



SUMMARY: EDUCATION 2013 OREGON VALUES & BELIEFS STUDY

Project Background: This memo presents summary points related to education from the 2013 Oregon Values & Beliefs study. The summary draws from three surveys conducted in April and May 2013. Final sample sizes were 3971 respondents for Survey #1, 1958 for Survey #2, and 1865 for Survey #3. The questionnaires and findings are available at www.oregonvaluesproject.org.

DHM Research and PolicyInteractive Research designed and conducted the surveys using telephone and online formats to aid accessibility and help obtain a representative sample. Enough interviews were completed in five geographic regions (Central, Eastern, Portland Metro, Southern, and Willamette) to permit statistically reliable analysis at the regional level. The research design used quotas and statistical weighting based on the U.S. Census to ensure representativeness within regions by age, gender, and income. The regions were then weighted proportionally by population per the U.S. Census to yield statewide results.

This study stands out from others in that, when asking questions about policy priorities with cost implications, we informed respondents that rating an item as "important" or "desirable" meant willingness to support some increase in taxes or reallocation of funds from other public services. The visual surveys used \$ symbols to emphasize the real-world implications of policy preferences.

Another distinctive feature of the study is that focal topics recur across the three surveys in a variety of question forms and contexts. High-quality research uses this "test-retest" or "triangulation" method to improve confidence in response validity.

This summary of key findings, observations and conclusions reflects the judgment of the research partners and not necessarily the views of the sponsoring organizations.

Findings

1. Out of a list of 20 public service priorities presented (not limited to education), **K-12 education services** received the highest very/somewhat important rating (81%). This was the only item on the list of 20 where very important topped fifty percent, at 58%. The question included implications for additional tax support or funding reallocation from other services (\$1.8).
2. **Education funding** was the second-most frequently volunteered item that residents would like both their local (8%) and state (11%) government officials to do something about, ranking just behind unemployment (\$1.4-5).
3. When combining very/somewhat important ratings for education-related priorities, **K-12 education services** (81%) outperformed **community colleges** (68%) and **vocational & technical training/retraining** (61%) as a service for which Oregonians would be willing to pay additional tax dollars (\$1.8-10).
4. Almost two-thirds (63%) of Oregonians consider it desirable that **K-12 education will be fundamentally different involving new classroom**



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atmospheres and teaching techniques. Just over half (54%) of Oregonians think that is likely to occur (S3.19).

5. Ninety percent (90%) of Oregonians believe that **parents should take greater responsibility and be more involved in their children's learning**, with a strong majority (76%) saying that's very desirable (S3.38).
6. Fifty percent of (50%) Oregonians believe that **traditional school facilities will increasingly lose relevancy** because of changing cultural needs and technology offerings (S3.35).
7. Meanwhile, nearly half (46%) of Oregonians find it desirable that **education increasingly move outside the classroom toward community mentoring and business apprenticeships**. By contrast, just over one-third of respondents (36%) feel this is a probable outcome for education (S2.19).
8. Nearly nine in ten (88%) Oregonians believe that school should substantially improve student knowledge of **money management and household finance**, while just over one-quarter (26%) indicate this is likely to occur in the next ten years (S3.36).
9. Similarly, more than eight in ten (83%) Oregonians believe that students should **better learn the lessons of citizenship, work and family**, but only two in ten (21%) think this is likely to happen (S3.37).
10. Presented with six possible actions that would support a tax increase or funding reallocation to areas within education, Oregonians found each action strongly/somewhat desirable at a rate higher than 50%. The most desirable actions included **make higher education more accessible by reducing the cost of tuition** (76%), **expand engineering and technical education** (72%), and **increase workforce training** (71%) (S3.39-44).

Observations and Conclusions

Education and education funding are top-of-mind issues for Oregonians. They place strong emphasis on general K-12 education services and making higher education more accessible by reducing the cost of tuition.

When presented with a set of possible future developments in the Oregon education system, Oregonians express high desirability for greater parental involvement, improved student knowledge of money management and household finances, and a better understanding of the lessons of citizenship, work, and family. While residents are not confident that these improvements will come to pass, they do foresee that schools will become fundamentally different places in 10 years, involving new classroom atmospheres and teaching techniques.