8) students.

The best grade organization depends on a number of factors, and a determination of structure for all schools should not be a part of our position.

Other (please state)

Question 4

Discussion question:

In Portland Public Schools 1J, transfers are being curtailed, in order to give equal services to all high schools. Without a sufficient number of students, this is not possible. What would be important reasons for allowing a more flexible choice policy and what might be lost?

Consensus question:

- _____ Schools should adhere to set boundaries, with few exceptions, to be able to give all students a consistent and broad spectrum of classes.
- _____ Schools should allow students to transfer at will, to enable them to have a choice of classes.
- _____ Schools should allow exceptions to be made to a neighborhood school boundary policy, based on educational or medical criteria.
- _____ Other (please state)

Question 5

Discussion question:

Currently in all Portland-area districts, schools are allowed to raise funds to purchase extras the existing budget does not cover. The Foundation takes 1/3 of most funds to grant less wealthy schools, but there are exceptions. What should school districts do to ensure equitable sharing and transparent accounting for privately raised funds?

Consensus question:

- _____ School districts should allow any amount of privately raised funds to be used in any way schools see fit.
- _____ School districts should not allow private funds to be raised for individual schools since some schools can raise more funds than others.
- _____ Schools should allow private funds to be raised, but shared in an equitable and transparent manner.
- _____ Other (please state)

Question 6

Discussion question:

Student populations increase and decrease over time. Building closures and boundary changes affect students, families, neighborhoods, and communities. What are districts' obligations with regard to their land holdings and buildings not needed for current enrollment? What obligations do districts have to inform and involve the public in their building and land use decisions?

Consensus question:

Do you agree with one or more of these statements? (Mark all that apply.)

- _____ School districts should keep all surplus land and buildings for future use, especially in urban areas where future building sites are scarce, and budget enough each year to maintain them, even if it reduces resources available for current services.
- _____ School districts have an obligation to maximize all resources by buying and selling school land whenever needed to accommodate current student needs, with less concern for unknown future needs.
- _____ District plans for land sales and use should be publicly announced with adequate information and opportunity for public discussion and participation in decision-making.
- _____ Other (please state)

Calendar

February 2011							March 2011						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5			1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28						27	28	29	30	31		

<p>2: Exec Committee 12:00 pm, Room 520</p> <p>7: Membership Comm. 2:00 pm, Room 520</p> <p>8: General Meeting 7:00 pm, Mult. Bldg.</p> <p>12: Meet Your Newly Elected Officials 9:30 am, Metro</p> <p>18: Voter Deadline</p> <p>21: Board Meeting 1:00 pm, Room 433</p> <p>22: Office Closed</p> <p>25: Action 1:00 pm, Room 433</p>	<p>2: Exec Committee 12:00 pm, Room 520</p> <p>8: General Meeting 7:00 pm, Mult. Bldg.</p> <p>18: Voter Deadline</p> <p>21: Board Meeting 1:00 pm, Room 433</p> <p>22: Office Closed</p> <p>24-25: Office Closed</p> <p>25: Action 1:00 pm, Room 433</p>
---	---

Calendar Location Key:

Room 520 and **Room 433** are located at our office building: Board of Trade Building, 310 SW 4th Avenue, Portland (4th Avenue between Stark and Oak Streets)

The **Mult. Bldg.** is located at 501 SE Hawthorne Boulevard. The Board Room is located on the first floor.

The **Metro** Regional Center is located at 600 NE Grand Avenue. Council Chambers are located on the third floor.

February Unit Meetings
<p>Education Study Consensus</p> <p>Unit #1-Southwest-Evening Monday, February 28, 7 pm <u>Leader:</u> Ann Mulrone <u>Host:</u> Ann Mulrone</p> <p>Unit #2-Southeast Monday, February 28, 10 am <u>Leaders:</u> Paulette Meyer AND Beth Johnson <u>Host:</u> Beth Johnson</p> <p>Unit #4—North/Northeast Thursday, February 17, 1 pm <u>Leader:</u> Bev Wilson <u>Host:</u> Bev Wilson</p> <p>Unit #5—Terwilliger Plaza Monday, February 14, 3 pm <u>Leader:</u> Jeanne Steed <u>No Host:</u> Convene at Terwilliger Plaza Auditorium A, 2545 SW Terwilliger Blvd</p> <p>Unit #6 Southwest/Northwest Hills Friday, February 18, 9:30 am <u>Leader:</u> Mary Hepokoski <u>Host:</u> Carol Wilson</p> <p>Unit #7—Vermont Hills Monday, February 14, 9:30 am <u>Leader:</u> Jeanne Steed <u>Host:</u> Donna Pregill</p> <p>Unit #8—Online <u>Leader:</u> Kathleen Hersh <u>Location:</u> http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LWVPDXVirtualUnit/</p>



The League of Women of Voters® of Portland

310 SW 4th Avenue, Suite 520
Portland, OR 97204-2310

Phone/Fax: 503-228-1675
Email: info@lwvpx.org
Web: www.lwvpx.org

Non profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Portland, OR
Permit #605

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Help Us Make Democracy Work! Ask a Friend to Join the League!

Return this coupon with your dues to: **LWV Portland, PO Box 3491, Portland, OR 97208.** Please make checks payable to **LWV Portland.**

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Dues Levels

- _____ Single --- \$70.00
- _____ Household --- \$105.00
(2 people at same address)
- _____ Limited Income --- \$43.60
- _____ Student --- \$25.00