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## OREGON EDUCATION INVESTMENT BOARD

### Equity and Partnerships Subcommittee

Members: Nichole June Maher; Chair, Gov. John Kitzhaber, Ramon Ramirez  
Julia Brim-Edwards, Mathew Donegan, Samuel Henry, Harriett Adair, Janet Dougherty-Smith

June 4, 2014

8:30am – 10:30am

NorthWest Health Foundation

221 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., #300

Portland, OR 97209

Call-In Number (888) 204-5984

Participant Code: 992939

### AGENDA

- 1.0 Welcome & Review of Agenda**  
Nichole Maher, Sub-committee Chair
- 2.0 Updates on Alignment Activities Among Agencies Who Serve Out-of School Youth**  
Peter Tromba, Oregon Education Investment Board
- 3.0 Update for Supporting Positive and Successful Options for Students**  
Peter Tromba, Oregon Education Investment Board
- 4.0 Draft GED Investment and Policy Recommendation Framework for Out-of School Youth**  
Peter Tromba, Oregon Education Investment Board
- 5.0 Draft GED Strategic Investment Recommendations for Outcomes and Investments Sub-Committee**  
Peter Tromba, Oregon Education Investment Board
- 6.0 Public Testimony**

All meetings of the Oregon Education Investment Board and its subcommittees are open to the public and will conform to Oregon public meetings laws. The upcoming meeting schedule and materials from past meetings are posted [online](#). Staff respectfully requests that you submit 25 collated copies of written materials at the time of your testimony. Persons making presentations including the use of video, DVD, PowerPoint or overhead projection equipment are asked to contact board staff 24 hours prior to the meeting. A request for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for accommodations for people with disabilities should be made to Seth Allen at 503-378-8213 or by email at [Seth.Allen@state.or.us](mailto:Seth.Allen@state.or.us). Requests for accommodation should be made at least 48 hours in advance.

Rev. 4: 05/29/14

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## Draft GED Investment & Policy Recommendation Framework for Out-of-School Youth

### Introduction

Oregon's 40-40-20 goal, adopted into law in 2011, has become shorthand for the efforts of the Legislature, Governor, the OEIB, and other state education boards, commissions, and agencies to significantly improve the education achievement levels and prosperity of Oregonians by 2025. The 40-40-20 goal intends to provide a clear target – a “North Star” aligned with Oregonians’ economic, civic, and social aspirations -- against which to generally gauge the state’s educational progress. The OEIB and Governor are united in the belief that in order for the 40-40-20 goal to be meaningful, it must be accompanied by the clear understanding that increased levels of attainment of diplomas, degrees and certificates must be achieved equitably -- across populations and across regions of the state.

Fundamentally, 40-40-20 says that *every Oregonian* is capable of earning at least a high school diploma or the equivalent thereof, and must have the opportunity to enter into the workforce in a meaningful way. Oregon’s youth who are not represented in the “traditional” pipeline -- either because they have dropped out, are being served in an alternative setting, or are incarcerated -- must be considered as part of the “each and every” to whom our goal applies. In fact, the success of these youth is fundamental to the overall achievement of the 40-40-20 goal.

In the years leading up to 2025, we cannot afford to ignore our youth who have (or are at risk for) dropping out or being pushed out of the pipeline, but rather must seize the opportunity these youth represent for improving our outcomes in both the short and long term. In Oregon and across the country, these out of school youth are described as Opportunity Youth to represent their potential and to identify students from a strength based perspective. Opportunity Youth include:

- Young high school dropouts (ages 16-18)
- Older high school dropouts (ages 19-24)
- Youth with high school diploma or GED, disconnected from postsecondary education, and unable to gain foothold in the labor market (ages 19-24)

Instead of the traditional pipeline, a shoreline approach will better serve their needs. Out-of-school youth need multiple access point and multiple pathways, with no wrong door.

### Vision

The new GED is an opportunity for the state to rethink, redesign, and rebrand an option that has declined in value over time. The new GED offers a second chance for many people and institutions:

- Adults who dropped out of high school and hope to advance to college or career;
- The state of Oregon as a whole, which can finally make the institutional and programmatic changes that would support those adults;

- And the GED itself. If students who earn the new GED credential succeed in college and career, they will rehabilitate the credential's image.

With the new exam, Oregon will have access to a wealth of data about GED test preparation centers and student performance that can help the state target support toward successful programs and replicate their techniques in different communities. It also will be able to support educational opportunities for communities of color and immigrant communities in a culturally responsive manner.

## **Purpose and Scope**

The areas addressed in these recommendations fall, in many cases, within the charges of other agencies, boards and workgroups. The intention of the OEIB Equity & Partnerships Subcommittee is not to complicate or replicate these charges, but rather to provide high-level direction and alignment between those efforts. The 2013 Secretary of State Audit Report: "Opportunities to Increase Adult GEDs In Support of 40-40-20 Education Plan and the 2014 Portland City Club Report: "A Second Chance for Oregon, High School Dropouts and the GED" have both produced important recommendations outlined below. The three proposed recommendations align with both reports.

### State Audit Report Recommendations:

- CCWD work with the State Board of Education, the OEIB, and the community colleges to develop a more detailed strategy for Oregonians without a high school degree.
- Continued collaboration between high schools, community colleges, and other agencies to help ensure clients needs a GED are referred to local programs
- Work with CCWD to facilitate the sharing of successful marketing and retention practices among community colleges
- Increase public awareness of the value of obtaining a GED credential
- Evaluate the impact of the new GED

### Portland City Club Report Recommendations:

- The Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB) should launch a public outreach program that targets diverse communities and stakeholders across the state and helps them develop a clear understanding of the 2014 GED program.
- Oregon's chief education officer should develop and implement a coordinated funding and strategic framework across departments for GED preparation, testing, soft-skill development programs and related wraparound services.
- The Legislature should allocate dedicated funding to subsidize GED testing for qualified students with demonstrable need.
- Oregon's public universities should update their admissions criteria to allow admissions for qualified recipients of the 2014 revision of the GED.
- Officials should collect information about the GED as well as the college and career performance of people after they earn it, and report back to Oregonians regularly. (This recommendation has several parts that are detailed in the full report.)
- The governor should direct the Department of Administrative Services to prepare an annual report that contains a clear accounting of state funds that are allocated for GED test preparation, testing and related support services.

- Officials should take a fresh look at alternatives to the GED in a few years.
- The Oregon Speaker of the House and Senate President should direct the Office of Legislative Counsel to conduct a review of applicable laws and administrative rules that refer to the GED. Counsel should suggest revisions to treat the HiSET, TASC and any other approved GED alternative in other states as equivalent to the GED for purposes of law, post-secondary education, public services and benefits.

## Core Beliefs Framing Recommendations

All policy initiatives are framed by the beliefs outlined in the OEIB Equity lens and incorporate the following vision: to advise and support the building, implementation and investment in a unified public education system in Oregon that meets the diverse learning needs of every pre-K through postsecondary student and provides boundless opportunities that support success; ensuring a 100 percent high school graduation rate by 2025 and reaching the 40-40-20 goal. By utilizing an equity lens, the OEIB aims to provide a common vocabulary and protocol for resource allocation and evaluating strategic investments. The lens articulates a way to critically examine present and proposed practices, the first step of which is to identify the racial/ethnic data with respect to Opportunity Youth as defined above.

### Graduation and Dropout

#### Oregon Graduation Rate by Race, 2013-2014

Average = 75%  
 Asian = 83%  
 White = 78%  
 Multi-Racial = 76%  
 Native Pacific = 71%  
 Native Amer/Alaska = 60%  
 Black = 62%  
 Hispanic = 65%

### Incarceration

#### 2013 Oregon Department of Corrections, Inmate Demographics

Race	% of Total Population	% of Incarcerated Population
White	78.1%	73.6%
Hispanic	12%	13.3%
Black	2%	9.4%
Native Amer	1.8%	2.5%

In addition, Youth of color comprise 25% of Oregon’s youth population but represent 36% of youth referrals to OYA and 36% of youth indicted under Measure 11.

## Employment

2011 Oregon Unemployment Rate (Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Asian 5.8%

White 9.1%

Hispanic/Latino 13.5%

Black/African American 21.3%

Most GED test-takers are people who have otherwise become disengaged from the educational system. The GED Testing Service releases an annual statistical report about GED test-takers nationwide and by state. In terms of race and ethnicity, whites are underrepresented. Sixty-six percent of test-takers are white, though 88 percent of Oregonians are. Oregonians of Asian descent also are underrepresented. Correspondingly, African American, Hispanic and Native American Oregonians are overrepresented.

## Policy and Investment Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Defray the cost of GED test for Opportunity Youth by subsidizing the cost for those with demonstrable need.

Recommendation 2: Identify successful organizations who provide wrap-around services and strategically invest and partner with them to either begin providing or continue to provide GED Preparation for Opportunity Youth. This funding would not be through a standard RFP process but rather through an RFQ process that articulates required capacities in potential funded organizations.

Recommendation 3: Coordinate funding and strategic alignment across agencies and institutions for GED preparation, testing, soft-skill development programs, data collection and related wraparound services. This includes a public outreach that would target diverse communities and stakeholders across the state and helps them develop a clear understanding of the 2014 GED program.

The Outcomes and Investments sub-committee of the OEIB is calling for descriptions of proposed strategic investments between May and July of 2014. Therefore, recommendations 1 and 2 have been expanded and analyzed using the framework supplied by this sub-committee and for proposal in August 2014.



OUTCOMES & INVESTMENTS SUBCOMITTEE

2015-17 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS **TEMPLATE**

PART 1 – Identify Your Highest Priority Strategies (no more than 8 pages)

**Strategy 1: Defraying the cost of GED training and testing for Opportunity Youth by subsidizing the cost for those with demonstrable need.**

**Opportunity Youth are defined as: young high school dropouts (ages 16-18); older high school dropouts (ages 19-24); or youth with high school diploma or GED, disconnected from postsecondary education, and unable to gain foothold in the labor market (ages 19-24)**

- (1) How does the strategy align with the OEIB’s 2015-17 Budget Strategies & Priorities? Is the strategy related to repurposing, reallocating or allocating funds differently?

**This strategy aligns with *OEIB’s 2015-17 Budget Strategies & Priorities 1: Coordinated, student-centered education system, from birth through college and career readiness* because it supports out-of-school youth and youth at risk.**

**This is a request for new funding that will be distributed as vouchers directly to students to allow them to choose from approved Oregon GED Training and Testing sites.**

- (2) How will the strategy lead to improvement on the key outcomes identified by the OEIB, such as those identified in Achievement Compact or early learning hub requirements?

**This strategy can improve the percentages mentioned as key outcomes in the Achievement Compacts because they can increase the number of students accessing the GED by provided them the financial means to take the exams.**

**Key Outcome from March 2014 Achievement Compact:**

**The five-year cohort completion rate. This rate is calculated by following students from their first high school enrollment, through five school years. The percentage represents the number of those students who earned a regular, modified, extended, or adult high school diploma, or a GED, during that time period, divided by the total number of those students, adjusted for students who transfer in or out.**

**Key Outcome from Community College Compacts:**

**Adult HS diplomas/GEDs.** The total number of adult high school diplomas as reported to Oregon Community Colleges Data Warehouse for each community college added to the total number of GEDs awarded at each of the GED testing centers associated with the specific community college.

- (3) What measurable difference will the strategy make for children, families & students, specifically those who are underserved or put at risk? By when? What metrics will be used to measure improvement?

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 336,000 adult Oregonians (11 percent) lack a high school diploma or alternative credential. One-quarter of Oregon students fail to complete high school within five years. Unlike the previous exam, people who take the new GED can earn one of two certificates depending on how well they perform. A “GED Score” indicates high school equivalence. A higher “GED Score with Honors” serves as a college and career readiness indicator. The 2014 revision also includes an overhaul of how students interact with the GED and the sorts of information available to students, states and test preparation providers. GED Testing Service chose to offer a more service-oriented experience in order to engage better with students and to offer information and feedback that would not only help them pass the exam but also provide planning tools to assist students as they prepare to pursue further education or career.

**METRICS:**

Please keep in mind that though metrics are important, the GED credential is not an end in itself. Rather, its value lies in what follows and the doors that it opens.

**Potential Measures:**

- Percentage of students enrolled in GED preparation programs/classes, etc
- Percentages of students who pass the GED tests with a “GED Score” indicating high school proficiency and those who earn a “GED Score with Honors” indicating college and career readiness
- Percentages of students who pass and then within the same year, enroll in a post-secondary option
- Percentages of students who complete a post-secondary program

- (4) How does this strategy demonstrate the priorities and values expressed in the OEIB equity lens?

A core belief outlined in the equity lens is that resource allocation demonstrates our priorities and our values and that we demonstrate our priorities and our commitment to rural communities, communities of color, English language learners, and out of school youth in the ways we allocate resources and make educational investments.

**Most GED test-takers are people who have otherwise become disengaged from the educational system. They often are less affluent, come from troubled families, face difficulty finding employment or have had children early in life. The GED Testing Service releases an annual statistical report about GED test-takers nationwide and by state. In 2012, more than 12,000 Oregonians took some or all of the subtests. Overall, they tended to perform well. Seventy-four percent of test-takers completed the entire test, and 84 percent of them passed. That passage rate ranked Oregon 11th among states. Demographically, some patterns emerge among GED test-takers. The majority (59 percent) are male, though females slightly outnumber men in Oregon overall. In terms of race and ethnicity, whites are underrepresented. Sixty-six percent of test-takers are white, though 88 percent of Oregonians are. Oregonians of Asian descent also are underrepresented. Correspondingly, African American, Hispanic and Native American Oregonians are overrepresented.**

(5) What evidence indicates this strategy will result in improvement?

**This strategy will increase access for students to GED training and testing. The financial barrier limits students ability to improve themselves for their next steps in college and career. The population of Opportunity Youth are a key area where the state of Oregon needs to make progress in order to reach the goal of 40/40/20 by 2025 and this strategy directly removes a key barrier for students.**

(6) At various levels of investment (modest, medium, substantial), what will the state be “buying”? What impact will this have on measurable results described above?

**The cost to individual test takers under the new revision is \$155 for the full suite of tests. The GED Testing Service assesses \$120 and the Oregon Department of Education charges a \$35 administrative fee. That is a significant increase over the previous cost to take the paper-based test.\* It also does not include secondary costs for practice tests and other preparation material.**

**To address these costs for Opportunity Youth would be a modest cost to the state.**

(7) What other conditions, supports and/or changes are needed for the strategy to be successful?

**It would behoove us to make the application process for financial assistance a smooth transition so that potential test takers are not daunted by process. We will need to work with entities whose process of proving “demonstrable need” is seamless.**

**A broader and more locally-centered network of community-based providers needs to be created, ideally providers who already have the mission and capacity to serve Opportunity Youth. A related Strategic Investment strategy describes the investment needed to help stand-up these community providers to be Oregon GED Centers. In addition, the state agencies and institutions who currently provide training and testing need to be aligned and to better communicate their programs to local schools and community groups.**

- (8) Are there state or federal policy or activities that could impact costs and/or success of strategy? In what ways?

**Current rules and policies at the Oregon Department of Education, Community College and Workforce Development, and other agencies need to be evaluated for potential barriers. That work is currently underway, lead by the Youth Development Division at ODE.**

### **Strategy 2: Create Community Based GED Training and Testing Centers.**

**Identify and funding successful organizations who provide wrap-around services and enter into partnerships to either begin providing or continue to provide GED Preparation for Opportunity Youth.**

- (1) How does the strategy align with the OEIB's 2015-17 Budget Strategies & Priorities? Is the strategy related to repurposing, reallocating or allocating funds differently?

**This strategy aligns with *OEIB's 2015-17 Focus state investment on achieving key student outcomes - subsection through "Transformational, Innovative and Effective Strategic Investments"* because it will require we create GED preparation with the realization that the test is not the ends in and of itself.**

- (2) How will the strategy lead to improvement on the key outcomes identified by the OEIB, such as those identified in Achievement Compact or early learning hub requirements?

**Preparation for the new GED will foster career and college readiness skills *in addition* to subject matter mastery. People who earn a high school diploma have demonstrated not just subject matter mastery but also other skills and traits that are valued in the workplace and are beneficial in both secondary and post-secondary education. For example, completing four years of high school requires perseverance and in most cases at least some social competencies that enable one to interact well with others.**

**The GED does not measure those soft traits. Indeed, it is structured as a test of knowledge and academic skills, not as an explicit test of soft skills. One can pass the GED in considerably less time than completing high school and without socially interacting with peers, though most students do interact with instructors and peers as they prepare.**

**What this strategy can do is create preparatory classes that do both: demonstrate mastery while developing career and college ready skills so that we don't fall back into the pattern of students who receive their GED and then drop out of community college within their first year.**

- (3) What measurable difference will the strategy make for children, families & students, specifically those who are underserved or put at risk? By when? What metrics will be used to measure improvement?

**The metrics and difference will be the same as those listed in the first strategy**

- (4) How does this strategy demonstrate the priorities and values expressed in the OEIB equity lens?

**A core belief outlined in the equity lens is that that communities, parents, teachers, and community-based organizations have unique and important solutions to improving outcomes for our students and educational systems. Our work will only be successful if we are able to truly partner with the community, engage with respect, authentically listen -- and have the courage to share decision making, control, and resources.**

- (5) What evidence indicates this strategy will result in improvement?

**It is important to offer culturally competent and culturally specific programs that are integrated within an existing and trustworthy environment and support system. Representatives of the Portland Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber testified that in the Latino community, education tends to be a family effort. When we offer services in partnership with organizations who recognize cultural values as important, we are more likely to see success.**

- (6) At various levels of investment (modest, medium, substantial), what will the state be "buying"? What impact will this have on measurable results described above?

**This is a modest investment. The OEIB will submit a Request for Qualifications in order to determine community partners who already have the critical capacities to serve students. This investment will consist of start-up materials and training.**

- (7) What other conditions, supports and/or changes are needed for the strategy to be successful?

**There is a need to partner this initiative with the on-going work at the ODE, the CCWD, alternative schools, community colleges, local HEP programs, and others to discuss how they are changing methods of preparation, so that we can find ways to support their initiatives.**

**A 2006 study funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation suggested that, while there are many reasons students drop out of school, some of the main ones are that they find school boring, they are uninspired or personal, real-life challenges arise. To succeed at engaging such students, a GED preparation program must address the underlying issues that caused the initial disengagement. Generally speaking, however, community colleges find that the wraparound services many GED seekers need to be successful are beyond the scope of what they are able to offer, particularly given their funding constraints. Students must look to other public assistance. A non-profit workforce or community college partner can provide such services. Wraparound services are essential because students' basic needs must be met in order for them to be able to focus on the GED.**

**Therefore: GED preparation is more than just preparing students to demonstrate knowledge on an exam - it is about providing the tools necessary to be successful students, be it bus passes, mental health referrals, childcare and more.**

- (8) Are there state or federal policy or activities that could impact costs and/or success of strategy? In what ways?

## **PART 2: Describe Conditions, Processes & Partners (No more than 2 pages)**

- (1) What do you need from other agencies / boards / groups to enable you to be most effective?

**The OEIB Equity and Partnerships will present these proposals in conjunction with overall policy recommendations to support the success of Opportunity Youth.**

**Successful implementation of these two strategies requires completion of alignment efforts currently underway between the ODE, the Department of Human Services, Community College and Workforce Development, the Oregon Youth Authority, County Commissions and others.**

- **A willingness to create a partnerships**
- **A commitment to the OEIB strategies for success**
- **An understanding of the new GED shifts**

(2) What can your agency / board / group offer to other parts of the system to aid in alignment & transformation?

**The Oregon Education Investment Board will provide support to the Oregon Youth Council and Division to complete audits of existing services and leadership to ensure that the partnerships and alignment are fostered among public and community based services.**

(3) Which strategies that you know are priorities for other agencies/boards/groups would enable you to achieve your results (better, faster, etc.), if any?

(4) Please identify at least one strategy for reducing costs or repurposing resources in your agency or policy area.

**The analysis of overlapping services among agencies currently serving Out of School Youth will provide the data required to determine where services can be consolidated or coordinated to reduce cost or provide new efficiencies.**

(5) Who are your key partners, stakeholders, and community groups?

**Oregon community colleges, local school districts, the business community, nonprofit groups, workforce development groups, state offices responsible for monitoring and certifying the GED in Oregon, and GED students themselves.**

(6) What processes were used for public input in developing the strategies?

**The research committee, composed of members with diverse backgrounds, expertise and skills, met for the first time on July 15, 2013. At weekly meetings, committee members interviewed witnesses and discussed the value of the GED as well as its role in the context of Oregon's 40-40-20 educational goals. It focused on systemic challenges with the GED, how state and community partners can better re-engage disconnected young Oregonians without a high school diploma and help them move on to career or college, and how Oregon can best take advantage of the 2014 GED program.**

**More than two-dozen witnesses spoke with the committee. They represented a wide array of stakeholders, including representatives from the national GED**

**Testing Service, Oregon community colleges, local school districts, the business community, nonprofit groups, workforce development groups, state offices responsible for monitoring and certifying the GED in Oregon, and GED students themselves.**

**Committee members also reviewed relevant reports and research, and assembled data from multiple sources to better understand the scope of the challenge and potential solutions.**

**DRAFT**

**Oregon Education Investment Board Equity and Partnerships Sub-committee**

**Investment Budget Analysis Tool for GED Strategic Investment**

May 29, 2014

**1. Briefly describe the budgetary recommendations.**

- a. Defray the cost of GED test for Opportunity Youth
- b. Fund organizations to provide Oregon GED Plus programs
- c. Coordinate GED related funding and strategic alignment across agencies and institutions

**2. Who are the racial/ethnic and underserved groups affected? What is the potential impact of the resource allocation and strategic investment to these groups? How does the investment or resource allocation advance the 40/40/20 goal?**

	Defray the cost of GED test for Opportunity Youth	Fund organizations to provide Oregon GED Plus programs	Coordinate GED related funding and strategic alignment across agencies and institutions
<b>Groups</b>			
<b>Impact</b>			
<b>40/40/20</b>			

**3. Does the decision being made ignore or worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences? What is the impact on eliminating the opportunity gap?**

	Defray the cost of GED test for Opportunity Youth	Fund organizations to provide Oregon GED Plus programs	Coordinate GED related funding and strategic alignment across agencies and institutions
<b>Unintended consequences</b>			
<b>Impact on eliminating opportunity gap</b>			

**4. What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes (e.g. mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic, or managerial)?**

	Defray the cost of GED test for Opportunity Youth	Fund organizations to provide Oregon GED Plus programs	Coordinate GED related funding and strategic alignment across agencies and institutions
<b>Mandates</b>			
<b>Politics</b>			
<b>Emotions</b>			
<b>Financial</b>			
<b>Programmatic</b>			
<b>Managerial</b>			

**5. How have you intentionally involved stakeholders who are also members of the communities affected by the strategic investment or resource allocation? How do you validate your assessments above?**

	Defray the cost of GED test for Opportunity Youth	Fund organizations to provide Oregon GED Plus programs	Coordinate GED related funding and strategic alignment across agencies and institutions
<b>Involve stakeholders</b>			
<b>Validate assessments</b>			

**6. How will you modify or enhance your strategies to ensure each learner and communities' individual and cultural needs are met?**

	Defray the cost of GED test for Opportunity Youth	Fund organizations to provide Oregon GED Plus programs	Coordinate GED related funding and strategic alignment across agencies and institutions
<b>Individual needs</b>			
<b>Cultural needs</b>			

**7. How are you collecting data on race, ethnicity, and native language?**

	Defray the cost of GED test for Opportunity Youth	Fund organizations to provide Oregon GED Plus programs	Coordinate GED related funding and strategic alignment across agencies and institutions
<b>Data collection (public)</b>			
<b>Data collection (private)</b>			

**8. What is your commitment to P-20 professional learning for equity? What resources are you allocating for training in cultural responsive instruction?**

	Defray the cost of GED test for Opportunity Youth	Fund organizations to provide Oregon GED Plus programs	Coordinate GED related funding and strategic alignment across agencies and institutions
<b>Resources for culturally responsive instruction training</b>			