Report on Oregon Student Transition Issues in Grades 11 -14

OEIB Best Practices and Student Transitions Subcommittee

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OEIB is charged with the responsibility to look across the entire pre-K to 20 enterprise and to make sure we're doing everything possible to leverage where we can to increase the chances for a seamless experience for students. What follows are some grim realities that could be turned into opportunities to increase Oregon students completing high school and pursuing post-secondary education.

UNDER-MAXIMIZED AND UNDER-FUNDED SENIOR YEAR

- Currently large numbers of high school seniors who are on track to graduate are taking less than a full year of courses during their senior year. Only required courses are in English and Government.
- Some students and their families view this as a well-deserved break before college starts.
- Some high schools cite a lack of fiscal resources limiting their ability to offer enough courses for seniors.
- Some high school seniors register for "lock out" for up to 2 periods a day (60% at one Oregon high school).
- Given that Oregon does not require a 4th year of Math, many students have rusty math skills when they take their college placement tests.

PLACEMENT TEST REALITIES

- High school students often are unaware that they are not ready for college-level courses until they fail college placement tests and are assigned to remedial courses.
- Many students take placement tests under less than ideal situations (first week in college), without sufficient focus and preparation, and without knowing they can retake the test.
- Data from a recent study of high school students enrolled in community colleges in 2011 showed that 69% were enrolled in at least one Developmental Education class
- Currently Oregon has multiple placement tests in use by community colleges and 4 year institutions (ACT, SAT, Accuplacer and COMPASS) and there appear to be arbitrary cut scores in place across institutions.
- Sometimes there are different cut scores within an institution while at least one institution cited its lack of institutional resources as the rationale for the cut score that it sets.
- Nationally, as well as in Oregon, students who, by virtue of their placement test scores, are enrolled in Developmental (Remedial) Education courses, often fail to persist in college and frequently never complete even a two year degree.
- Nationally, the annual cost of remedial education is estimated to be around $2.3 billiion.

WHAT COULD THE OEIB CONSIDER AS POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Use the 11th grade results of SBAC or other College Readiness measures to:
    - Automatically enroll seniors scoring college and career ready in the next level of advanced coursework and/or college bearing credit courses and waive the placement test requirement if they pass the courses during their senior year
    - Connect students ready for postsecondary coursework with Oregon colleges and better fund them to concurrently enroll in college bear credits while in high school
    - Automatically enroll seniors who score less than college or career ready in remedial classes during the senior year or summer that are taken in lieu of electives (would mean that more students would take a 4th year of Math and would require additional funding for high schools)
    - Invest in the redesign of developmental classes for both high school students and college students that are truly engaging and tap into the interests of students rather than require additional drill and practice courses
    - Strategically invest in those programs able to redesign developmental education (co-requisites, student success components, module approaches, etc)
    - Incent the most successful faculty (both approved high school instructors and college level instructors) to teach remedial courses at the high school level
    - Provide the names and contact information to colleges for those students who score college and career ready and provide funding for them to concurrently enroll in college bear credits when possible
- Require all seniors to take a College Access and Success Course (would require additional HS funding) and determine what tool (CIS or NAVIANCE or both) should be used to engage students in career and college planning
- Retool the Student Education Plan and Profile required for an Oregon Diploma to maximize annual progress updates and goal setting including the use of SBAC scores for determining college and career readiness.
- Hire HS counselors to keep contact with graduating seniors during the summer following graduation (predicted by some to recapture up to 10% of those who are admitted but don't enroll in the fall)
- Encourage high schools to restrict senior "lockouts" to those taking college classes, parenting students, working over 18 hours a week, or other extenuating circumstances. Principal is the guardian at the gate
- Encourage high schools to tighten requirements for Work Experience credit and require contracts for teaching assistants and limit numbers
- Minimally schedule all seniors in the next level of Math and science as a default
- Place an all out press on maximizing the comprehensive guidance and counseling program (CGC) that each school district in Oregon is expected to have to support students' transitions throughout school, achievement of the diploma requirements, and preparation for post-high school next steps
- Include indicators on the post-secondary Achievement Compacts that track:
    - How many first-time college students enroll in remedial courses
    - How many remedial students successfully complete/pass their remedial courses
    - How many of those students complete college-level courses
    - How many of those students persist year to year
    - How many of those students earn a degree