<u>Community Colleges and Achievement Compacts: Principles and Recommendations</u>
Oregon Education Association Community College Council (OEA CCC)
September 28, 2012

Oregon's "Achievement Compact" plan provides an important opportunity for the state of Oregon to recognize the vital role that public education and Oregon's educational institutions play in the social, economic, and political health of our state, to establish educational goals for the 21st century, and to create a path to realizing them. The OEA Community College Council (OEA CCC), representing over 3600 faculty and staff members at Oregon's community colleges, supports and embraces the commitment to expand, both qualitatively and quantitatively, educational outcomes in Oregon, to raise degree completion rates, and to ensure public support for community colleges by making data on our progress available to Oregon's public.

The inclusion of Oregon's Post-Secondary sector in a plan primarily developed to address issues in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2002 (ESEA), however, overlooks fundamental differences between Oregon's educational sectors, and as a result does not, we believe, provide a successful model for Post-Secondary sectors to advance toward these vital goals. To move Oregon's Post-Secondary education sector ahead and to meet the state's educational goals, a revised plan should adhere to the following principles:

- We must recognize and honor the broad and vital educational achievement goals outlined in Oregon statute (ORS 351.001, 351.003, and 351.009) and not redefine educational "*achievement*" simply in terms of degree or certification "*attainment",* as the current plan does.
- We must ensure that attainment goals align with current and projected state workforce data and economic development research and plans. We must continually review, incorporate and utilize empirical analysis and evidence that the goals we are setting contribute directly to student learning and success, job retention and creation, and a strong local and statewide economy.
- We must base our educational reform plans on social scientific research on the causes of variance in educational attainment rates, on sound empirical analysis of Oregon's educational practices and outcomes, and on strategies informed by these.
- We must not overestimate the efficacy of schools to unilaterally and dramatically raise attainment rates, or overestimate the ability of schools and state organizations to produce such changes simply by *committing* to them, without identifying strategies, mechanisms, and resources to realize them.
- We must ensure that our outcome expectations match the level of investment. We cannot expect educational attainment rates to dramatically *increase* despite the dramatic *reductions* and historical underfunding of education in Oregon.
- Joint commitments to raise educational achievement and attainment must be truly *joint* commitments. We cannot require Oregon's schools to commit to one-sided 'compacts' while making no reciprocal commitment by the state to fund and support schools' efforts.
- We must recognize and protect public education as a "public good," and not transform it into a "private good" or "private privilege," opening public education to further privatization and profiteering efforts.
- We must protect and not undermine the Post-Secondary sector's institutional and professional quality assurance methods and educational reform efforts, nor undercut them with ad hoc and poorly operationalized counting schemas and 'metrics.'
- We must avoid tying education budgets and evaluative systems to attainment or factory production standards simply because they are easy-to-compile numbers, or under the false belief that doing so will result in 'productivity increases'; performance-funding schemas would do little or nothing to promote real educational advancement, and would encourage the reduction of educational standards and undermine the integrity and quality of Oregon's Post-Secondary courses, degrees, and educational systems.

- We must protect the local and professional control of independent educational institutions, and not substitute higher levels of bureaucracy for professional educational governance, nor substitute educational 'managers' for educational professionals.
- We must address the underlying causes of educational non-completion, including the increasing overuse of part-time faculty positions that undermines the ability of faculty to fully support student success and engage in institutional advancement practices.
- We must ensure that calls for wide spread collaboration and inclusion of educational employees and their representatives in this work are fully embraced and not simply words used to legitimize top-down decision-making. The success of this effort requires real collaboration and commitment from all members of Oregon's educational systems.

We believe the work of the OEIB is vital to the success of public education in Oregon. However, given the essential principles outlined above and the limits and weaknesses of the current 'Achievement Compact' plan, on behalf of the Oregon Education Association (OEA), the Oregon Education Association Community College Council (OEA CCC):

I. *Concludes that Oregon's Achievement Compact plan for community colleges cannot succeed in its current form,* and

II. *Calls for the plan to be replaced* by the Oregon Governor, Oregon Legislature, Oregon Chief Education Officer, and Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB) working directly with leaders of all sectors of Oregon's community colleges -- including the *Oregon Education Association (OEA),* the *American Federation of Teachers - Oregon (AFT-O),* the *Oregon Community College Association (OCCA),* the *Oregon Community College Council of Instructional Administrators (CIA),* and the *Oregon Community College Student Association (OCCSA)* -- to develop an "Oregon Community College Achievement and Attainment Plan" to pursue Oregon's educational goals.

<u>Core elements of this new plan should include:</u>

A. Oregon's community colleges' fundamental commitment to pursue:
   1. Increased educational attainment rates
   2. The achievement goals established in ORS 351.001, 351.003, and 351.009
   3. Annual publication of progress reports toward meeting these goals
B. The state establishing a "*Community College Completion Investment Fund*" using funds beyond the fully restored Community College Support Fund to provide grants to institutions to support educational completion projects consistent with the goals above, and administered by the OEIB in partnership with community colleges
C. Governor Kitzhaber establishing a Commission to complete former Governor Kulongski's charge to the Post-Secondary Quality Education Commission to develop an accurate accounting of the full costs of the current Post-Secondary educational system (parallel to the K-12 Quality Educational Model), as well as the additional costs of the projected growth in community colleges called for in the '40-40-20' aspirational goal
D. The state's commitment to providing stable and adequate funding for Oregon's community college system to meet the need identified by the reestablished Post-Secondary Quality Education Commission, and, failing to fully meet this need, identifying what portion of the unmet need the state expects students and their families to bear, and
E. All parties working collaboratively to amend SB 1581 during the 2013 Legislative Session to reflect this joint strategic plan for Oregon's community colleges