

N.H. schools may join Bono's ONE poverty program

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PORTSMOUTH — Classrooms throughout the state could soon become ONE with real world issues of extreme poverty and disease in Africa.

The state Board of Education will hear a proposal today from representatives of ONE, a national grassroots effort of more than 2 million people — co-founded by U2 lead singer Bono — designed to raise awareness about the issues facing Africa. The plan is to integrate some of the components of the organization into classrooms throughout the state and, potentially, the country.

Board Chairman John Lyons, a Portsmouth resident and active ONE member, came up with the idea and met with representatives in Washington, D.C. to discuss it.

Both sides felt the students of New Hampshire and the organization stand to benefit greatly.

“This is a marriage made in heaven,” said Lyons. “The breadth and depth that I see this partnership between students of America and what ONE is trying to do is limitless. It’s very exciting.”

The pilot program would begin in select middle and high schools in the state and expand, should the board approve.

Geography, culture, language, science, medicine and economics are just some of the subjects that stand to get bolstered by the program, according to Lyons.

Matthew Bartlett, a Nashua native who works for ONE in the capital, said the organization became widely known during the 2008 presidential campaign, where both parties pledged support to the cause. Since then, campaigns have begun at colleges and universities throughout the country.

“Sporadically, we’re getting more and more high school students who really have interest in this,” said Bartlett. “Now we’re looking to New Hampshire and we’re very excited about the potential.”

It is unclear exactly how it would be worked into the curriculum, but Lyons said it is important to give teachers flexibility.

He is convinced the real world application will enhance student learning and expose them to lessons that will help them compete in the global economy.

“The state board is committed to creating as many real world opportunities as we can,” said Lyons.

“New Hampshire is the right size to be an incubator for all these new programs.”