

Education Update



Rob's Blog

Message from Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction Rob Saxton

We recently released graduation rates for Oregon schools, and as you are likely aware, there were two changes this year that impacted our numbers. These changes were needed to ensure our graduation rates provided a clear, accurate, and complete picture of how many students our schools are helping to reach this important milestone. The changes also make our rates more comparable across districts and with other states, allowing for a more apples-to-apples comparison than we have had in previous years.

The first change relates to students who receive modified diplomas. In previous years, these students were counted as high school completers, but not as graduates. However, after additional conversations with the U.S. Department of Education regarding the requirements for our modified diploma (which are substantially similar to our regular diploma requirements) we determined that modified diplomas could be counted as a standard diploma and could be included as graduates in our calculations. This change alone caused an increase of approximately 2% to our statewide 4-year cohort graduation rates. Many other states already included modified diplomas in their graduation rates, so this change not only gives students and schools credit for the hard work that goes into completing this diploma, but provides a more accurate comparison to graduation rates across the country.

The second change relates to how we count students enrolled in 5th year programs who have completed all requirements for a diploma. An increasing number of districts are offering 5th year programs which allow students to earn college credits while still enrolled in high school. We know that access to college coursework and credit earning while in high school can have a significant impact on increasing college-going and completion rates particularly for first generation students. We have a number of districts that have seen great success with these types of programs. However, in the past, students who stayed on to participate in these programs were not included in the school's cohort rates as graduates until their diplomas were awarded, which made accurate comparisons across districts challenging. Starting with this year's report, we have included these students as graduates in the cohort rates provided they have met all state and local graduation requirements, even if the diploma has not yet been awarded. This change caused an additional statewide increase of approximately 2%, in the 4-year cohort graduation rates.

With these two changes, our statewide 4-year cohort graduation rate was 72%. Without the changes, our rate would have been approximately 68%. Clearly we have a great deal of work left to do but we are starting to make gains both in terms of providing a more complete and accurate picture of who our graduates are and in terms of moving the dial on the numbers overall.

Thank you for all you do to improve the opportunities and outcomes for Oregon students,

Steps to Success

Articles and Resources Relating to the Common Core, the Oregon Diploma, the Essential Skills, and More...

Busting Myths about Oregon Schools

In this [Oregonian Guest Opinion](#), John Tapogna, President of ECONorthwest, does some mythbusting on Oregon schools and how they compare to other states.

Future Ready Regional Summit

Please consider taking the [pledge](#) and [registering your district leadership team](#) to participate in the free Future Ready regional summit, February 17-18, 2015 in Vancouver, Washington. This summit is being offered by the Alliance for Excellent Education in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education. The summits are being offered to a limited number of district teams on a first come-first served basis.

Future Ready is a new effort to maximize digital learning opportunities and help school districts move quickly toward preparing students for success in college, a career, and citizenship. Please contact [Sara Hall](#) at 410-279-3368 for additional questions about the summit.

Closing the Gap Awards

[College For Every Student](#) (CFES) has received funding to support five low-income schools for [Closing the Gap](#) awards, a three-year program that will help underserved students become college and career ready. Five schools will be selected for Closing the Gap awards as part of our commitment to help one million more low-income students attain college degrees by 2025. Eligible middle and/or high schools are encouraged to [apply](#) before the deadline of March 1, 2015. Please contact [Tara Smith](#) at 518-963-4500 for additional information.

Nike College and Career Readiness Program

Nike is excited to announce the Nike School Innovation Fund (NSIF) College and Career Readiness Program. If your school is interested in partnering with NSIF to further prepare all students for success in high school and beyond, and to address Oregon's opportunity gap, we invite you to [apply by February 18, 2015](#). Fifty public high schools will be selected for participation by March 6, 2015 based on



school readiness and support from both school and district leadership. The selected Oregon high schools will receive program grants to accelerate career and college readiness for Oregon's students. In addition to program funding, ten of the 50 NSIF partner schools will be paired with Nike leaders as strategic partners to support school-based innovation and programming that directly impacts students.

If you would like to apply, sign up your school [here](#). You will be asked to complete six short questions and provide achievement compact data for your school by February 18, 2015. Please contact [Vanessa Wilkins](#) for additional information.

Teacher Talk

Articles and Resources Relating to Curriculum, Instruction, Special Programs, and More...

e-Rate Program

The Federal Communication Commission's e-Rate program provides discounts to assist schools in obtaining affordable Internet access. Eligibility is determined by a school or district's percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced cost lunches through the National School Lunch Program.

2015 has brought unprecedented change and opportunity to the e-Rate program. The most exciting change is the addition of dedicated funding for Category 2 equipment. Money saved with discounted equipment can then be used to invest in service improvements such as fiber installations, workstation upgrades, training, and more. You can find more information by watching the [2015 training video](#). Please contact [Sabrina Carson](#) if you have any questions.

Early Warning Systems Guide

To reverse the trend of dropouts in the US, many districts and organizations are turning to early warning systems (EWS) that signal whether a student is at risk of not graduating from high school. While some research exists about establishing these systems and creating indicators, there is less information about actual implementation strategies that are being used across the country. *A Practitioner's Guide to Implementing Early Warning Systems*, a new publication from [Regional Educational Laboratory \(REL\) Northwest](#), helps fill this gap by summarizing the experience and recommendations of EWS users throughout the US. This guide covers how to establish and train a team to use the EWS, identify accurate indicators, develop usable indicator reports, map interventions in response to student needs, and evaluate student progress. [The guide is available](#) through the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) website. For additional information, please contact [Richard Melo](#) at 503-275-9610.

Workshop Facilitators

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) will begin the application process for selecting several new ODE/New Teacher Center Mentor Workshop facilitators soon. The Oregon Mentoring Program offers several professional learning opportunities to support new and experienced mentors around the state. The demand for these workshops continues to grow and new facilitators are needed to present the sessions throughout the year. The application, timeline, and applicant criteria will be posted soon. Please monitor the [Oregon Mentor Program website](#) for the application. If you have any questions, please contact [Tanya Frisendahl](#) at 503-947-5754.

Instructional Materials Evaluation

The Oregon Department of Education is looking for nominations of teachers, curriculum specialists, and other experienced professionals who have interest and expertise in Mathematics to participate in the evaluation for the 2015 adoption of Mathematics instructional materials. Those individuals chosen to participate on the committee will receive travel reimbursements and a stipend. Please [click here](#) to nominate qualified teachers today. If you have additional questions, please contact Vanessa Clark at 503-947-5746.

Student Wellness

Articles and Resources on Student Health, Wellness, Safety, and More...

Summer Meals for Children and Teens

Please partner with the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to “Fuel Oregon’s Future” during the summer months by participating in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). This program was created to fill the gap for families who may not be able to afford to give their children nutritious meals during the summer months when school is not in session.



ODE Child Nutrition Program (CNP) contracts with sponsors to feed children during the summer months. Nationally, more than 26 million children eat school lunch daily when school is in session, and about half

receive meals free or at a reduced price. Last year, Oregon’s 134 summer food sponsors served 2,066,023 meals at 794 sites. Every summer, schools play a vital role in helping to feed our children.

ODE encourages school districts to:

- Operate the Summer Food Service Program from the first day of summer vacation to the last;
- Add a meal or snack service if the district currently participates and is just serving lunch;
- Incorporate enrichment into the SFSP program;
- Offer programs in all low-income schools, especially priority and focus schools; and
- Advertise the availability of this valuable program so families and children can find sites in the summer.

Additional information about the Summer Food Service Program is available [here](#).



SFSP Training:

All sponsors, new and returning, are required to attend training. The 2015 trainings are located on the [2015 SFSP Annual Training web page](#) and will be available in March.

SFSP Applications:

Application information is provided to eligible sponsors and is due by **April 15, 2015**. The application must be approved by ODE CNP prior to program operation. Applications that are not complete and approved by June 15, 2015, cannot be reimbursed for meals.

For more information on the 2015 training registration, please contact [Dustin Melton](#) at (503) 947-5901.

Legal Corner

Articles and Resources on Rules, Statutes, Policy, Numbered Memos, and More...

January 2015 State Board Actions

- Adopted Lincoln County School District Supplemental Plan
- Adopted December 2014 Minutes
- Adopted State Library Standards
- Adopted Instructional Materials Criteria for 2014 Science Standards (NGSS)
- Adopted State Instructional Material Adoption Schedule for Mathematics
- Adopted Smarter Balanced Achievement Levels
- Adopted Instructional Time Definition / OAR 581-022-0102
- Adopted Required Instructional Time / OAR 581-022-1620
- Adopted Credit Options / OAR 581-022-1131



Title IX Guidance

On December 1, 2014 the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) released a significant guidance document concerning the legality of single-sex elementary and secondary classes and extracurricular activities offered by schools and districts under the Department's regulations implementing Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in federally funded education programs and activities. This guidance describes regulations issued to authorize schools to offer single sex classes only under certain circumstances. The Department's Title IX regulations identify the following categories for which a recipient may intentionally separate students by sex:

- Contact sports in physical education.
- Classes or portions of classes in elementary and secondary schools that deal primarily with human sexuality.
- Nonvocational classes and extracurricular activities within a coeducational, nonvocational elementary or secondary school if certain criteria are met. (The criteria to be met are discussed at length in the document, and require specific objectives, justification, documentation, and assessment at a minimum of every 2 years.)

The document is located in the [OCR Reading Room under Documents – Title IX](#). If you have questions concerning single-sex classes or other Title IX issues, they can be addressed to [Karin Moscon](#), Title IX Coordinator.

Title IX Conference

The first annual Title IX Basics and Beyond Conference will be held March 18-19, 2015 at Chemeketa Community College in Salem, Oregon. This conference meets the minimum training requirement for a designated Title IX Coordinator. Featured presenters from Oregon and Washington include Tim Sell and Amy Klosterman, Seattle Regional Office of Civil Rights, and Jackie Sandmeyer, Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force. Please contact [Karin Moscon](#) for more information.

Mentoring Programs

The [Oregon Mentoring Program Standards](#), adopted in 2014, describe the structures and functions, processes, and effective practices necessary for a quality mentoring program. An essential element of a mentoring program is a professional mentor who understands and utilizes the skills, strategies, and tools necessary for the continuous development of teachers and administrators. Please reference [OARs 581-018-0130 through 581-018-0151](#) for rules specific to the mentoring program. If you have any questions, please contact [Tanya Frisendahl](#) at 503-947-5754.

Upcoming Opportunities

Articles and Resources on Scholarships, Grants, Professional Development, and More...

Oregon's History Teacher of the Year

The 2015 Gilder Lehrman National History Teacher of the Year Award is open to K-6 teachers, with the deadline for nominations extended to February 15, 2015. Once nominated, teachers have until March 15, 2015 to submit their application and supporting materials. The National History Teacher of the Year Award recognizes outstanding K-12 American history teachers across the country. [Click here](#) to nominate a teacher. Additional information about the program can be found [here](#).

Selma Speech and Essay Contest

Calling all high school students: Martin Luther King, Jr. used his words to change history. How will you use yours? The National Liberty Museum's *Selma* Speech & Essay Contest is open to U.S. High School students ages 14-18 who are enrolled in a public, private, or parochial high school or home study program in the United States and its territories. After viewing Paramount Pictures film SELMA, contestants will respond to the Contest topic with an original 500-700 word essay and videotaped speech reading of their essay. The deadline for this contest is February 15, 2015. For additional information, [click here](#).

School Security Grant Program

Due to the incredible success of its 2014 School Security In-Kind Grant program, *Video Insight* – a leading developer of enterprise IP video surveillance software – has increased their program fourfold for 2015 and will donate \$1 million in grants to underfunded school systems across the US. Each grant recipient will receive Video Insight Video Management Software (VMS) licenses, 16 IP video surveillance cameras, 1 video encoder that includes VMS software licenses, and 10 years of software upgrades. For detailed information on how to apply for the 2015 Video Insight School Security In-Kind Grant program, please [click here](#) or call (713) 621-9779.

Youth Development Council Grants

The Oregon Youth Development Council, administered by the Youth Development Division within the Department of Education, is responsible for developing state policy and funding community based efforts that support Opportunity Youth and Priority Youth. Opportunity Youth are youth ages 16-20 who are disconnected from the education system and the labor market. Priority Youth are youth ages 6-15 who are at risk of disconnecting from the education system, who are already disconnected from the system, or are at risk of being unable to transition successfully to the labor force. The Youth Development Council is issuing a request for applications for the following grant funds for the 2015-2017 biennium:

[The Youth and Community](#)

[The Youth and Innovation](#)

[The Youth and Gangs](#)

To receive future email from the Youth Development Council, sign up for the listserv [here](#). For additional information, please contact [Brenda Brooks](#) at (503) 378-5129.