Guidance and Support for Post-Secondary Aspirations

Oregon has reached a crisis point with respect to the growing gap in achievement between underserved students (students of color, student living in poverty, and students whose first language is not English) and white students, particularly in the areas of high school graduation, post-secondary enrollment and completion. This crisis impacts lives, puts communities at risk, and further cripples our state's economy. Reaching the 40-40-20 Goal will require that nearly all Oregon students complete high school with the option of moving on to some kind of post-secondary experience, and the OEIB's clear commitment to equity requires that the goal be reached in a way that is representative of the state's population.
This will require a commitment to ensuring that students are supported and guided through the P-20 education system, and that a strong culture of expectations and opportunity motivates all students to succeed.

Monitoring and Support to Ensure Students are On-Track for Graduation

The transition from 8th to 9th grade is a pivotal time for students who struggle academically. Compelling evidence suggests that many students fall behind, get disengaged, and drop out or fail to complete. It is crucial for Oregon to research and examine the factors leading to risk of failure, identify students who are at risk (in terms of academics, attendance, or behavior), deliver appropriate screening and evidence-based interventional strategies, and track students' progress to completion.

Oregon should invest in cost-effective programs that identify students, grades 6 through 10, who are at risk of dropping out or failing, and provide them systematic, individualized monitoring and mentoring. Programs that have increased outcomes for students may include:

- Summer transition program for in-coming 9th graders, such as 9th Grade Counts
- *"Check & Connect"* or other cost-effective "mentor" strategy that relies on monitoring of school performance, as well as mentoring, case management, and other supports.
- Accelerated middle school programs designed to help middle school students who are behind grade level catch up with their age peers by the time they enroll in high school.
- Early intervention, gang prevention and other services for at-risk youth

Guidance and Support for a College-Going Culture

Setting students up for success in a 40-40-20 world requires Oregon to build a strong college-going culture and to provide students, particularly first-generation college goers, and their families with information, access and supports. To that end, this initiative will support existing or new programs, particularly those serving underserved communities:

- ASPIRE, a mentoring program for middle and high school students focused on college readiness
- Counselors, campus visits, college success initiatives, FAFSA completion support, family information nights
- AP, IB, dual enrollment and other early college credit opportunities
- Scholarship opportunities aimed at ensuring students who earn an Oregon diploma can access a first college-level class for free

Evidence:

Balfanz, R. (2009) Putting middle grades students on the graduation path: A Policy and practice brief. Everyone Graduates Center and Talent Development Middle Grades Program: National Middle School Association.
http://www.amle.org/portals/0/pdf/research/research_from_the_field/policy_brief_balfanz.pdf

Harvard Family Research Center (April 2010), Family Engagement as a Systemic, Sustained, and Integrated Strategy to Promote Student Achievement. http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/family-engagement-as-a-systemic-sustained-and-integrated-strategy-to-promote-student-achievement

Northwest Evaluation Assocation (August 2012), Outcomes and Demographics for Participants in Ninth Grade Counts and College + Career Connections. http://allhandsraised.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/All-Hands-Raised-2012-Report-Final1.pdf

U.S. Department of Education, What Works Clearinghouse (July 2008), Drop-Out Prevention: Accelerated Middle School. http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/interventionreport.aspx?sid=11

U.S. Department of Education, What Works Clearinghouse (September 2006),Drop-Out Prevention: Check & Connect. http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/interventionreport.aspx?sid=79

Outcomes:

*By June 2015, the percentage of students who are "on track" for graduation by the end of 9th grade will be no less than X% (with no gaps greater than 10%).

*As of June 2015, the percentage of students graduating in 5 years or less will be no less than X% (with no gaps greater than X%).

***Specific targets will be developed in conjunction with OEIB strategic plan**