

Dear Parent:

During the next few weeks we will explore the 2004 presidential election. The curriculum we are using is guided by materials compiled by Classroom Law Project. I am pleased that the focus of the curriculum is on what it takes to be an informed voter, not on finger pointing in the direction of the candidates.

The curriculum incorporates use of community leaders. As the election draws nearer, there will be a hearing in class in which all students will participate. During the hearing all students will "testify" before a "legislative committee" made up of community leaders. Students will deliver prepared comments about what it means to be an informed voter.

On Thursday, October 28, a small group of pre-selected students will have the honor of representing the class by participating in a Youth Summit at Portland State University. Selection criteria for students attending the Summit will include assessing homework assignments, class participation, and peer review that will occur over the course of this unit. The focus of the Summit is on being an informed voter and is also organized by Classroom Law Project. Approximately 150 middle and high school students from around the state will gather for this event. It will include more hearings as well as a townhall with civic leaders. Students will also have the opportunity to vote on their choice for president.

Please encourage your child to talk about election issues. Share your own thoughts about being an informed voter in this election year. We know that the strength of our democracy depends on participation of its citizens. The goal of this unit is to help students become active and informed citizens. Your support and encouragement is appreciated.

Be listening for more details from your child. Thank you.

Sincerely,