



JOHN KITZHABER
Governor of Oregon
OEIB Chair

JULIA BRIM-
EDWARDS

YVONNE CURTIS

MATTHEW DONEGAN

SAMUEL HENRY

NICHOLE JUNE
MAHER

MARK MULVIHILL

DAVID RIVES

RON SAXTON

MARY SPILDE
Chair-Designee

KAY TORAN

JOHANNA
VAANDERING

DICK WITHNELL

Chief Education Officer
NANCY GOLDEN

OREGON EDUCATION INVESTMENT BOARD

Tuesday, March 11, 2014

1pm – 5pm

PCC Rock Creek, Event Center

17705 NW Springville Road

Portland, OR 97229

Video Streaming [HERE](#)

If above link fails, please use [this one](#)

Members of the public wanting to give public testimony must sign in.

There will only be one speaker from each group.

Each individual speaker or group spokesperson will have 3 minutes.

AGENDA

Joint meeting with the Higher Education Coordinating Commission

*Signing Ceremony on HB 4116 and SB 1524, College Affordability

- 1. Board Welcome and Roll Call**
- 2. Approval of Minutes from February board meeting**
ACTION ITEM
- 3. Chief Education Officer Update**
Dr. Nancy Golden, Chief Education Officer
- 4. Aligning Education & Workforce**
Agnes Balassa, Workforce Policy Advisor, Governor's Office
- 5. 40-40-20 Definitions and Refinements**
Ben Cannon, Director, Higher Education Coordinating Commission
Agnes Balassa, Governor's Workforce Policy Advisor, & Shalee Hodgson, CCWD
Senator Mark Hass & Representative Tobias Read
- 6. Presentation of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission Strategic Plan**
Tim Nesbitt, Chair, Higher Education Coordinating Commission
Ben Cannon, Director, Higher Education Coordinating Commission
- 7. Presentation from Portland City Club GED Study Group**
Zeke Smith, United Way

8. OEIB 2015-17 Budget Strategies & Initial Priorities

Whitney Grubbs, Chief of Staff, OEIB

9. Initial Discussion of College & Career Readiness Definition

Hilda Rosselli, College & Career Readiness Director, OEIB

10. Subcommittee Update

Best Practices and Student Transitions – Dr. Yvonne Curtis, Chair

Outcomes & Investments Subcommittee -- Dick Withnell, Chair

Equity and Partnerships – Nichole June Maher, Chair

11. Public testimony

12. Adjournment

OREGON EDUCATION INVESTMENT BOARD

February 11, 2014

1pm – 5pm

Oregon State Fairgrounds

Cascade Hall, 2330 17th Street, NE, Salem, 97301

[LINK TO AUDIO](#)

[LINK TO MEETING MATERIALS](#)

OEIB Members Present:

Governor John Kitzhaber, Chair; Mark Mulvihill (phone); Johanna Vaandering (late); Nichole June Maher (phone); Dick Withnell; Samuel Henry; Mary Spilde, Julia Brim-Edwards; Samuel Henry; Yvonne Curtis (joined by phone later in the meeting)

Advisors Present

Vicki Chamberlain; Gerald Hamilton; Bob Brew; Jada Rupley; Ben Cannon, Kent Neely (sitting in for Melody Rose)

Members/Advisors Excused

David Rives, Ron Saxton, Mathew Donegan, Kay Toran; Melody Rose; Rob Saxton

Staff/Other Participants

Nancy Golden - OEIB Chief Education Officer

Ben Cannon -HECC

Whitney Grubbs – OEIB Staff

Hilda Rosselli – OEIB Staff

Serena Stoudamire Wesley – OEIB Staff

David Martinez – OEIB Staff

Kristin Gimbel – OEIB Staff

Mark Lewis – OEIB Staff

Peter Tromba – OEIB Staff

Mark Lewis – OEIB Staff

David Edwards – OEIB Staff

Seth Allen – OEIB Staff

1. Board Welcome and Roll Call

The meeting is called to order at 1:05pm

2. Approval of Minutes from February 2014 board meeting

Action Item

[DRAFT February Meeting Minutes](#)

MOTION: Dr. Mary Spilde moves to accept the meeting minutes from the January meeting. Hannah Vaandering seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

3. Chief Education Officer Update

Dr. Nancy Golden, Chief Education Officer

[Materials](#)

4. Subcommittee Updates:

Best Practices and Student Transitions – Dr. Yvonne Curtis, Chair

Equity and Partnerships – Nichole June Maher, Chair

Outcomes and Investments – Dick Withnell, Chair

5. 2013-15 Strategic Investment Implementation Update

Rob Saxton, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction

Sarah Pope, Chief of Staff, Oregon Department of Education

[Materials](#)

6. 2015-17 Budget Process and Initial Conversation and OEIB Scorecard

Whitney Grubbs, OEIB Chief of Staff

[Materials](#)

7. Whitney Grubbs, OEIB Chief of Staff, and Laurel Singer, Oregon Solutions Network

Central Oregon Better Together

- Dr. Paul Andrews, Deputy Superintendent, High Desert ESD

- Anna Higgins, Coordinator of Student Success, High Desert ESD
Southern Oregon Success

- Scott Perry, Superintendent, Southern Oregon ESD

[Materials](#)

8. Agency Updates

Jada Rupley, Early Learning System Director, Early Learning Division

Bob Brew, Executive Director, Oregon Student Access Commission

[Materials](#)

9. Public Testimony

Steve Buel, Oregon Save or Schools

Rex Hagans, Oregon Save Our Schools

[Materials](#)

10. Adjournment

Chair Designee Mary Spilde adjourned the meeting at 4:45pm.



FEBRUARY UPDATE - 2014

A Progress Report on 6-Month Outcomes for Nancy Golden

OBJECTIVE #1

DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION OF BIRTH TO COLLEGE & CAREER STRUCTURE

Ongoing Systems of Communication/Alignment Across Birth to College and Career

- Met with the Early Learning Council to provide an overview of OEIB and update the group on our commitment to early learning.
- Met with Laura McKinney to receive an update on the Engineering and Technology Industry Council (ETIC).

OBJECTIVE #2

ADOPT STRONG POLICY FRAMEWORK

Secure Adoption of Legislative/Administrative Policy Agenda

- Attended the House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development to discuss changes to HB 4058.
- Met with the House Education Committee to discuss HB 4134 on youth development.
- Met with the Ways and Means Education Sub-Committee to discuss the longitudinal database.
- Met with Representative Frederick to discuss the longitudinal database.
- Met with Representative Parrish to discuss the work and priorities of OEIB.
- Participated in senior policy staff meeting with the Governor's office on strategic planning.
- Met with Representative Gelsler regarding HB 4150, a bill related to student assessment and grading system.
- Participated in a weekly meeting with Representative Gelsler, Representative Komp, Senator Monroe and Senator Hass to discuss possible legislation.
- Met with Senator Devlin to discuss the longitudinal database.
- Met with Senator Steiner Hayward to discuss the collaboration of education and the healthcare system.
- Presented to the Education subcommittee on Ways and Means regarding strategic investment updates and Early Learning Hubs report.
- Met with Representative Sprenger to discuss the OEIB.
- Met with Senator Girod regarding higher education governance.

Develop Strong Partnerships and Accountability Across Birth to College and Career

- Met with the Governor, key education state and Oregon Education Association leadership and members to discuss OEIB priorities, how to work collaboratively on key policies issues and to develop an educator advisory group.
- Met with representatives of Stand for Children to discuss partnerships and community outreach.
- Met with Governor Policy Advisors regarding the strategic plan.

OBJECTIVE #3

CREATE OUTCOMES-BASED BUDGET, ALIGNED TO INITIATIVES

OBJECTIVE #4

WORK TO BUILD AN ENGAGED & MOTIVATED PUBLIC

Create strong, multi-faceted communication plan

- Taped interview with Eastern Promise to share OEIB perspective on the work and subsequent RFP process and discuss what it means to Eastern Oregon.
- Developed an additional communication piece to share OEIB core priorities.

Engage and activate diverse communities, parents and students

- Presented an OEIB update at the Stand for Children's Annual Summit.
- Presented at Leadership Lake Oswego regarding the role of the OEIB.
- Presented on the foci for OEIB for the Eugene Area Chamber.
- Participated in a ground breaking retreat at the Kah-Nee-Tah on issues of 3rd grade reading and equity.
- Met with key members of the Grand Ronde Tribe, April Campbell, Rob Saxton and OEIB staff to discuss the findings from the Chalkboard study relating to tribal youth in Oregon's K-12 education system.
- Presented at a meeting with the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) on the opportunities and challenges of educating Latino children.

JOINT HECC/OWIB TASK FORCE CHARTER

Purpose: The Oregon Workforce Investment Board (OWIB) and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) have a common goal to assure that a highly skilled populace has the skills to enter into good jobs, achieve personal goals and progress along career paths. Specifically, the two boards have a common interest regarding the achievement of Oregon's "middle 40" goal, which necessitates a strong connection between educational achievement and labor market success. The joint HECC/OWIB Task Force has been chartered by Governor Kitzhaber to:

- Identify a set of common goals for achievement of the middle 40 with common measurable outcomes.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the two boards and of the education and workforce partners to achieve middle 40 and workforce goals.
- Identify the policy areas where there is overlap between the work of the two boards related to common goals and recommend a mechanism for managing this "shared space" in order to achieve common outcomes.
- Clarify the relationship and accountability between workforce and education partners for the achievement of common goals, outcomes and metrics.

The work of this task force may inform 2015 budget development related to the work of the agencies overseen by the OWIB and HECC.

Membership: The Taskforce will consist of no more than 16 members (TBD)

Those with expertise relating to community colleges, local workforce investment boards, state agencies, labor market information, and other topics may be called upon to provide input to the task force.

Product: The task force will provide a report that will include, but not be limited to:

1. Documentation of the roles and responsibilities of the OWIB and HECC relating to the achievement of Oregon's middle 40 and workforce goals.
2. Documentation of the "common space" between HECC and OWIB, with a recommendation to manage this space into the future.
3. A recommended set of common outcomes related to the achievement of the middle 40 and workforce goals with clarification of accountability for the achievement of those goals.
4. A joint statement from HECC and OWIB regarding expectations related to the roles and responsibilities of the partners within the workforce and education systems charged with delivering common outcomes.
5. A comparison of actual and projected labor market needs with actual and projected and aspirational educational attainment levels for the adult population; and
6. A recommendation for further articulation of degrees, certificates, and other credentials that should constitute the "Middle 40," as well as an analysis of the State of Oregon's ability to track/count those degrees, certificates, and credentials.

Staffing: The task force will be jointly staffed by the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, the Oregon Employment Department and Oregon Education Investment Board.

JOINT HECC/OWIB TASK FORCE CHARTER

Timeline: The task force will meet for a period of not more than 7 months starting in March and ending September 30, 2014. Task force recommendations will be provided in writing not later than September 30, 2014. The task force will sunset upon the completion of the scope of work identified above, to be replaced with the mechanism it recommends for the long-term management of shared OWIB/HECC work.

Meetings: The task force will hold 4 meetings. Meetings will be scheduled to coincide with HECC meeting dates as follows: April 10, May 8, June 12 and September 11. Task force work may be vetted and approved at regularly scheduled HECC and OWIB meetings. The task force may decide to add meetings if necessary to complete the work/

DRAFT



December 2, 2013

JOHN A. KITZHABER, MD
Governor

Tim Nesbitt, Chair
Higher Education Coordinating Commission
775 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97310-1300

Dear Tim,

As you are aware, a concern as of late is that we could potentially meet our 40-40-20 goals in terms of the numbers, yet still not achieve our ultimate goal: a more prosperous Oregon. It is clear that we must do more to assure that the skills of our citizens align with opportunities in the labor market that translate into thriving businesses and growing wages.

Achieving the middle 40 goal is pivotal to our efforts. The middle 40 sets Oregonians onto career pathways and addresses industry needs for skilled workers. It provides opportunity for those living in poverty and those impacted by a changing economy. The achievement of this goal requires a concerted effort among the systems that provide training and certification and those that provide employment services.

Last week, the Governor had the opportunity to meet with several Community College Presidents, OCCA staff and Agnes Balassa, our Policy Advisor for workforce. It became clear that the colleges have a number of concerns regarding the achievement of their mission amidst changing state organizational structures. My sense is that they have a deep commitment to assuring that our middle forty goals be about more than just achieving the right number of degrees and certificates. However, they identified concerns about having the capacity and the necessary support at the state level to effectively implement this critical work.

They also voiced concerns regarding the impact of our efforts to realign the workforce system. Our goal in realigning the programs that serve the unemployed and underemployed is to help more Oregonians gain access to the middle 40 and meaningful work. However, this realignment also impacts state level capacity for the administration of community college activities, which we will need to address.

The role of the HECC is central to resolving a number of these questions. I ask that you reach out to the community college presidents to engage with the HECC in better defining the specific issues that impact the ability of the community colleges deliver on their mission and offer potential solutions. In Executive Order 13-08, the Governor also asked that the Oregon Education Investment Board (OWIB) and the Oregon Workforce Investment Board (OWIB) identify ways to achieve common results across the education and workforce systems. It seems the HECC would have an important role to play in this discussion.

Sincerely,

Curtis Robinhold
Chief of Staff

Pathways to Progress

A Strategy for Steering, Cheering and Persevering To Achieve Oregon's Higher Education Goals

Tim Nesbitt, Chair, Higher Education Coordinating Commission
Ben Cannon, Executive Director, HECC

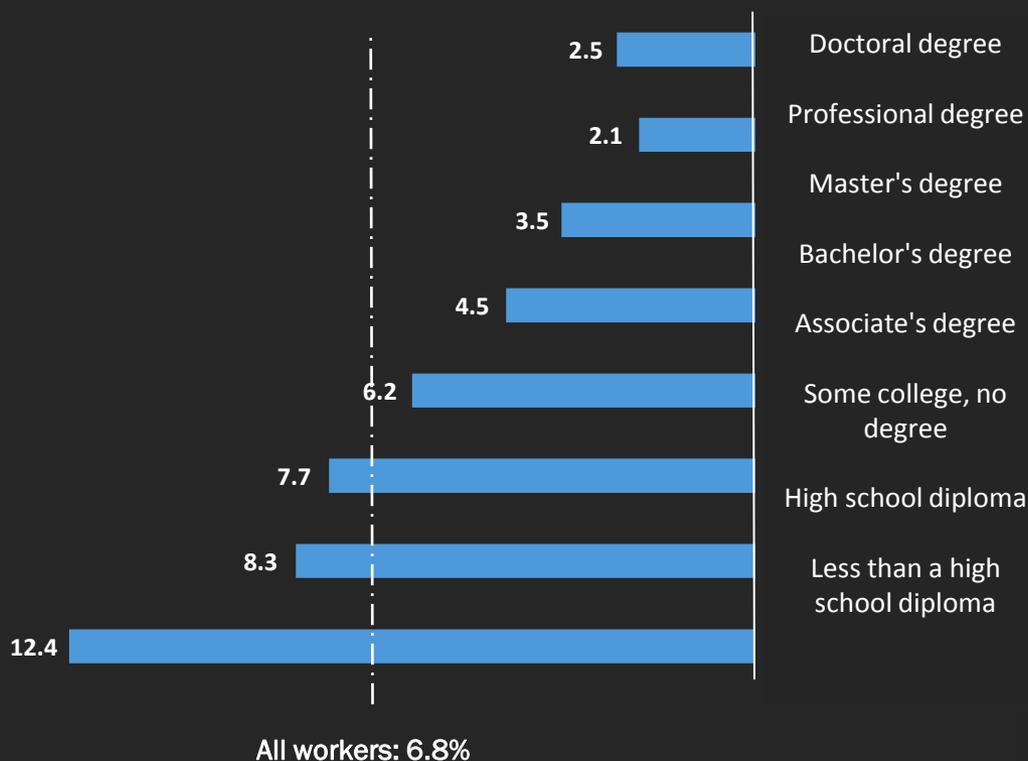
March 11, 2014

Goal

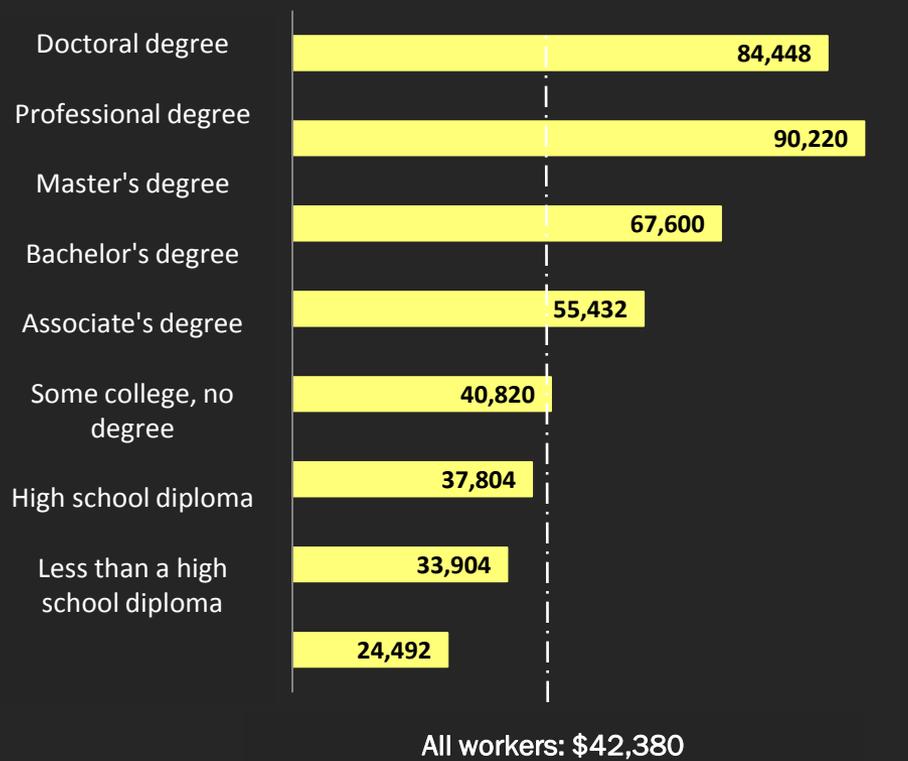
By 2025, 40% of adult Oregonians will hold a bachelor's or advanced degree, 40% will have an associate's degree or a meaningful postsecondary certificate, and all adult Oregonians will hold a high school diploma.

Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment

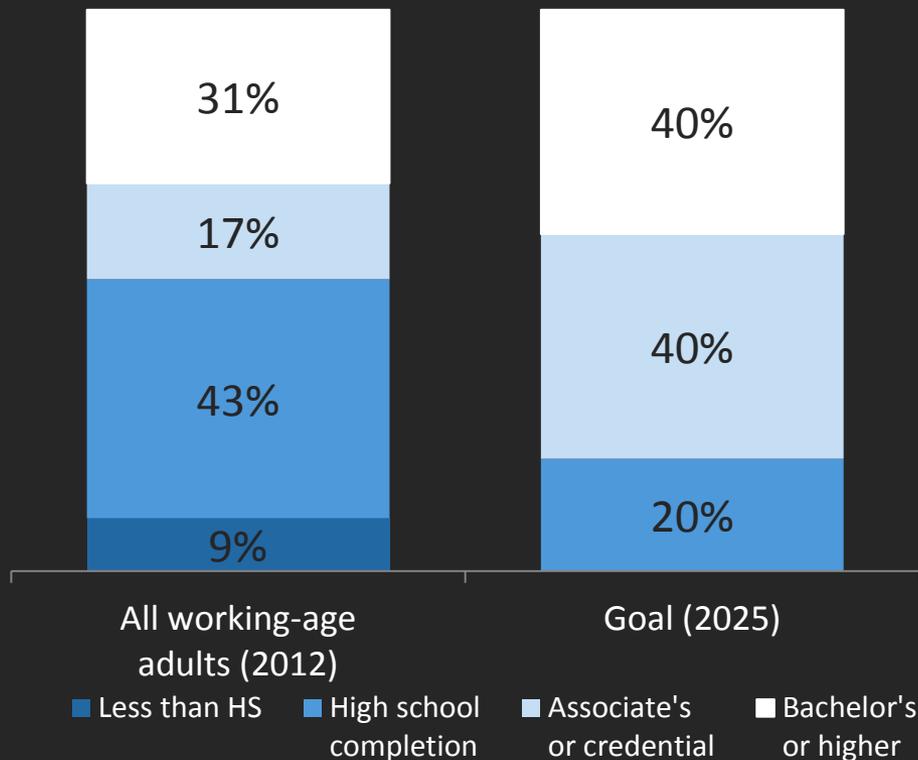
Unemployment rate in 2012 (%)



Median annual earnings in 2012 (\$)



To reach 40-40-20 in 2012 Oregon would have needed:



- *11,000* more high school graduates
- *480,000* more adults with an Associate's or a certificate
- *189,000* more adults with at least a Bachelor's degree

New P-20 Structure

HB 3231, HB 3234, SB 270, HB 3120

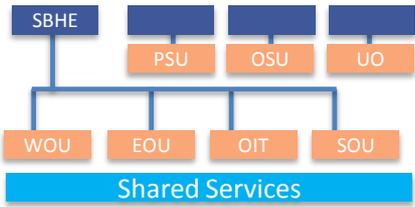
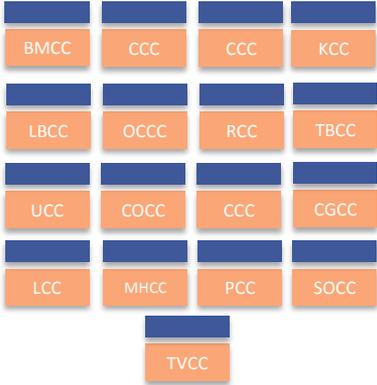
Legislature/Governor

OEIB

ELC	YDC	SBE
D H S	Oregon Department of Education	

HECC	
OSAC	CCWD

Funding, Rules, Compacts



■ Institution
■ Board/Council
■ Agency



Governance structure

Old Paradigm	New Paradigm
The public system is managed to sustain existing institutions	The public system is organized to maximize student success
State budgeting constraints encourage “opaque” cost shifts to institutions and students	Clarify impacts of state budgeting constraints on institutions and students
State provides resources to institutions based on enrollment	State provides resources to institutions to maximize learning outcomes and student success
Centralized governance and management of public universities	Centralized coordination with local governance and management of universities and colleges

HECC Action Plan

- ✓ Broaden the pathways to our 40-40 goal
- ✓ Make the pathways accessible, affordable and supportive for students
- ✓ “Steer” the higher education enterprise
- ✓ “Cheer” the promotion of college completion and career readiness

Broaden the Pathways to our 40-40 Goal

HECC Action Items:

- ✓ Refine 40-40 goals and develop key metrics to keep us on track
- ✓ Develop profile of students to be served and needs to be met
- ✓ Work with OWIB on “middle 40” strategies
- ✓ Construct budget recommendations for institutional capacity and student support

Make the Pathways Accessible, Affordable and Supportive for Students

HECC Action Items:

- ✓ Monitor tuition policy across all of our post-secondary institutions and approve/reject university increases above 5%.
- ✓ Develop and consider recommending options for enhancing affordability, including *Pay It Forward*, free community college, and redesign of the Oregon Opportunity Grant.
- ✓ Design mechanisms to guide and coach students through post-secondary education, including web-based portal.

“Steer” the Higher Education Enterprise

HECC Action Items:

- ✓ Develop and implement distribution formula and advance funding policy recommendations
- ✓ Approve university missions and establish program approval process
- ✓ Develop evaluation criteria for university boards
- ✓ Launch *Credit for Prior Learning* pilot
- ✓ Use convening authority to promote common standards and assessment
- ✓ Use convening authority to promote textbook affordability

“Cheer” the Promotion of College Completion and Career Readiness

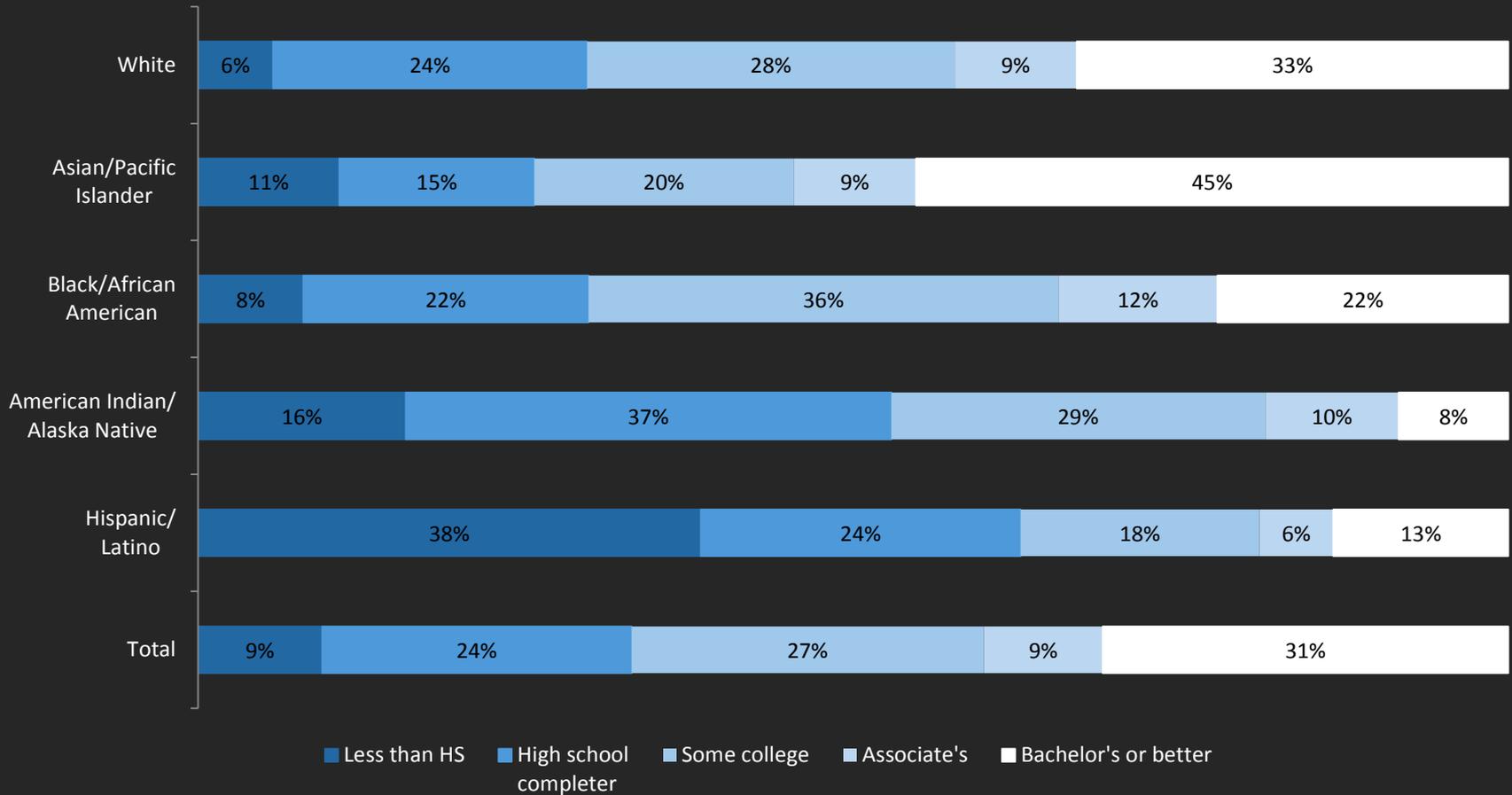
HECC Action Items:

- ✓ Compile inventory of public attitudes about post-secondary education at the state and national levels
- ✓ Develop and implement an external communications plan
- ✓ Launch FAFSA completion pilot project to maximize Pell grants for Oregon students

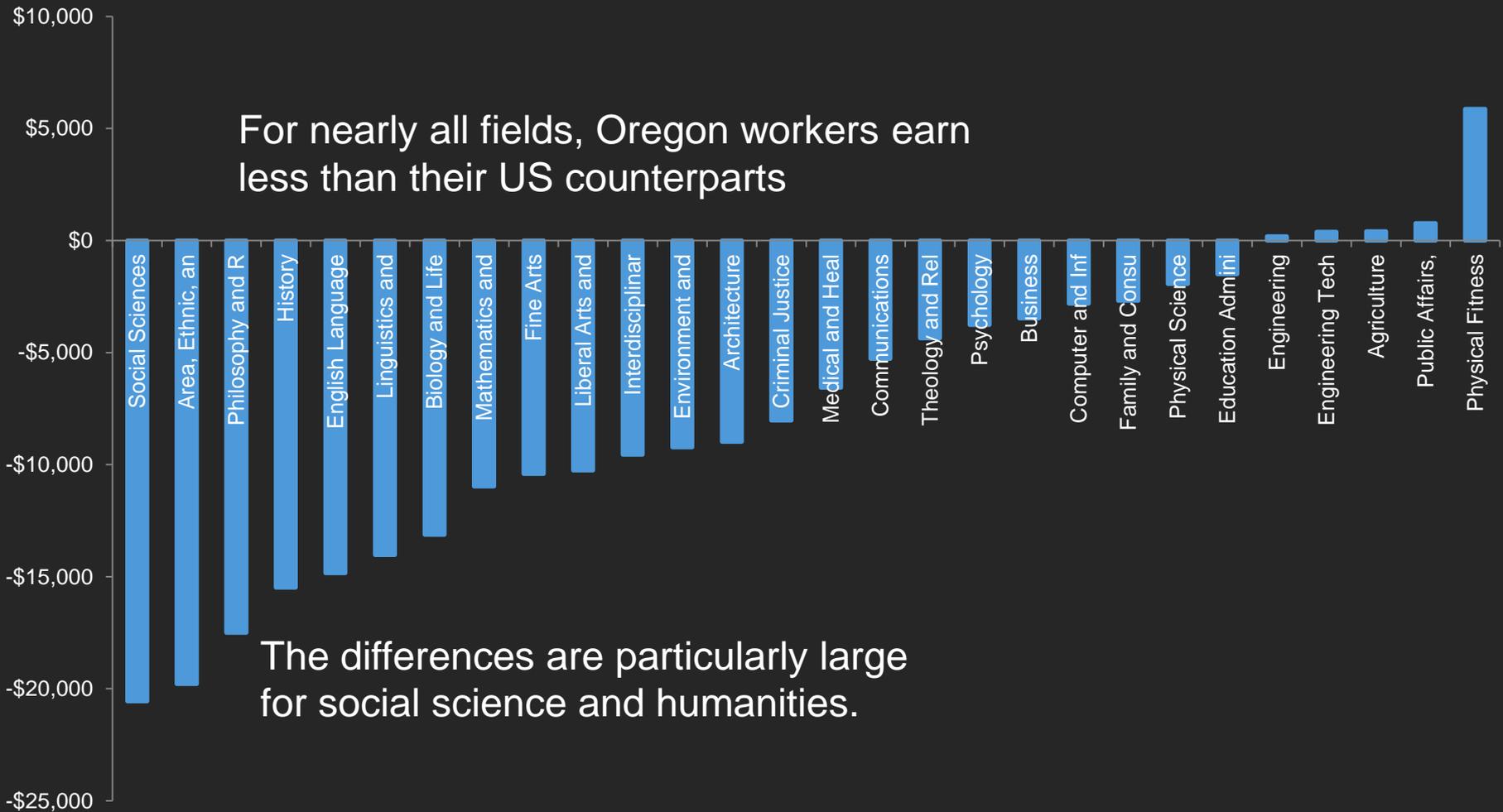
The Challenge

- *Fundamental challenge:* Existing attainment gaps
- *Systemic challenge:* “Leaky” education pipeline
- *Demographic challenge:* Increasing share of students facing significant barriers to success
- *Economic challenge:* Increasing poverty and stagnant middle class incomes
- *Fiscal challenge:* Declining rate of growth in state support and increasing competition for general funds
- Increasing numbers of working-age Oregonians without a high school diploma and college degree

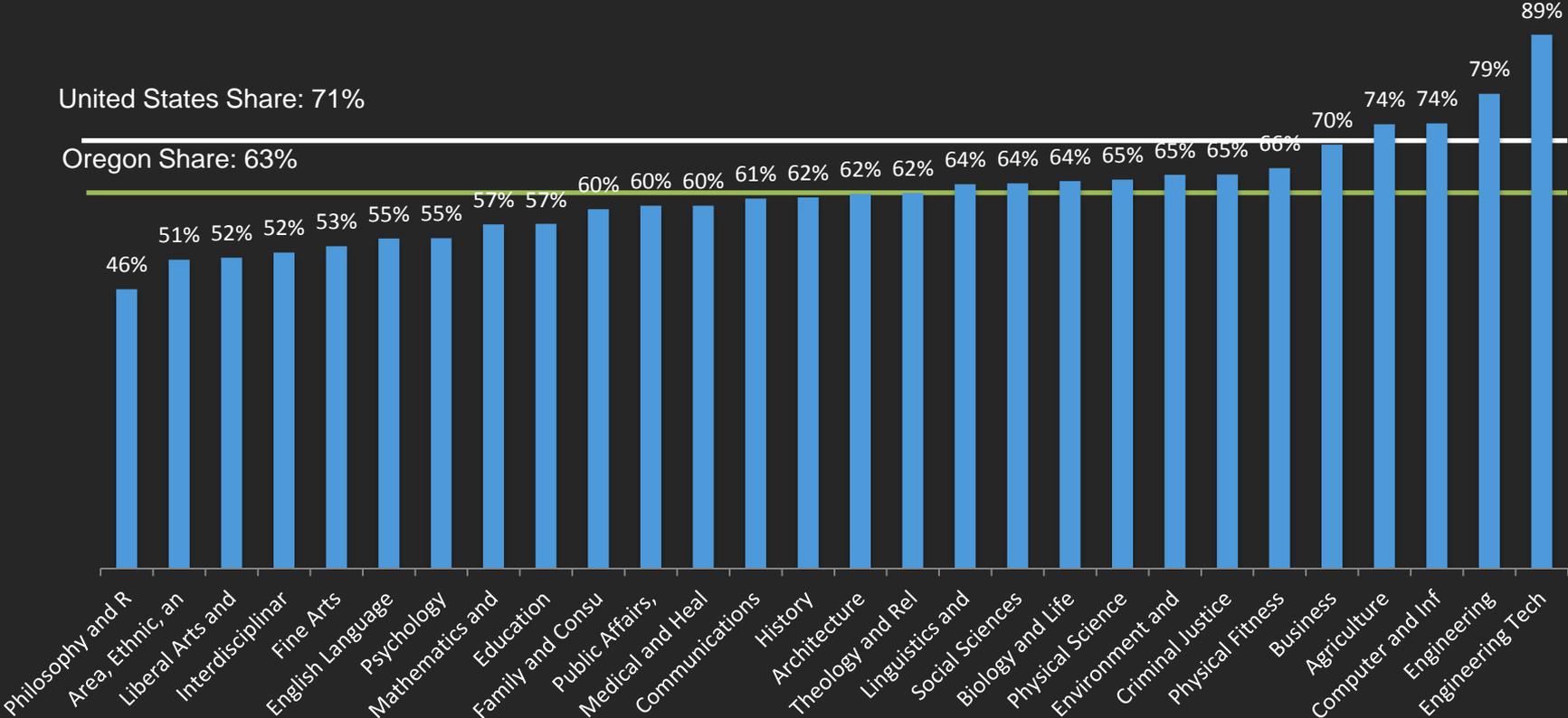
Attainment Varies Across Subpopulations



Earnings Differential by Field: Oregon vs. US

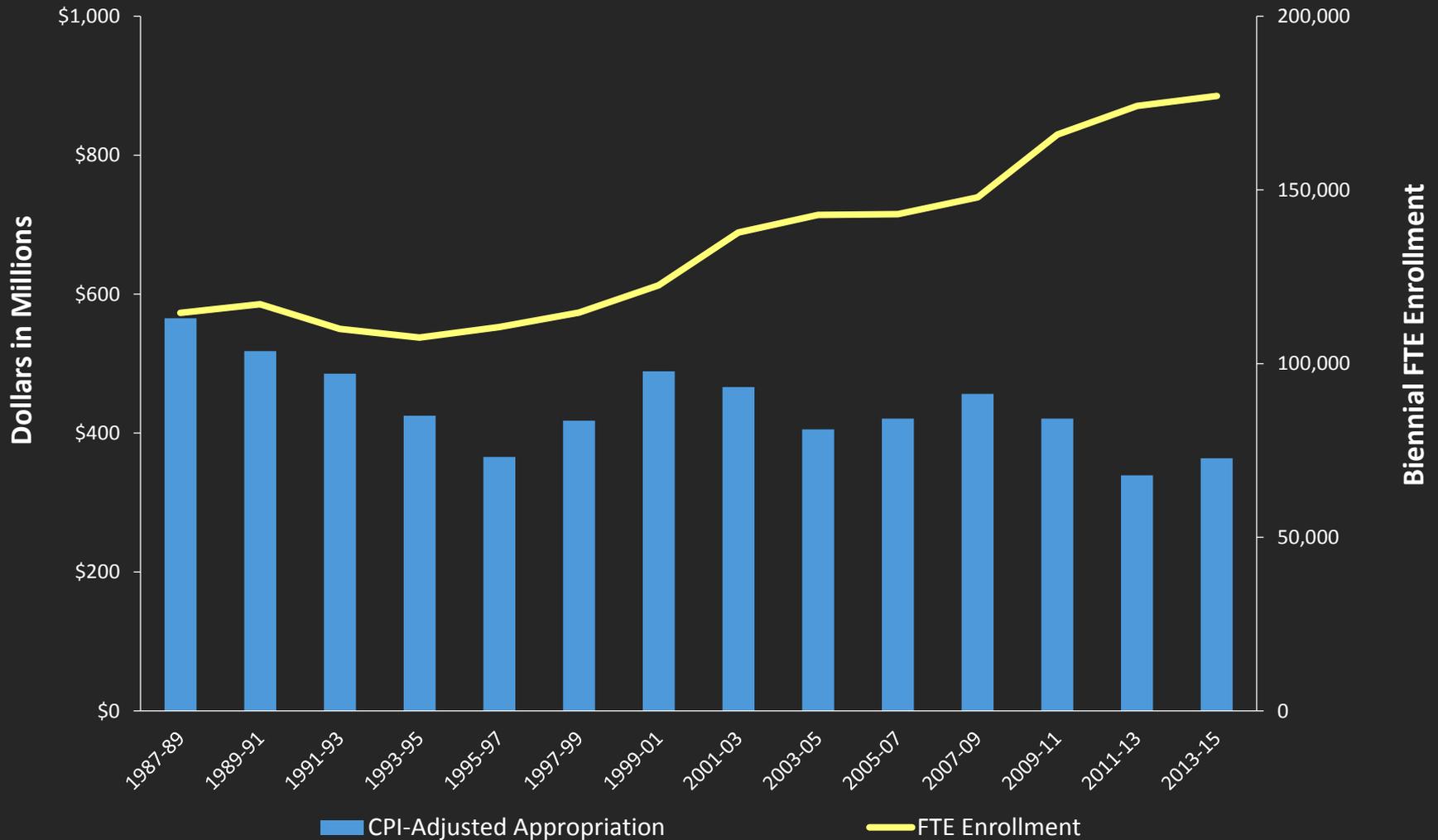


Share of Oregonians Who Work Full-Time by Degree Field



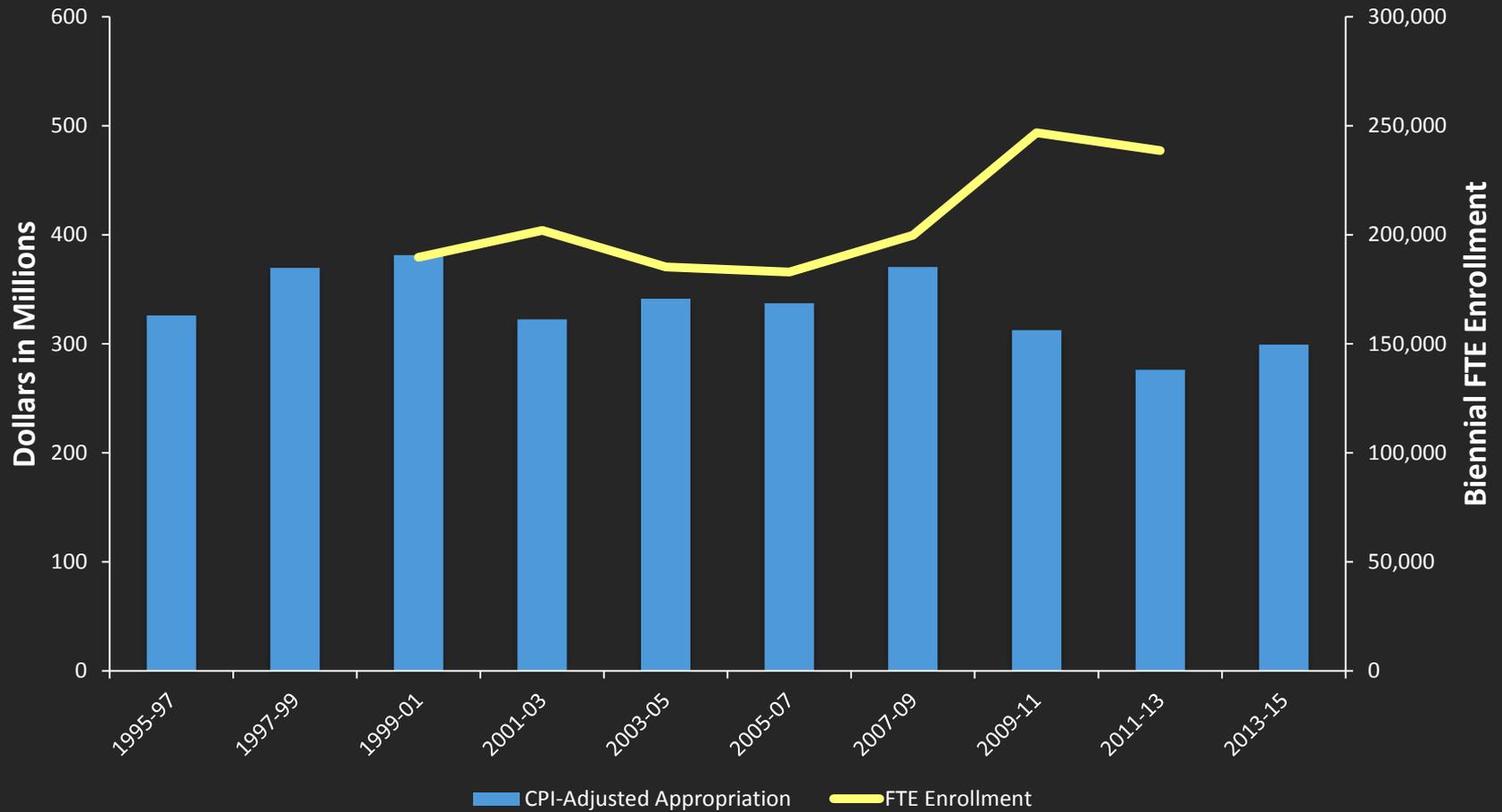
OUS Biennial State Appropriation and FTE Enrollment

1987 through 2013-15



Community College Biennial State Appropriation and FTE Enrollment

1995 through 2013-15



A few ongoing questions and considerations

- Community colleges contribute not just to the post-secondary “40-40,” but to the secondary “20,” by virtue of GED programs, adult high schools, middle colleges and dual enrollment.
- Research matters. If we focus only on undergraduate student success, the HECC may ignore one of the most important aspects of being a research university.
- Our focus should be squarely on the educational attainment of Oregonians. The benefits and trade-offs of relying on out-of-state students to subsidize in-state students deserves more attention.
- What explains the increase in the costs of higher education, beyond the impacts of cost shifts to students?
- Sometimes the unavailability of certain courses is a greater barrier than tuition/fees. Thus, the relationship between affordability for students and the capacity of our institutions needs to be examined.
- The quality of educational offerings should not be an arms’ length concern for the HECC.

The state's 40-40-20 goals commit us to a future in which all Oregonians will complete their education and gain the ability to contribute to our society and economy.

Success will require more than good intentions or the construct of aspirational goals; it will require reinvention, recommitment and reinvestment.

Expansion of Oregon's "Middle 40"

Presented by:

*Shalee Hodgson, Department of Community Colleges and
Workforce Development*

Agnes Balassa, Office of the Governor

March 11, 2014



40-40-20

The Legislative Assembly declares that the mission of all education beyond high school in Oregon includes achievement of the following by 2025:

- (1) Ensure that at least 40 percent of adult Oregonians have earned a bachelors degree or higher;
- (2) Ensure that at least 40 percent of adult Oregonians have earned an associates degree or post-secondary credential as their highest level of educational attainment;**
and
- (3) Ensure that the remaining 20 percent or less of all adult Oregonians have earned a high school diploma, an extended or modified high school diploma or the equivalent of a high school diploma as their highest level of educational attainment.

Source: ORS 351.009 - <http://www.oregonlaws.org/ors/351.009>

The “Middle 40” Today

- Associate’s Degrees
 - State approved lower division undergraduate award issued by a community college that indicates satisfactory completion of a course of study approved by the local community college board.
- Certificates of Completion
 - State approved form of recognition awarded by a community college for meeting minimum occupational course, curriculum or proficiency requirements approved by the local community college board.

Source: Oregon Community College Handbook - <http://handbook.ccwwebforms.net/>

The “Middle 40” Today

- Associate’s Degrees (90-108 credits)
 - Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer (AAOT)
 - The Associate of General Studies (AGS)
 - Associate of Science (AS)
 - Associate of Science/Oregon Transfer in Business (ASOT-Bus)
 - Associate of Applied Science (AAS) and Options
 - *MHCC Business Management and Accounting Option*
 - Statewide Associate of Applied Science (SAAS)
 - *Administrative Office Professional (9 colleges)*

Source: Oregon Community College Handbook - <http://handbook.ccwdbwebforms.net/>

The “Middle 40” Today

- Certificates of Completion (12-108 credits) one term to two years
 - Related to an existing Associate of Applied Science Degree or Certificate of Completion
 - *LCC Aviation Maintenance Technician*
 - Wholly contained in an existing Associate of Applied Science Degree or Certificate of Completion
 - *Career Pathway Certificates – RCC Website Assistant*
 - Independent new program
 - *Clackamas CC – Collision Refinishing Specialist*
 - Statewide Certificates of Completion (12-108 credits)
 - *Emergency Medical Services (14 colleges)*
 - Business & Industry Certificate of Completion (12-108 credits)
 - *PCC Restorative Dental Hygiene*
 - Employment Skills Training Certificate (12-44 Credits)
 - Occupational Skills Training Certificate (36-65 credits)

Source: Oregon Community College Handbook - <http://handbook.ccwwebforms.net/>

Expansion of the “Middle 40”

“In addition to, or instead of, regular schooling, some people earn educational certificates, professional certifications, or licenses or participate in noncredit courses, on-the-job training, or apprenticeships.”

Source: Measuring Alternative Education Credentials: 2012 <http://www.census.gov/prod/2014pubs/p70-138.pdf>

Expansion of the “Middle 40”

- **Industry Recognized Certifications**
 - Administered & awarded by third parties & competency/performance based.
 - Direct assessment through a written, oral or performance-based exam.
 - Time-limited, renewed through a recertification process.
 - *Automotive Service Excellence (ASE). Microsoft*
- **Licenses**
 - Awarded by a licensing agency based on criteria (may include degree attainment, certifications, certificates, assessment, apprenticeship programs, or work experience).
 - Time-limited and must be renewed periodically.
 - *Construction Contractors Board, Oregon Board of Cosmetology*
- **Apprenticeship (added to middle 40 by HB 4058)**
 - Partnership of employers, workers, the State, schools and/or community colleges.
 - Combines on-the-job experience with classroom instruction.

Source: Measuring Alternative Education Credentials: 2012 <http://www.census.gov/prod/2014pubs/p70-138.pdf>

Growing Demand for Competency-Based Credentials

Gallup/Lumina Poll: Americans want education to focus on learning and competencies, not “seat time.”

- 87% - students should receive college credit for knowledge and skills acquired outside of the classroom.
- 75% - would enroll in higher education if they could receive credit for what they already know.
- 75% - learning should not be time based.
- 75% - if students demonstrate they have mastered class material in less than 16-weeks, they should get credit without sitting through 16 weeks.

For more information:

http://www.luminafoundation.org/newsroom/news_releases/2013-02-05.html#sthash.WHSQ4Pp6.dpuf

Opportunities

- Better alignment between community college programs and industry needs.
- Expanded options for job seekers and employers.
- Better alignment of the “Middle 40” with the current labor market demands.
- Ability for workforce system to identify pools of certified workers and work with employers to close skill gaps.
- Acceleration of credential attainment, increasing worker competitiveness and wage gains.

Challenges

- Relatively little direct collaboration between certifying/licensing entities and postsecondary education institutions.
- Public institutions often do not have access to certification/licensing exam data.
- Difficult to know if students completing postsecondary education programs are well prepared to meet industry-specified competencies.
- The marketplace is currently unregulated.
- The proliferation of these credentials could be a disruptive force to the current way in which education is delivered.

Industry Credential Student Success Coalition

- Coalition of 20 states with the following goals:
 - Establish joint data standards and data sharing agreements.
 - Information on certification outcomes is more easily shared with community colleges across the nation.

Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development



255 Capitol Street NE
Salem OR 97310
503-378-8648

<http://www.oregon.gov/CCWD/>

For additional information:

Shalee Hodgson

Education Division Director

shalee.l.hodgson@state.or.us

Draft OEIB policy statement on refining 40-40-20 (March 11, 2014)

Oregon's 40-40-20 goal¹ provides a clear target – a “North Star” aligned with Oregonians’ economic, civic, and social aspirations -- against which to generally gauge the state’s educational progress. Its purpose is to help drive state policy decisions as well as permit the measurement of Oregon’s progress against a fixed goal. In making our policy and investment recommendations, we will be guided by the following refinements:

To Whom It Applies

- *Demographic groups:* 40-40-20 speaks to the hopes and opportunities of all Oregonians. Our policies and investments should ensure that communities of color, immigrants, migrants, and low income rural students are as well-represented as more affluent white students at each stage of completion.
- *Age cohorts:* We understand 40-40-20 as a goal that should be fully realized for today’s youngest students (the high school classes of 2025 and beyond), requiring significant progress towards that result with every intervening cohort, including those who have disengaged from school. At the same time, we also understand 40-40-20 to be a goal for the overall working age adult population, including 18-25 year olds, although the precise targets for this population should be refined and updated frequently based on attention to actual and projected labor market demands, as well as other factors.

What Counts

- *The “Middle 40”:* The OEIB endorses a broad understanding what “counts” for the middle 40, including two year associates’ degrees, one-year certificates, and Career Pathways Certificates issued by community colleges, and a variety of credentials that have demonstrable career and labor market value. Examples of those certificates include, but are not limited to: registered apprenticeships; industry-based nationally-recognized certificates; and state licensure for various fields.

¹ As a result of SB 253 (2011), ORS 351.009 reads as follows: “The Legislative Assembly declares that the mission of all education beyond high school in Oregon includes achievement of the following by 2025:

- (1) Ensure that at least 40 percent of adult Oregonians have earned a bachelor’s degree or higher;
- (2) Ensure that at least 40 percent of adult Oregonians have earned an associate’s degree or post-secondary credential as their highest level of educational attainment;
- (3) Ensure that the remaining 20 percent or less of all adult Oregonians have earned a high school diploma, an extended or modified high school diploma or the equivalent of a high school diploma as their highest level of educational attainment.”

What's Next

- The OEIB requests that the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), in consultation with the Oregon Workforce Investment Board (OWIB), the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, and the Department of Employment, report back to OEIB by September 30, 2014 the following:
 1. For the purpose of setting an initial goal for the working age adult population, a comparison of actual and projected labor market needs with actual and projected educational attainment levels; and
 2. Recommendations for further articulation of degrees, certificates, and other credentials that should constitute the “Middle 40,” as well as an analysis of the State of Oregon’s ability to track/count those degrees, certificates, and credentials.

A Second Chance for Oregon, High School Dropouts, and the GED

Oregon has neglected pathways of success for dropouts, but the launch of a new high school equivalency exam offers the possibility of a better future.

City Club of Portland Bulletin, Vol. 96, No. 11, January 17, 2014

City Club members will vote on this report between Friday, January 24, 2014 and Wednesday, January 29, 2014. Until the membership votes, City Club of Portland does not have an official position on this report. The outcome of the vote will be reported in the City Club of Portland Bulletin Vol. 96, No. 12, dated January 31, 2014, and online at pdxcityclub.org.

Executive summary

Oregon has a high school dropout crisis, but the state does not adequately support the primary tool to help young adults get back on track for college and career: The General Educational Development (GED) credential.

It cannot be said that Oregon dropped the GED ball because the state never truly picked it up. Providing services for young adult dropouts who wish to earn a GED certificate has been barely an afterthought in statewide planning. A mix of under-funded, under-coordinated public and private providers have done their best to fill the gap, but they face a steep challenge.

Oregon has a second chance with the launch of a revised GED exam in 2014.

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, though some eventually do earn a diploma or alternate certificate.

School districts are working hard to keep kids in the classroom and shepherd them to graduation. But even the most optimistic predictions do not include a day any time soon when every student will earn a diploma. Rather, if only due to unforeseen life circumstances, too many students will continue to enter adulthood having dropped out before graduation. Oregon must do more to help those future dropouts and those who already have dropped out.

The day after a student leaves school for the last time without a diploma, his future prospects are grim, but not hopeless. The GED offers adults a second chance. Though it is not a genuine high school equivalent, it is a way for them to advance into college and career.

High school alternative credentials are particularly important within the context of Oregon's ambitious 40-40-20 plan. The governor and lawmakers set a goal that by 2025, 40 percent of Oregonians will earn at least a bachelor's degree, 40 percent will earn an associate's degree or post-secondary credential, and the remaining 20 percent will earn at least a high school diploma or alternative. To reach 40-40-20, then, nearly every Oregonian will need a high school diploma or an alternative like the GED.

In recent years, the GED has suffered from a poor reputation among employers, educators and the public. That reputation was well-deserved. Research showed that GED recipients fared little or no better than other high school dropouts.

Things changed on Jan. 2, 2014, when GED Testing Service launched a revised GED exam that aligns with the Common Core State Standards for K-12 education. The new GED has a second chance to dispel past criticisms and serve as a useful educational stepping stone for adults who did not complete high school. Whether it does so remains to be seen.

To maximize the opportunity for success, Oregon must change how it approaches the GED and new alternatives to it. The state lacks coordinated, comprehensive support and oversight for GED-related services, and it cannot even provide a full accounting of public spending on the GED.

The fact that Oregon neither coordinates support for the GED across departments nor tracks expenditures on them creates an environment in which accountability is virtually impossible and success remains elusive.

Such shortcomings became particularly acute in the months leading up to the launch of the 2014 revision. State outreach to help students and GED preparation providers was lacking, necessary administrative and technical changes were hurried or did not occur, and the state provided little help to providers preparing for the transition.

Yet it is not too late to capitalize on the opportunity the revised GED offers.

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.

New hires and appointments to several key positions in state government within the last year make this a particularly good time to enact needed changes.

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.

Your committee concludes and recommends the following in order to give young adult dropouts, Oregon and the GED the best opportunity to capitalize on that second chance.

Conclusions

This report's conclusions reflect five overarching themes:

1. The GED is not the same as a high school diploma, but the 2014 GED revision has a chance to demonstrate that it accurately measures college and career readiness. (Conclusions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)
2. If the new GED leads to college and career readiness, Oregon would benefit from helping more 19 to 25 year olds who lack a high school diploma prepare for and earn the GED credential. (Conclusions 6, 7, and 8)
3. Oregon should monitor the success of GED alternatives in other states, consider adopting them here and prepare for people who earn them to move here. (Conclusions 9, 10 and 11)
4. Oregon has not prepared sufficiently for the 2014 GED revision. (Conclusions 12 and 13)
5. State funding and coordination of GED services are inadequate. (Conclusions 14 and 15)

Recommendations

For additional explanation, please refer to the Recommendations section of the report.

1. 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.
 2. 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.
 3. The Legislature should allocate dedicated funding to subsidize GED testing for qualified students with demonstrable need.
 4. Oregon's public universities should update their admissions criteria to allow admissions for qualified recipients of the 2014 revision of the GED.
 5. 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.)
 6. 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.
 7. Officials should take a fresh look at alternatives to the GED in a few years. (This recommendation has several parts that are detailed in the full report.)
 8. 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.
-

Download the Full Report

You can [download the full report here](http://pdxcityclub.org/Oregon-GED): pdxcityclub.org/Oregon-GED



About the City Club

The mission of City Club is to inform its members and the community in public matters and to arouse in them a realization of the obligations of citizenship.

Additional copies of this report are available online at www.pdxcityclub.org.

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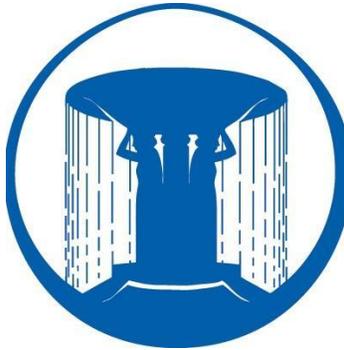
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A SECOND CHANCE FOR OREGON, HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS, AND THE GED

Oregon has neglected pathways of success for dropouts, but the launch of a new high school equivalency exam offers the possibility of a better future.



City Club of Portland Bulletin, Vol. 96, No. 9, January 17, 2014

City Club members will vote on this report between Friday, January 24, 2014 and Wednesday, January 29, 2014.

Until the membership votes, City Club of Portland does not have an official position on this report. The outcome of the vote will be reported in the City Club of Portland Bulletin Vol. 96, No. 11, dated January 31, 2014, and online at pdxcityclub.org.

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Executive summary

Oregon has a high school dropout crisis, but the state does not adequately support the primary tool to help young adults get back on track for college and career: The General Educational Development (GED) credential.

It cannot be said that Oregon dropped the GED ball because the state never truly picked it up. Providing services for young adult dropouts who wish to earn a GED certificate has been barely an afterthought in statewide planning. A mix of under-funded, under-coordinated public and private providers have done their best to fill the gap, but they face a steep challenge.

Oregon has a second chance with the launch of a revised GED exam in 2014.

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, though some eventually do earn a diploma or alternate certificate.

School districts are working hard to keep kids in the classroom and shepherd them to graduation. But even the most optimistic predictions do not include a day any time soon when every student will earn a diploma. Rather, if only due to unforeseen life circumstances, too many students will continue to enter adulthood having dropped out before graduation. Oregon must do more to help those future dropouts and those who already have dropped out.

The day after a student leaves school for the last time without a diploma, his future prospects are grim, but not hopeless. The GED offers adults a second chance. Though it is not a genuine high school equivalent, it is a way for them to advance into college and career.

High school alternative credentials are particularly important within the context of Oregon's ambitious 40-40-20 plan. The governor and lawmakers set a goal that by 2025, 40 percent of Oregonians will earn at least a bachelor's degree, 40 percent will earn an associate's degree or post-secondary credential, and the remaining 20 percent will earn at least a high school diploma or alternative. To reach 40-40-20, then, nearly every Oregonian will need a high school diploma or an alternative like the GED.

In recent years, the GED has suffered from a poor reputation among employers, educators and the public. That reputation was well-deserved. Research showed that GED recipients fared little or no better than other high school dropouts.

Things changed on Jan. 2, 2014, when GED Testing Service launched a revised GED exam that aligns with the Common Core State Standards for K-12 education. The new GED has a second chance to dispel past criticisms and serve as a useful educational stepping stone for adults who did not complete high school. Whether it does so remains to be seen.

To maximize the opportunity for success, Oregon must change how it approaches the GED and new alternatives to it. The state lacks coordinated, comprehensive support and oversight for GED-related services, and it cannot even provide a full accounting of public spending on the GED.

The fact that Oregon neither coordinates support for the GED across departments nor tracks expenditures on them creates an environment in which accountability is virtually impossible and success remains elusive.

Such shortcomings became particularly acute in the months leading up to the launch of the 2014 revision. State outreach to help students and GED preparation providers was lacking, necessary administrative and technical changes were hurried or did not occur, and the state provided little help to providers preparing for the transition.

Yet it is not too late to capitalize on the opportunity the revised GED offers.

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New hires and appointments to several key positions in state government within the last year make this a particularly good time to enact needed changes.

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- Adults who dropped out of high school and hope to advance to college or career;
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Your committee concludes and recommends the following in order to give young adult dropouts, Oregon and the GED the best opportunity to capitalize on that second chance.

Conclusions

This report's conclusions reflect five overarching themes:

1. The GED is not the same as a high school diploma, but the 2014 GED revision has a chance to demonstrate that it accurately measures college and career readiness. (Conclusions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)
2. If the new GED leads to college and career readiness, Oregon would benefit from helping more 19 to 25 year olds who lack a high school diploma prepare for and earn the GED credential. (Conclusions 6, 7, and 8)
3. Oregon should monitor the success of GED alternatives in other states, consider adopting them here and prepare for people who earn them to move here. (Conclusions 9, 10 and 11)
4. Oregon has not prepared sufficiently for the 2014 GED revision. (Conclusions 12 and 13)
5. State funding and coordination of GED services are inadequate. (Conclusions 14 and 15)

Recommendations

For additional explanation, please refer to the [Recommendations section of the report](#).

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. The Legislature should allocate dedicated funding to subsidize GED testing for qualified students with demonstrable need.
4. Oregon's public universities should update their admissions criteria to allow admissions for qualified recipients of the 2014 revision of the GED.
5. 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.)
6. 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.

7. Officials should take a fresh look at alternatives to the GED in a few years. (This recommendation has several parts that are detailed in the full report.)
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About this study

Study charge

City Club of Portland charged your research committee with studying how state and local government systems and community-based efforts might better support Oregonians aged 19 to 25 who have dropped out of high school in obtaining a General Educational Development (GED) credential that will lead to a post-secondary education or advanced skills training.*

The study charge asked your committee to pay particular attention to impacts and opportunities of the 2014 GED revision for Oregon's broader educational goals, how the state can successfully manage transition to the new GED, changes important for communities of color and those with lower socioeconomic status, and how better to evaluate the impact of changes.

In February 2013, an Oregon Secretary of State Audit Report found that "Current strategies aimed at implementing Oregon's 40-40-20 education goal do not sufficiently address the education needs of adults that have already dropped out of school, nor do they address the needs of those that may drop out in the future."¹

The study charge also tasked your committee with researching options to ensure that the GED is not simply an end in itself but that it serve as a credential that leads to a post-secondary education, advanced-skills training certification or successful career. This is consistent with the state's 40-40-20 education goals serving as an economic driver for Oregon.

Your committee also was asked to assess the impacts and opportunities of the 2014 revision of the GED program.

Study methodology

Your 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.

* See Appendix A for an explanation of why the scope is limited to adults 19 to 25 years old.

More than two dozen witnesses spoke with your 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. A [complete list of witnesses](#) is at the end of this report.

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.

After assessing the evidence and witness testimony, your committee deliberated and reached the conclusions and [recommendations](#) contained in this report.

Throughout the research, your committee was aware that a new version of the GED test would launch on Jan. 2, 2014. This report makes a conscious effort to look forward to the new exam rather than dwell at great length on the inadequacies of the old test.

In order to achieve the goal of all Oregon adults having at least a high school diploma or equivalent by 2025 and 80 percent having a post-secondary education, the educational needs of those without a high school diploma will need to be met.

This will require a coordinated statewide effort that is unlikely to occur without a strategic plan targeted at reengaging high school dropouts, helping them earn GEDs, and then facilitating their transition to post-secondary education or employment.

Oregon Secretary of State Audit Report

Composition of the committee

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Background

Introduction

No young children dream of dropping out of high school. They plan to become doctors, nurses, astronauts or firefighters. Then life happens, and the unfortunate reality is that more than one-quarter of young Oregonians will not complete high school within five years of starting.

Young Oregonians like Yolanda G. After she became pregnant in high school, her educational trajectory soon turned downward. She tried an alternative high school, but remained a few credits short of graduation when she turned 21 and had to leave without a diploma.²

Yolanda and the 336,000 other adult Oregonians who do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent have a second chance. The General Educational Development (GED) program offers them an opportunity to earn a credential recognized by post-secondary schools and some employers as a mark of achievement.

How much achievement the GED truly represents, though, is a matter of some debate. Academic literature and data show that GED earners on average do not perform as well as high school graduates in college or career. The credential itself therefore has a generally poor reputation among many employers, educators and the public.

On Jan. 2, 2014, the national GED Testing Service launched a new GED program that aims to address past criticisms ([described in detail below](#)) and to align the exam with the Common Core State Standards. Those standards set educational targets for language arts and mathematics, integrating critical thinking and problem-solving skills at each grade level. Forty-five states, including Oregon, have adopted them.³

The 2014 revision could prove to be a substantial improvement over its predecessor and better assess students' ability to succeed in college and career. It also could inherit the failings of its predecessor. It remains unclear whether the GED credential ever will be a genuine high school equivalent, and this must be assessed in the coming years in Oregon and across the nation.

Indeed, perhaps the error is assuming that the GED is or should be conceived of as *high school equivalency*. The question for the new GED program should not be whether it shows that

someone who passes has the same skills and knowledge as a high school student but whether it is an accurate measure of college and career readiness.*

The GED also must be considered in the larger context of re-engaging disconnected youth. It is not the only option for these students, but rather is one tool in a complex toolkit.

If the new GED successfully corrects the old one's shortcomings and if state and local education officials implement measures to maximize the potential for success, then the new GED offers Oregon an important and much-needed opportunity to re-engage more effectively the many disconnected young adults who have not completed high school.

Why earn a GED?

The GED credential is not an end in itself. Rather, its value lies in what follows and the doors that it opens.

In their report "Achieving Education for All," Daniel Princiotta and Ryan Reyna call the GED "an important last resort."⁴

They write, "General Educational Development (GED) certificate programs are an important last resort for individuals who have exhausted options for earning a traditional high school diploma. GEDs can help adults without high school diplomas enhance their educational and economic opportunities."⁵

Community colleges test students upfront to assess their level of mastery of core subjects and direct them into remedial classes as needed. Earners of the GED should be able to avoid some

* The concept of "college and career readiness" defies precise definition. For purposes of this report, your committee takes it to mean a certain web of skills and knowledge that will allow a first year college student or entry-level employee to succeed without remedial training. Those skills certainly include but are not limited to competency at basic arithmetic, literacy, reading comprehension and problem-solving. They also include a level of maturity and interpersonal skills that, for example, will have someone show up on time for work or class and interact respectfully with colleagues.

GED Testing Service notes:

One of the major goals of the GED Testing Service is to develop a new GED assessment that indicates readiness for careers and college (CCR) and continues to provide for issuance of a high-school equivalency credential. The philosophy underlying the new GED assessment states that there is a foundational core, or domain, of academic skills and content knowledge that must be acquired in order for an adult to be prepared to enter a job, a training program, or an entry-level, credit bearing postsecondary course. While the emphasis on particular skills may differ from job to job and course to course, mastery of a core set of essential skills is required for any post-secondary pursuit.

(Wine, Marjorie, et al.)

or all of that remedial work, enrolling in more advanced classes immediately. This is not always the case, of course, but it also is not always the case for high school graduates. The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education reports that 60 percent of first-year college students require remedial coursework.⁶

Technically, community colleges do not require a high school diploma or GED credential for enrollment. However, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) that most universities also use to determine financial aid eligibility requires the applicant to possess a diploma or equivalent or to have completed a high school education in a home-school setting approved by state law.⁷ For many people, financial aid is an absolute need in order to attend postsecondary education, thus making the GED credential or high school diploma a *de facto* requirement for enrollment.

Universities typically do require a high school diploma or equivalent to enroll, and some require a minimum score for GED applicants. University of Oregon,⁸ Portland State University⁹ and Oregon State University,¹⁰ for example, set minimum scores on the GED test for admission.

A high school diploma or GED credential is also a minimum requirement for many technical and trade schools and is sometimes accepted for military enlistment.

For young people who do not wish to pursue further education or training, a GED credential can be the gateway to work. Employers today commonly require that new hires possess a high school diploma or equivalent, even for entry-level jobs.

Yet for all those opportunities, a GED credential does not guarantee success. In the past, many people who earned it were unprepared for college and career. Some lacked academic skills; others lacked personal skills needed to excel. We return to this point below.

History of the GED

The GED test was born out of war. Many young veterans returning from World War II found that they did not possess the credentials needed to pursue higher education or career. They might have been gone for years and had disengaged from the educational system.

GED was created to provide them with a means to earn a high school equivalency that would open doors. This was particularly important in light of the G.I. Bill, which originated around the same time and provided funding for veterans to attend college.¹¹

The first people took the test in 1942. The practical application of the exam soon spread beyond veterans to serve other adults who did not finish high school. More than 18 million

Profile: Yolanda G.

*GED Student
Portland Community College
Age: 25*



When Yolanda G. became pregnant in high school, she enrolled in an alternative program. She was still three or four credits short of what she needed to graduate when she turned 21 and became disqualified for school.

She attempted her first GED test preparation in 2007, but she couldn't continue because of a second pregnancy. In the fall of 2013, she returned to her studies.

"The sooner I get my GED, ... the sooner I can get my career started," she confided.

Yolanda's children motivate her to study for the GED exam. With three small kids and one stepson, time management is a big challenge for the 25-year-old while she prepares.

She does all her work during the GED class period because she is too busy with the kids' daily demands outside the class.

Her two biggest hurdles to studying are childcare and transportation. For the former, she relies on her aunt. For the latter, she receives some help from the Workforce Training Center and Department of Human Services in the form of gas vouchers.

In the past, she and folks like her had to figure out what options were available to them for GED preparation and support on their own. The public schools provided no direction.

This time around she feels she is receiving the help she needs from Portland Community College.

She especially credits her current GED instructor's encouragement for her sticking with the program.

After completing her GED, she wants to go to college and ultimately become a nurse.

people have passed the GED test. It remains the only nationally recognized high school equivalency exam at this time.

Historically, the nonprofit American Council on Education ran the test. ACE represents the presidents of accredited public, private, and for-profit colleges and universities. It owns the GED trademark and oversees content.

In 2011, ACE joined with Pearson VUE to form GED Testing Service. Pearson VUE is part of Pearson PLC, a global, for-profit firm that publishes education materials and provides

commercial testing. The company is one of the largest providers of textbooks used by public schools in the United States.

GED Testing Service now oversees the GED test and directly related services.

2014 Revision and the Common Core Standards

Over the years, ACE revised the GED to reflect new educational standards and expectations. Such updates are needed occasionally as expectations for high school graduates change. The knowledge and skills they are expected to master are not static, and the GED gradually falls behind until realignment. Past revisions occurred in 1978, 1988 and 2002.

On Jan. 2, 2014, the GED Testing Service launched its newest version of the GED. This time, not only had expectations of high school graduates changed, but the Common Core State Standards had been adopted by nearly every state, including Oregon. The new test therefore aims both to address concerns about the old one and bring the GED into alignment with the [Common Core](#).*

According to the official website of the Common Core, “The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers.”¹²

The format of the GED test also changed. The previous test consisted of five subtests. The 2014 version has only four, merging reading and writing subtests into a single “Language Arts.” The other three subtests cover mathematical reasoning, science and social studies. GED Testing Service estimates students will need more than 7 hours to complete all four.¹³

In the past, students have primarily taken the GED on paper. No longer. The new test will be conducted exclusively on computers.[†] That will allow more-sophisticated questioning that adapts to test-takers and provides a more thorough assessment.

Test-takers therefore will need some keyboarding skill, which could present new challenges for education and test preparation programs. People without regular access to computers might not be comfortable using them.

* See Appendix B for more information about the Common Core State Standards.

† There are limited exceptions for students with disabilities.

That said, younger people tend to have stronger computer skills than their elders. Portland Community College GED instructor Bowen Adajian believes the change to computer-based testing could be a positive.

“Our students are pretty good with computers. They’re more comfortable with computers than they are with reading and writing conventional text,” he said.¹⁴

Profile: Blue Mountain Community College

GED and Adult Basic Education



Blue Mountain Community College excels at integrating resources and services for adult students in different situations.

The college serves four counties in northeastern Oregon — Baker, Grant, Morrow and Umatilla — through its locations in Pendleton, Hermiston, Baker City, Milton-Freewater, Boardman and John Day. It also provides selected onsite services to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Blue Mountain provides GED preparation services in a classroom setting not only at its various community locations but also in adult corrections institutions and local juvenile detention facilities. Many of its students require improvement in basic literacy skills and must enroll in English as a Second Language (ESL) or Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes before starting GED preparation classes.

During the 2008-09 academic year, more than 1,100 of the college’s 11,000 students plus 1,340 prison inmates enrolled in GED preparation, ESL or ABE classes. Blue Mountain has the largest contract to offer GED services in Oregon prisons.

The funding formula for community colleges does not directly fund basic skills and GED programs. Blue Mountain, like other community colleges, uses its general funds to support those classes and to underwrite some or all of the testing costs.

Colleges generally cannot charge tuition because basic skills and GED preparation students do not have the means to pay it.

Blue Mountain provides low-cost ESL, ABE and GED preparation instruction with financial support for basic literacy programs from Title II of the Federal Workforce Investment Act. In addition, basic literacy and GED programs receive varying amount of community support from nonprofits, local fundraising and philanthropy.

Students can receive tuition support and job training funded through the state’s allocation of the Federal Welfare to Work program, which primarily serves women with children, through the Jobs Opportunity Basic Skills (JOBS) program. Some students also have access to Workforce Investment Act funds that can provide funding for students in GED preparation programs.

In Eastern Oregon, Blue Mountain Community College President Camille Preus had the same view. “I think it will be well embraced by younger individuals,” she said.¹⁵

The cost to take the 2014 GED will increase. Practice subtests, which previously were free, now will cost \$4 to \$6, depending on where they are taken. The base price GED Testing Service charges for the full test has more than doubled from \$50 to \$120. Some of that fee is returned to the testing center.

Actual costs to students vary by state. In Oregon, the cost to take the test last year ranged from \$35 to \$150 among the 44 active official testing centers.¹⁶ With the 2014 test, there will be a uniform statewide fee of \$155. The Oregon Department of Education charges a \$35 administrative fee on top of GED Testing Services’ \$120.¹⁷

With the alignment to the Common Core State Standards, the new test is also expected to be more difficult than the previous version.

“As we see the new GED test roll out with more rigorous educational expectations, there could be more protracted time in preparation than we’ve had with the old test,” State Director of Adult Basic Skills David Moore said.¹⁸

Indeed, in the final months of 2013, some states saw a rush of students taking the GED in hopes of passing before the more expensive and more difficult 2014 version went into effect. Other students rushed to complete because they had passed some but not all of the old tests’ subtests. If they did not complete them by Jan. 2, 2014, they had to start over with the new test.¹⁹

Scores required to pass the GED are normed to graduating seniors around the country by testing a diverse sample of recent graduates and seniors who are on track to graduate. Their performance helps set the bar for passing. Stakeholder panels also play a role. Those panels include K-12 teachers, higher education faculty and employers.

However, 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.

A new MyGED Portal is the online point of interaction for students. There, people seeking a GED will be able to learn about the test, to register for and schedule practice tests, to find preparation resources and, after they have passed, to access score reports, and to order transcripts and diplomas.

A core part of that interactive, online experience is GED Ready, which will provide sample questions and the same scoring scheme as the real test. When students choose to take the sample test, they will immediately receive detailed score reports and customized learning plans to improve their weak spots before taking the full test. If working with a test preparation program, students can share that information with their provider.*

For educators and public officials, GED Analytics will provide new depth of information to states that want it. The detailed reports will allow officials to analyze student success down to the local program level in order to see which are working as well as where additional resources might be most fruitfully directed.

40-40-20 and the challenge of high school dropouts

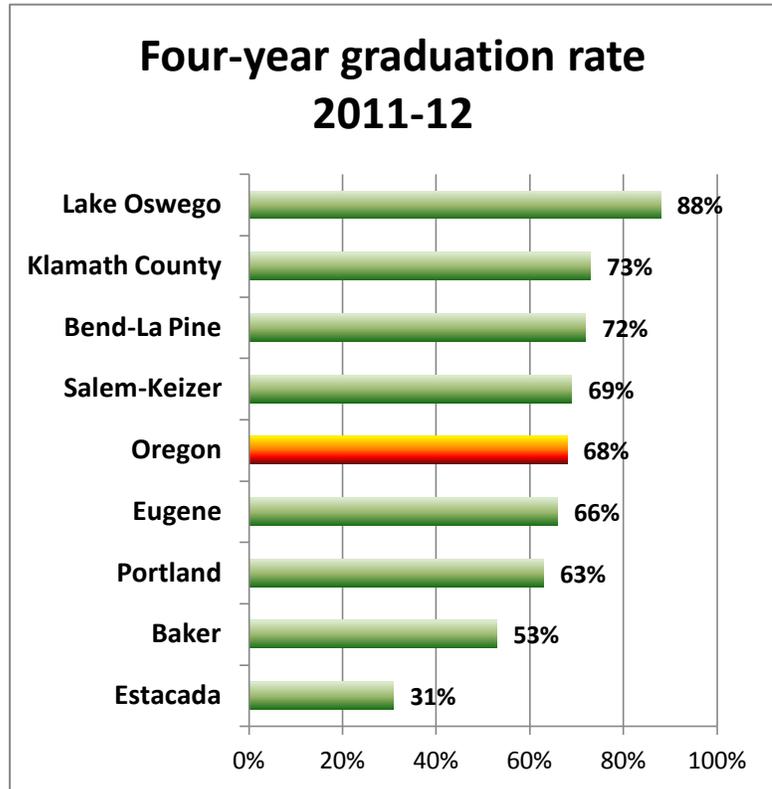
On July 20, 2011, Gov. John Kitzhaber signed SB 253,²⁰ which the Oregon Legislature had passed with overwhelming bipartisan support a month earlier.[†] SB 253 set ambitious goals for education in the state. Colloquially referred to as the 40-40-20 law, the bill enacted statutory goals that Oregon would strive to achieve by 2025:

- At least 40 percent of adult Oregonians earn a bachelor’s degree or higher.
- At least 40 percent of adult Oregonians earn an associate’s degree or post-secondary credential as their highest level of educational attainment.
- The remaining 20 percent or less of adult Oregonians earn a high school diploma, extended or modified diploma or the equivalent as their highest level of educational attainment.

* Sample questions are online at gedtestingservice.com/educators/freepracticetest.

[†] The Oregon Senate passed SB 253 on Feb. 10, 2011 with a 28-2 vote. The Oregon State House of Representatives passed it on June 21, 2011 with a 46-14 vote.

The implications of the third goal are striking. In order to achieve any of the goals, nearly 100 percent of adult Oregonians must achieve high school graduation or an equivalent certification.* The U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey found that about 336,000 Oregonians 18 and older (11 percent) lacked a high school diploma or its equivalent.²¹ To put that in perspective, it is more than the combined populations of Salem and Eugene.



Oregon graduates about two-thirds of its high school students in four years, according to data compiled by the Oregon

Department of Education. In the 2011-12 cohort, 68.4 percent received a regular high school diploma in four years. Given an extra year, the five-year cohort graduation rate increased to 72.4 percent. Those rates have been trending upward slightly in recent years, but they remain too low for a state with lofty education goals.²²

Local graduation rates vary across Oregon. In Portland Public School District, the four-year graduation rate for the 2011-12 cohort was 63 percent.[†]

Graduation rates also vary among racial/ethnic groups. Asian and white students tend to graduate at higher rates than other groups.

Oregon’s K-12 educators strive to increase the portion of students who graduate each year with a regular high school diploma, but it is unrealistic to expect that a 100 percent completion rate is obtainable by 2025, if ever.

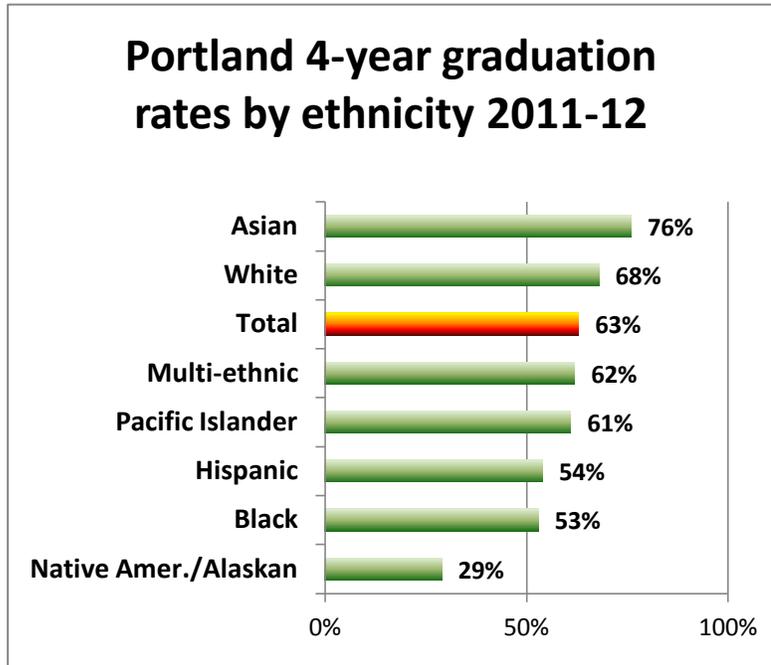
The large number of dropouts has serious personal and public consequences.

* “Nearly” because exceptional students without a high school diploma or GED credential still can enroll in community college and earn a two-year degree. They would then fall into the middle 40.

† Portland Public Schools’ 2011-12 four-year “completion” rate – which includes adult high school diploma, modified diploma and GED recipients – was 73 percent. The state completion rate was 75 percent.

The poverty rate is particularly acute among Oregonians without a high school diploma or equivalent, standing at 29 percent. Among students with a diploma it is only 16 percent, and the rate drops even further for college-educated Oregonians.

The benefits of education do not accrue to the individual alone. Oregon as a whole benefits from an educated populace that appeals to employers. Those workers also contribute to state coffers through income taxes.



Conversely, Oregon experiences steep costs associated with people who drop out of high school. They are more likely to rely on public programs such as unemployment assistance and the Oregon Health Plan. They also are more likely to be incarcerated.

By one estimate, when lost revenue and additional public support costs are totaled, dropouts cost Oregon more than \$400 million per year.²³

The state should focus considerable effort on high school retention and completion, but the GED is an important part of a robust safety net and essential to achieving the 40-40-20 goals. As long as some students do not receive a high school diploma, they will need to earn a credential that demonstrates college and career readiness before the state can declare success.

Discussion

The illusion of high school equivalency

Oregon's 40-40-20 goal does not differentiate between high school graduates and earners of an equivalent certificate (GED). It consolidates them into a single group (the 20 percent), and that could create the impression that they are equivalent. They are not.

The earning power of GED recipients and their general career prospects fall short of high school graduates. College and career prospects for someone with the pre-2014 GED are little better than for someone who has dropped out and never earned a credential. Time will tell whether the 2014 revision helps create better opportunities.

The state will repeatedly assess its progress toward 40-40-20 in the run-up to the 2025 target date. As it does so, differentiating between high school graduates and GED recipients would increase transparency and promote a better understanding among Oregonians that they are not the same and historically have had, on average, very different outcomes. Oregon should not seek to increase GED attainment at the cost of high school graduation rates simply because both count the same in 40-40-20.

Conclusion 1:

The 40-40-20 goal could create a false equivalency between the GED and a high school diploma.

Multiple witnesses testified that GED completers often do not possess the knowledge and skills that are needed to continue either in employment or post-secondary education. For all the doors that officially open, most people who earn the GED fail to take advantage of their new opportunities such as post-secondary education.

Researchers with the National Bureau of Economic Research conducted a review of the academic literature about the GED and reported in 2010 that it provides minimal value in terms of labor market outcomes and post-secondary success:

GEDs are equivalent to uncredentialed dropouts in terms of their labor market outcomes and their general performance in society. On average, obtaining a GED does not increase the wages of dropouts. While GEDs go to college at higher rates than dropouts, few finish more than one semester. The same traits that lead them to drop

out of school also lead them to leave from jobs early, to divorce more frequently, and to fail in the military.²⁴

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.

Bowen Adajian, a GED instructor at Portland Community College's Portland Metropolitan Workforce Training Center, described the deficit among many of his students. "My students tend to lack these kinds of soft skills, emotional skills or habits of mind – things like patience, perseverance and the ability to tolerate frustration," he said.

Portland Public Schools Superintendent Carole Smith noted that well-designed class time spent preparing for the GED can help some students develop college and career readiness skills.²⁵

That is not to say that all students who pursue a GED lack the traits that businesses seek. Indeed, examples abound of students who earn a GED and go on to tremendous success. Famous examples include comedian Bill Cosby, actor Christian Slater, former Delaware Gov. Ruth Ann Minner, former U.S. Surgeon General Richard Carmona and former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman, Jr.

Leaders from Portland's Hispanic business community remained skeptical of the GED's value. When asked who is best served by access to the GED, Gale Castillo, president of the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber, answered that no one is well served by it. "The GED is not a solution to the dropout problem. It will not prepare students to be college-ready or prepare for a career," she said.²⁶

Gerardo Ochoa, a member of the chamber's board and director of financial assistance at Linfield College, echoed a common theme among witnesses. "Finishing the GED is not enough," he said.²⁷

Rather, it is a point on an educational and career continuum that should continue past earning a GED certificate. The need for further learning and for more sophisticated soft skills will increase as the economy in Oregon continues to change.

Witnesses from community colleges also indicated that GED recipients are often perceived as underprepared for college.

“In its current form, the GED is viewed by some as an incomplete measure and is not seen as a viable articulation of a level of skill and talent,” Camille Preus, president of Blue Mountain Community College, said.²⁸

Randy Trask, president of GED Testing Service, acknowledged the challenges in an interview with PBS NewsHour:

If you think about what we've been testing historically, we've been testing knowledge. And what employers are telling us and what colleges are telling us is it's less about the knowledge and more about being able to use what you know to demonstrate critical thinking skills and solve real-world problems. ... It's the application of the knowledge that becomes much more important than the original knowledge we tested.²⁹

Where the evidence of GED success is lacking, the evidence of high school graduates' success is clear. A student who completes high school and earns a diploma on average will earn more over a lifetime and has far greater opportunity to pursue post-secondary education.

Conclusion 2:

A high school diploma better serves and prepares students who can achieve it than the pre-2014 GED certificate did.

Some business representatives suggested to your committee that the National Career Readiness Certificate is a better measure for whether an individual possesses the skills to succeed in the workplace. The NCRC provides an assessment of an individual's skills in applied mathematics, locating information and reading comprehension. It also seeks to measure soft skills and work-related behaviors that indicate the potential for employment success.

David Conley, professor of educational policy and leadership in the University of Oregon College of Education, testified that no single test or credential – not the high school diploma nor the GED nor the NCRC – can provide a clear line to show who is ready and sufficiently prepared and who is not.³⁰

The GED fundamentally differs from high school, though. Preparation does not normally occur in the sort of institutional school environment that consumes a young person's days and is compelled by the state. Rather, it is something that adults who have disengaged from the educational system personally choose to pursue because of the perceived benefits it will bring.

The GED, then, has never truly been a high school equivalent. The 2014 revision is tied to high school standards through the Common Core State Standards and the passing score is normed to high school graduates. It is not, however, a comparable experience, and demanding that it identify people who are indistinguishable from high school graduates in their skills and knowledge is an unreasonable expectation.

The better way for the potential test-takers, educators, employers and the public to think of the GED program is as a measure of college and career readiness for adults 19 years old and older. If students for whom high school is no longer a practical option can succeed in post-secondary education, in trade schools or in a career after preparing for the GED exam and earning the credential, then the GED would serve as a valuable educational benchmark and waypoint.

Conclusion 3:

Rather than ask whether GED recipients are equivalent to high school graduates, Oregon should assess the credential based on whether the people who earn it succeed in college or career.

A new era for the GED

The 2014 GED revision is a second chance for outreach both to students and to the broader public who have preconceptions based on the old GED.

The negative popular perception that your committee found arose during the era of the 2002-13 GED test, which had become outdated over more than a decade. The arrival of a new GED examination could be a turning point. It's a brand new day, and the revised GED deserves an opportunity to overturn past preconceptions. How well earners of the new credential perform in college and career will to a large extent determine whether it becomes a more meaningful credential.

“The proof will be in the pudding,” BMCC President Preus said, “when we actually start enrolling students at collegiate level coursework who have the new GED and see how well they do.”³¹

Conclusion 4:

It will take time to ascertain whether the 2014 GED revision successfully measures college and career readiness.

Andrew Dyke, senior economist and managing director at ECONorthwest, suggested that the higher standards of the new GED could screen out some less-skilled students who might have passed the old test. That, in turn, could improve the perception of the GED.³²

Dyke's suggestion contains an important insight. The new GED is not something meant to be handed out to anyone who simply jumps through hoops. If it is to have genuine value, employers and post-secondary educators must believe that it accurately assesses the knowledge and skills of test-takers. Only people who genuinely meet the standards should pass the exam. If it is more difficult than the past exam, then those who passed it will have demonstrated a higher level of knowledge and skills than their predecessors.

He also emphasized that higher standards will not help if the standards reflect skills that employers don't care about.

Operating under the old assumptions would be a disservice both to students and to the people who could benefit from access to a pool of educated people who have earned a GED, but overturning those preconceptions could prove difficult if the state does not actively get the message out.

Compared to some other states, Oregon conducts very little outreach and marketing. The secretary of state's GED audit notes that Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts and Virginia had statewide marketing plans and programs in place to raise awareness of Adult Basic Education and the GED in particular. Kentucky in particular has an aggressive program of television and radio advertising as well as partnerships with local McDonald's restaurants to produce tray liners that direct potential students to GED services.³³

Oregon's business community could become a valuable partner in such efforts. The state's business leaders were among the strongest proponents of the 40-40-20 plan when it was proposed. Moreover, employers have a vested interest in advancing the plan's goals, including helping adults attain the knowledge and skills that allow them to earn a GED credential and move on to college or career.

Conclusion 5:

Students, employers, educators, and the public need to understand that the 2014 GED revision sets new achievement standards and is not the old GED.

Who takes the GED test?

Adults who have not earned a high school diploma are as varied as other Oregonians. They come from all racial and ethnic groups as well as from different economic groups. There is no single description that encompasses them all.

There are some people who take the test because they want to, not because they dropped out of school. Home-schooled students might want it as a credential. Particularly bright students might see it as a way to complete high school early and move on to more challenging education. Incarcerated youth pursue the GED. Some immigrants choose to take the GED because credentials from their home country are not recognized in the United States.

Those people do exist, but they are the exceptions. 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.³⁴ That passage rate ranked Oregon 11th among states.³⁵

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.*

* See Appendix C for more demographic details.

One should not attribute those disparities to different degrees of motivation to take the test. Rather, they arise because dropout rates are higher among males and non-Asian communities of color. Those demographic groups therefore have a larger proportional pool of people who would consider pursuing the GED and for whom the high school system is not currently working.

Midge Purcell, director of advocacy and public policy for the Urban League of Portland, noted that in order to ensure that the GED is a successful option for African Americans, the delivery system and support system must accommodate the particular needs of the community and African American students. It is important to offer culturally competent and culturally specific* programs that are integrated within an existing and trustworthy environment and support system.³⁶

Representatives of the Portland Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber testified that in the Latino community, education tends to be a family effort. The chamber seeks to build on this work ethic and commitment to educational attainment by directly engaging with students and their families before they become disengaged. Members coach students in the skills they need to succeed in college as well as in more practical matters such as seeking financial aid and navigating academic bureaucracy.³⁷

Gerardo Ochoa, a member of the chamber's board and director of financial assistance at Linfield College, said such encouragement is necessary because "the system is disenfranchising too many of our kids" and tells them that "they are not college material."³⁸

The GED test is offered in Spanish.[†] In 2012, 1,053 Oregonians chose the Spanish version, representing about 8 percent of the 12,691 test-takers that year. Nationally, about 4 percent of people took the test in Spanish.³⁹

If Oregon is to strive to achieve its goal of universal high school completion or its equivalent under the 40-40-20 plan, it must reach out to members of diverse demographic groups that have disproportionately taken the GED and do so in a way that addresses their unique characteristics and needs. The educational needs of these communities should be addressed in a comprehensive manner that goes beyond the GED test itself. Partnerships with groups like

* The notions of "culturally competent and culturally specific," as used in this report, refer to recognizing and being sensitive to differences that exist between people of varied cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. One must be able to tailor a message, training, etc. to the cultural norms, practices and communication styles of a particular audience. Given the disproportionate outcomes that affect communities of color and the lack of systemic success to date, understanding these cultural attributes and approaches is critical to making progress on rectifying those inequities.

† GED Testing Service also offers a French version of the test. Only 527 people nationwide (less than 0.1 percent) chose it in 2012, mostly in New York.

the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber, the Urban League, faith-based organizations, and other civic and nonprofit groups would facilitate such efforts.

Conclusion 6:

The lack of targeted outreach across the state to communities of color and immigrant communities in a culturally appropriate manner for each has hindered Oregon from maximizing the number of young adults who re-engage in education, including through GED programs. One blanket outreach policy will not successfully engage all groups.

Wraparound support services for adults preparing to take the GED

Many young adults face significant barriers to preparing for and earning a GED credential.

When your committee interviewed GED students, a common thread emerged for why they want to earn the credential. Yes, they see it as a means to advance to postsecondary education, technical training and career, but that is not what motivates them to return to the classroom week after week.

“The reason I’m pursuing my GED is so I can get better job opportunities and to further my life for my son,” Victor T. said.⁴⁰

“My kids are my motivation. ... The sooner I get my GED, the better that I can get my career started and pursue what I want to do with my life. That way I could provide for my kids, and I wouldn’t have to depend on a man,” Yolanda G. said.⁴¹

“My motivation are my kids because I can’t tell my daughter I want her to go to college if her mother doesn’t have a high school diploma,” Michelle L. said.⁴²

Those personal reasons are an essential element of each student’s narrative. Yet even as family motivates students, it also is one of many potential barriers to a student’s devoting time, energy and financial resources toward education. But family is not the only obstacle.

Bowen Adajian, a GED instructor for Portland Community College’s Portland Metropolitan Workforce Training Center, described some of the challenges students face.

“Most of them receive [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families] or some other form of public assistance,” he said. “In addition to the stressors of poverty, most of my students face

Profile: Bowen Adajian

*GED and Adult Basic Education Instructor
Portland Community College
Portland Metropolitan Workforce Training
Center*



When Bowen Adajian started teaching remedial reading, writing and mathematics almost two decades ago, he found that he enjoyed working with students who traditionally struggled academically. He has taught GED preparation for 15 years in Portland and previously taught similar classes in Wisconsin. He holds a master's degree in English literature and composition.

He sees the challenges students face on a daily basis. Academically, many of his students enter the class at an 8th grade reading level and a 5th grade math level.

"The general demographic is mostly women. Most of them receive TANF or some other form of public assistance," he said. "In addition to the stressors of poverty, most of my students face additional barriers such as domestic violence, drugs and alcohol, mental health and homelessness. Many of my students are affected by at least one of those barriers."

In the past, there were four instructors for the program, two part-time and two full-time paid for by the Steps to Success program at his campus.

Over the last several years, however, grants dried up, and now Bowen is the only

instructor. He is a part-time instructor, and his GED classes usually have 15-20 students on the roster. "The huge challenge is attendance and retention," he said. On an average day, eight to ten might show up for class. His class meets four days a week for two or three hours per day.

Bowen feels well informed about the 2014 GED revision, but he believes that many of his students will struggle to overcome the higher bar it sets.

He believes that because of their weaknesses in basic reading, writing and math, the increased emphasis on reasoning, critical thinking and content knowledge in the Common Core-aligned test will be a big challenge for them.

Bowen believes the GED is a very important stepping stone for students to transition into additional education and training and especially into employment.

It is essential that students are supported on to that next step. Without built-in supports similar to those of the Workforce Training Center or the Department of Human Services, Bowen says GED recipients will have difficulty transitioning successfully into the next stage of their lives.

additional barriers such as domestic violence, drugs and alcohol, mental health and homelessness. Many of my students are affected by at least one of those barriers.”⁴³

They therefore typically have limited resources to pay for test prep and often find themselves working long hours just to keep a roof over their heads and to feed their families. Time for studying grows scarce.

For GED students with children, babysitting and other childcare services can present hurdles. Even when they have access to such services, using them can be time consuming.

For example, GED student Yolanda G. lives in North Portland but must deliver her children to Gresham where her aunt watches them. She then returns to Portland for her GED classes and must make the roundtrip again afterward.

Michelle L., another student your committee interviewed, described similar challenges, “My daughter doesn’t have to be to school until 8:50, so when my babysitter, my mom, comes late ... I’m a little late waiting for the bus, and I get here late, which is not OK. Transportation and childcare are my biggest things.”⁴⁴

Many GED completion programs would be ineffective if they did not provide wraparound social and economic support for students. The problems that contribute to dropping out of school initially also affect a person’s willingness and ability to pursue options for advancing their education, like the GED. Challenges such as finances, childcare and transportation are often cited.

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.⁴⁵ To succeed at engaging such students, a GED preparation program must address the underlying issues that caused the initial disengagement.⁴⁶

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.⁴⁷ Students must look to other public assistance.

“Usually a nonprofit workforce or community college partner will provide the wraparound services. It could be transportation, vouchers, health care or child care to provide support for students while they are getting instruction,” Blue Mountain Community College President Camille Preus explained.⁴⁸

Northwest Health Foundation President Nichole Maher* also identified mental health issues and the need for community support as significant challenges.⁴⁹

Wraparound services are essential because students' basic needs must be met in order for them to be able to focus on the GED. Portland YouthBuilders is a prime example of the sort of organization that provides wraparound services and assistance to help students address the myriad issues that inhibit their success and ability to prepare for the GED.

“We have three people on staff who are very proactively working with students to address the barriers that got them off track in the first place: unstable housing, unstable food, drug-affected families, juvenile justice circumstances. The barriers this population faces are endless,” Elise Huggins, education manager at Portland YouthBuilders, said.⁵⁰

Her organization also provides direct support to students in the form of a stipend based on attendance.

The faces of GED

Tracie Memmott, Portland Community College – Cascades instructor for the YES! Program, arranged for some GED students to share their stories with your committee.

Raja M.

Raja (18 years old) found GED preparations to be easy. He didn't see any major challenges ahead in his GED testing. Once he receives his GED, he wants to take video production classes. After that, he wants to pursue higher education and get a job.



Skylar H.

Skylar (20 years old) moved from Arizona to Oregon. He wasn't able to complete his high school diploma because of illness. He had a pleasant experience completing his GED. He credits his PCC instructors and the YES! program for his successful completion. The only major challenge he faced was scheduling classes. He currently is working on a transfer degree.

Hannah R.

Hannah (17 years old) had problems with attendance at her high school. Her parents have been instrumental in pushing her to follow the GED track instead. Although she is worried about “how long the [GED] process takes,” she is grateful for the current YES! teachers and their help. She plans to transfer to a 4-year college and ultimately become a registered nurse.



“We recognize that many of our youth can’t afford the time to go back to school. They have families that they must financially contribute to, or they have families of their own,” she said. “The stipend is far from a livable wage, but it helps our students stay in school.”

Huggins is optimistic about their ability to overcome challenges, “They are incredibly resilient youth. That they even come to our door and want to try again is very impressive.”

New Avenues for Youth, another Portland provider, also emphasizes support services.

“We keep our students engaged by providing a lot of wraparound support,” said Kari Brenk, New Avenues’ program director. Every student is tied to a team of support staff and case managers.⁵¹

Programs like Portland YouthBuilders, New Avenues for Youth and Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center, provide culturally competent avenues for ethnic minority students who are overrepresented among GED seekers.⁵² Despite this, Oregon lacks GED programs that cater to Latino and Southeast Asian GED seekers.⁵³

Many of these programs receive funding from a variety of sources based on the particular social needs they address, such as homelessness. Some of those funding sources include Portland Public Schools, the City of Portland, Multnomah County and the U.S. Department of Labor.

Conclusion 7:

Because many adults who lack a high school diploma face significant barriers to success in their lives, well funded, coordinated, culturally competent wraparound support services are essential to helping students succeed in pursuing a GED credential.

Paying for the GED

In general, GED participants in Oregon personally bear the brunt of costs for testing and preparation unless they qualify for a specific need-based program (e.g., unemployment or teen parenting) or a third party (e.g., community college, school district or private nonprofit) underwrites the costs through some other funding sources. For many students, this means that access to financial assistance for testing costs can feel arbitrary and capricious. It might appear that help is more dependent on where one lives and one’s personal persistence in finding resources than on the actual need.

The increased cost of the 2014 GED revision could create a financial hurdle for some test takers. 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.

Thirty-three percent of the costs assessed by the GED Testing Service will come back to test centers, through the Department of Education,⁵⁴ but it remains unclear how these resources will be allocated in relation to existing resources.

These increasing costs occur in an environment of reduced federal spending. Students will find less funding available to support them while they pursue a GED.

For example, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (or TANF, which is commonly referred to as welfare) now identifies GED preparation as a non-core activity that only some TANF recipients may count toward their federal participation requirements. Specifically, single adults with children under the age of six may not count non-core activities like GED preparation. Single adults with children 6 and older as well as two-parent families may count it to varying degrees.⁵⁵

Due to budget reductions experienced in Oregon's 2011-13 biennium, TANF limited GED test payments to teen parents. Effective July 1, 2013, that policy was expanded to provide some flexibility for case managers to pay for GED tests on behalf of other TANF adults under some circumstances, but the example remains relevant.⁵⁶

Teen mothers certainly can benefit from such assistance, but so would other at-risk parents who might have as great or greater need and motivation to pursue a GED credential.

A second example of reduced support occurred in the Portland metro area where managers of Workforce Investment Act funds have shifted the focus away from education costs, including GED services, and toward actual job development, workforce training and creating pipelines to work. Assessing the merits of that shift in an environment of limited resources is beyond the scope of this report.

Some states subsidize the testing fees. For example, both Maryland and Ohio subsidize the cost to test-takers, and Maryland's governor has ensured that testing fees will stay nearly the same price under the 2014 revision (\$45 for the whole test suite, less than one-third of the cost to students in Oregon).⁵⁷ New York, which has abandoned the GED in favor of the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC), will continue to pay all testing fees for students.⁵⁸

* Test costs varied in Oregon prior to the 2014 GED revision. Typically the test cost \$100 to \$125. At Portland Community College, for example, the fee was \$120.

In the case of New York, however, it is important to note that fully subsidizing testing fees does not ensure positive outcomes. The 2012 GED passing rate there was worst in the nation at only 54 percent compared to Oregon's 84 percent.⁵⁹ One cause might be that there is no personal cost to take and retake the test, even if one is unprepared.

In 2012, some 12,691 Oregonians took at least one of the GED subtests. If one optimistically assumes that number will double in coming years as the state pushes toward its 40-40-20 goal and that each test-taker completes all of the subtests, then the total cost to cover their fees would be nearly \$4 million.

Given the pass rate in New York, however, it might make better sense to pay only part of the fee. For example, Oregon might decide to pay half the cost. It also could restrict who is eligible with need-based criteria as well as requirements that test-takers have completed a recognized preparation course or scored at a pass level on official practice tests.

For \$2 million or less annually and \$4 million in a budget biennium, Oregon could offer a substantial discount on testing fees for many GED test takers.* That would be 0.03 percent of the \$6.55 billion K-12 biennial budget that the legislature adopted in 2013.

Conclusion 8:

The cost of a need-based subsidy for GED test takers who meet minimum qualifications is not out of reach in the Oregon budget and would reduce the disincentive for many low-income high school dropouts to prepare for and take the test.

Alternatives to the GED

The 2014 GED revision has not received universal acceptance. Some of the changes that came with the exam worried education officials in other states and led them to pursue alternatives. Two new exams have sprung up to fill that demand.

- For-profit CTB/McGraw-Hill will offer the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC).⁶⁰
- Nonprofit Education Testing Service will offer the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET).⁶¹

* If 25,000 people take the GED in some near-future year, it would cost \$2 million to give each an \$80 subsidy or to pay the entire testing fee for half of them.

Both tests cover five core areas: reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies. Both also claim that they will align with the Common Core State Standards.

They differ from the 2014 revision of the GED in at least two significant ways.

- Students can choose between computer or pencil-and-paper exams. The GED test is available only on computer.
- The base cost for the two alternatives is \$52 for TASC and \$50 for HiSET, compared to \$120 for GED. Total costs to the test-taker will vary from state to state.

Several states find those differences appealing and have either dropped the GED in favor of one of the alternatives or will offer multiple options. Maine, Iowa, Missouri, New Hampshire and Louisiana have chosen the HiSET. New York and Indiana have chosen the TASC.⁶² Tennessee now offers both HiSET and GED as equal certificates.⁶³ Nevada will offer all three.⁶⁴

Oregon is sticking with the GED alone. State GED Administrator Marque Haeg, whose office falls under the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD), testified that changing to an alternative test would be a complex decision requiring coordination with Oregon Department of Human Services, Department of Education, the Adult Basic Skills community and Oregon Youth Authority.

Haeg noted several points in the GED's favor over the new alternatives:

- **Portability** – CCWD wants to assure that a high school alternative certificate completed in Oregon will be accepted by all other states and Canadian provinces. Currently, the GED is the only one that has that level of portability.
- **Sustainability** – GED Testing Service, by way of American Council on Education, has a 70-year history of developing high school equivalency tests. The alternatives are new.
- **Alignment with Common Core State Standards** – The 2014 GED revision aligns with the Common Core State Standards. The alternative tests claim they will align with at least some of the Common Core, though full implementation will take time. Those promises could wind up being more marketing than reality.
- **History** – The GED has an established track record and experience in testing. It has been around for 70 years. The alternative tests might not prove sustainable.

The alternative tests might be more attractive once they have had time to iron out any issues in the states that are using them. Those states also might find that these other tests provide a more effective platform for assessing the skills of specific types of learners, for example, recent immigrants who are non native English speakers. Problems also could arise with the GED. Haeg therefore suggested reassessing the HiSET and TASC objectively in a few years.

Conclusion 9:

Continuing to use the GED has pros and cons, but new alternatives lack any performance data.

Conclusion 10:

As data become available about the performance of the 2014 GED test and new alternatives, Oregon will be able to better assess which of them would best serve the state's educational needs.

In the meantime, adults in other states will earn these alternative credentials, and some of them will move to Oregon. Even if Oregon does not use these tests, it must decide whether it will recognize them for purposes of postsecondary education, employment and social services. If the HiSET or TASC will be accepted credentials, administrative rules and policies must be updated to reflect that.

Conclusion 11:

Regardless of whether Oregon uses alternatives to the GED, adults who have earned those credentials will move to Oregon.

Oregon's preparation for the new GED

The 2014 GED test was in the works for more than two years. It contains several significant changes from its predecessor that Oregon might have addressed prior to launch but, for reasons indiscernible to your committee, did not.

Several witnesses testified that with only a few months until the new GED launches, they had not yet received detailed information about the format and content of the new exam.

Profile: Charlotte Fraser

*Vocational and Recreational Coordinator
Clackamas County Drug Court,
Clackamas County Juvenile Department*



Charlotte Fraser shared the perspective of decades of working with GED students. She has worked with troubled youth for almost 45 years, as a counselor, case manager and program coordinator. She said that high school simply doesn't work for some students.

"Getting a GED certificate can be the best option for them, so they can get on with their lives," she said. "It may not be perfect, but it has enabled many, many young people over the years the chance to find success and feel much personal satisfaction over completing the activity.

"Just today I referred a student (a former meth user) who got his GED a few weeks ago, to Clackamas Community College's vocational staff to pursue his dream of being a welder. The GED was a huge first step in his following his dream and has made a real difference in his life. Not only did he succeed in achieving his GED, but he attended prep classes with other students and was involved in a classroom environment that provided academic as well as social opportunities."

She said classes at CCC focus on attendance, taking initiative, social skills and appropriate behavior.

"The thing about a GED is that it not only gives students a sense of accomplishment, but it shows them what it feels like to start and finish something, what it feels like to show up and do the work and complete a project. This gives them confidence in their abilities and

their potential. And they learn how to learn," she said.

In her years of coordinating employment and training programs, she has never encountered an employer who refused to hire a young person with a GED because it was not a high school diploma.

Fraser has personal experience with the GED, too. "Our granddaughter had a very rough childhood and when she came to live with us she was seriously deficient in high school credits," she shared. "It just made sense for her to get her GED. She completed her GED at CCC and went on to have a career as a beautician. She worked as a hair stylist for a while and then she decided she wanted something more challenging. She studied to be a medical assistant, graduated with honors, and is now a medical assistant in a clinic. The road to her success started with her GED and continued through other accomplishments."

Fraser acknowledged the value of updating the test periodically, but she worried that it might be too much change this time.

"I hope that supports are in place to assist young people through the challenges and requirements that the new GED test brings," she said.

That concern aside, she remains upbeat about the GED. "The GED, old or new, can be a huge stepping stone in a young person's life," she said.

For example, Heather Ficht, director of youth workforce services at Worksystems, Inc., said in August, “I feel like the new GED is a black box that I haven’t gotten to see inside.” She said in November that more information had become available in the intervening months.⁶⁵

Elise Huggins, education manager at Portland YouthBuilders, said in September, “GED has released a lot of guidance on the new GED, but we have not seen a version of the test that is going to roll out in January. We just have the learning targets and the assessment targets. We’ve been working proactively to align our program with these learning and assessment targets, but since we haven’t seen the new test, we are prepared to do additional work when it is released.”⁶⁶

Yet when your committee interviewed CT Turner, GED Testing Service’s senior director, public affairs and government relations, he identified resources that have been available for up to two years to assist teachers and test preparation programs in preparing for the 2014 revision. An assessment guide for educators runs to more than 100 pages covering each of the content areas and what the standards will be. The site also includes a sample exam and archived webinars for training.⁶⁷

“We have provided more information earlier about this test to educators than any test that we’ve ever released in our history,” he said.⁶⁸

Your committee was not able to ascertain why this information disconnect exists.

GED Testing Service must accept some of the responsibility. It is the primary source of information about the 2014 revision and the resources available to help states and educators prepare. It failed to ensure that information was widely disseminated, at least in Oregon.

It is not solely responsible, though. Oregon State GED Administrator Marque Haeg testified that he had updated GED test center coordinators and Adult Basic Skills Directors about available information.

“The information ... has been distributed to the GED preparation sites. The publishers’ list of materials is distributed to the preparation staff, and we have recently conducted a survey of the needs of instructors to teach the new content of the tests,” he wrote in an email to your committee.

Yet most representatives from GED test centers, higher education and other preparation sites in Oregon testified that they did not have the information necessary to prepare adults to take the new GED exam.

Teachers and GED test centers are not the only ones who needed to prepare for the new test. Technical changes needed to be made to Oregon Administrative Rules, which spell out several

details about oversight and administration of the GED in the state.* As of December 2013, with little time remaining before the launch of the new exam, they had not all been updated.

By December, Oregon also had not adopted a regulation regarding the sharing of disaggregated information between the GED Testing Service and GED test centers. This shortfall will be addressed in detail in the next section.

Oregon's public universities accept the GED for admission under some circumstances, but they require that minimum scores be met. Those scores are tied to particular GED revisions. For example, the University of Oregon uses the following standard that reflects changes made in the 2002-13 test:⁶⁹

- If you received your GED *after* January 2002, your standard score on each of the five examinations must be at least 410, with an overall average of 580 or higher.
- If you received your GED *before* January 2002, your standard score on each of the five examinations must be at least 40, with an overall average of 58 or higher.

Similar standards exist at other public universities. In the final months of 2013, they had not been updated to address the 2014 revision. Indeed, one admissions official contacted by your committee was unaware of the 2014 revision and the need to set a new admissions threshold.

Joseph Holliday, Oregon University System assistant vice chancellor for student success initiatives, initiated discussions among admissions officials in December. If things advance well, schools could have new standards in place relatively quickly.

The new admissions requirements could again reflect specific numerical scores or instead adopt the GED Testing Service's "GED Score with honors" level that the service says will indicate college and career readiness.

The fact that universities were unaware of the need for new GED admissions standards and were working to adopt them quickly so close to the launch of the new exam is another indication of a lack of state preparation.

Conclusion 12:

Oregon agencies and officials that oversee or interact with the GED inadequately prepared for the 2014 revision.

* Specifically OAR 589-007-0400: General Educational Development Program and Certificates of High School Equivalency and OAR 589-007-0500: State GED Fees.

GED Analytics

The 2014 GED program includes a new tool called GED Analytics that can provide real-time data about student performance to state officials, policymakers and testing centers. The data will contain aggregate information that can inform policy and encourage sharing of best practices for student preparation. It will provide program metrics that answer questions such as:⁷⁰

- How are test-takers performing?
- What are the characteristics of test-takers?
- How many students take the test how frequently throughout the state and at individual test centers?

The new system can provide unprecedented data to officials and testing centers that will empower them to make smart choices based on real-time information. They will be able to analyze subject-specific test performance based on many demographic and geographic characteristics, as well as performance by students coming out of particular test-preparation programs. They can spot trends, both good and bad, and identify best practices to share.

Access to that data is contingent on Oregon engaging with GED Testing Services. Each state will decide how much of the data is accessible and to whom. In Oregon, that decision had not been made in the final months of 2013. The state had not adopted formal guidelines or regulation that would allow Oregon to capitalize on the data-rich package to effectively support student development while ensuring individual student privacy.

Without privacy protections, personal information about individual students could be shared widely. Students should be able to decide what is shared about them individually, and the default should be for the state to protect individual privacy.

Conclusion 13:

Approaching the end of 2013, Oregon had not prepared to take advantage of all of the analytical data available as part of the 2014 GED test. GED Analytics provides a tool to Oregon and its partners in GED preparation and testing to track and measure the outcomes of the 2014 GED test. The sooner it takes advantage of it, the sooner it will have reliable data on which to act.

State coordination and funding for the GED

Despite the ambitious 40-40-20 goal, your committee found that Oregon has neither a plan in place for providing GED-related services to students who drop out nor a clear understanding of what it would take to implement such a plan. In fact, the current approach to supporting GED attainment as the primary alternative to a high school diploma is fractured, uncoordinated and insufficient for many.

“Oregon is one of the few states in the United States that provides no categorical funding to its citizens to prepare for the test or to take the GED,” State Director of Adult Basic Skills David Moore said. “The [40-40-20] goal is ambitious, but I’m not sure the resources have been aligned at the state to adequately give Oregonians access to that educational opportunity.”⁷¹

The lack of designated, coordinated funding and preparation manifests differently in different environments, but the overall result is the same – a disconnected system where GED students often pay a disproportionate share of the costs relative to other states.

Part of the problem is that no single office or individual oversees the GED and related services in Oregon. The state has a GED administrator, but the number of programs and support services extend far beyond the scope of his responsibilities. Your committee considered recommending the creation of an overarching position, a “GED czar,” but it chose not to do so primarily out of concern that it would not successfully streamline and consolidate the oversight.

Implementing a coordinated plan for disconnected youth will require Oregon to address both regulatory and funding issues.

The Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development regulates who can provide the actual testing services by designating and monitoring local GED testing centers, but regulation does not extend to GED preparation and education programs.

While the state regulates community colleges that are significant providers of GED preparation and testing, those are not the only providers. Community-based and faith-based organizations also provide GED instruction. So do private, for-profit organizations. Because Oregon does not certify or oversee any of them, there is considerable variation in the quality of instruction. As noted above, however, the wide variety of providers also allows GED students to choose a program that best serves their particular needs and circumstances.

Community colleges tend to offer these programs as a public service and direct some of their institutional funds to underwrite the costs. GED programs are not revenue generators for colleges.

Colleges continue to provide the service because the GED opens up an educational opportunity and enhanced access to postsecondary options for people who have not completed a high school education.

Although your committee discussed formal state regulation of GED test preparation providers, we make no recommendation on this point. Some committee members view state certification as a means to protect education consumers. Other members shared concerns that a regulatory framework could become a burden on local, community-based providers, especially those that meet the culturally specific needs of communities of color.

State funding is available for students aged 19 to 21 through their local school districts. Oregon law permits, but does not require, school districts to provide alternative education services to students in that age group, using existing education dollars.⁷² Students in that age range are counted like any other student in a district's attendance tally under the state's school funding formula.⁷³

Some school districts aggressively seek out those students and provide them with alternative education paths to help complete their high school diploma or prepare for the GED test. Such services may be provided directly by the district or by contract with outside providers, such as community colleges.

Portland Public Schools actively takes advantage of this option. Superintendent Carole Smith explained:

It's our responsibility to give students an opportunity to live a productive and fulfilling life, even if they have not obtained a diploma by the time they're 18. That's one reason we provide students with an opportunity to complete school until they are 21. Those funds support community college or community-based organizations where students can continue to work on their diploma or GED. We pay for that instruction because we want students prepared to become responsible adults. That aligns with Oregon's 40-40-20 goal.⁷⁴

If more school districts served 19- to 21-year-olds, greater resources might be available to local GED services for that age group. However, because circumstances differ among districts, the decision whether to serve older students must be made locally. Your committee therefore makes no specific recommendation on this point.

The experience of community colleges and K-12 schools are pieces of a broader public funding problem. There is no categorical, dedicated, line-item funding for GED preparation, testing and wraparound support services in Oregon, and what resources are expended are not tracked in any clear way.

Many federal agencies and programs support GED attainment, including federal workforce development, the Department of Education, special education and programs that support families in need, to name a few.

Several state agencies also currently support GED-related costs through resources under their purview, including the Department of Education, Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, Oregon Youth Authority, Department of Corrections and Department of Human Services.

Yet no one actually knows how much the state spends on GED services. When asked about funds spent on GED services out of the Department of Human Services, a department analyst acknowledged that preparation, testing and support services such as childcare or transportation costs are allowable, but also wrote, “We don’t track or collect the cost specifically related to GED attainment.” She suggested, however, that they might be gleaned through manual analysis.⁷⁵

A policy and budget analyst in the Department of Administrative Services said the department has never studied how GED services are funded, and he was unaware of anyone who has.⁷⁶

A representative of the Legislative Fiscal Office also confirmed that the office does not track specific state dollars spent on programs related to the GED.⁷⁷

Conclusion 14:

Because Oregon does not track its spending on GED preparation and related services, Oregonians cannot gauge how effectively state-supported programs are performing.

While every state is dealing differently with the costs of the new GED system, several states are better positioned than Oregon to strategically meet the change.

According to the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium, Oklahoma, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania are among the states that coordinate funding for GED services across state agencies and incorporate federal funding streams.⁷⁸

Most states provide some level of categorical or line-item funding for GED services, including Washington, Montana, Georgia, Kansas and Kentucky. Many of these states provide funds for core programming and award performance-based funds related to the number of students who pass the GED.

Your committee concludes that Oregon is unprepared for the 2014 GED revision not only because it failed to take action but also because the state has never developed the institutional infrastructure, budgeting and oversight to manage the GED in a coherent manner. That was true under the old GED, but the new GED provides a second chance. It is not too late to pursue an effective approach to building an integrated system that ensures all adults have the credentialing and skills necessary to contribute to the economic, workforce and educational goals our state has set.

Conclusion 15:

A funding and oversight framework for the GED and related services that coordinates across state agencies and aligns resources within a coherent plan would stabilize the system and best ensure a successful pathway to bridging the gap between Oregonians without a high school diploma or equivalent and the aspirations of 40-40-20.

Recommendations

Oregon, the GED test itself and young adults without a high school diploma all have a second chance with the 2014 GED revision. Historically, the state has not treated the GED as part of a comprehensive education system. Now is the time to change that.

The 2014 GED revision comes at a fortuitous time for Oregon as the state strives to meet the ambitious goals of its 40-40-20 plan and has new education leadership in place. The state's still relatively new Oregon Education Investment Board last year hired a new chief education officer. The governor's office has appointed a new education adviser. And the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development has an interim director. These education leaders can implement a better approach to the GED and adult basic education without being tied directly to past shortcomings.

Yet just as the GED does not guarantee success but only a second chance for adults, so too the 2014 revision offers Oregon only an as-yet-unproven opportunity to help 19- to 25-year-old adults without high school diplomas to become active participants in the state's economy.

Many people's views of the GED credential have been shaped by its past shortcomings. Such negative opinions could discourage some adults from pursuing the credential and affect how recipients are perceived in the workplace. The launch of the 2014 revision could reshape public perceptions, but only if the public is aware of the changes and the performance of the new GED program.

Historically, Oregon has not engaged in much marketing or outreach for the GED. That should change.

Recommendation 1:

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.

Your committee concluded that the absence of a coordinated funding framework for the GED, related wraparound services and programs to help adult students develop soft skills does not

serve Oregonians well. Adults who lack a high school diploma often face steep barriers to success, and assistance programs help provide the freedom to pursue a GED. Coordination between training and preparation programs will allow students to maximize their time studying and learning career skills.

Recommendation 2:

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.

Your committee concluded that a need-based subsidy for GED testing fees would not be cost-prohibitive within the Oregon state budget and would reduce a barrier for low-income high school dropouts to prepare for and take the test. Demonstrable need varies among government programs. In this case, lawmakers should develop eligibility criteria after a robust public discussion and consideration of similar programs in other states.

Recommendation 3:

The Legislature should allocate dedicated funding to subsidize GED testing for qualified students with demonstrable need.

Oregon's public universities did not update their admissions criteria in advance of the 2014 GED's launch. Individuals who pass the new GED test will be ineligible for admission to universities until those criteria are changed.

Recommendation 4:

Oregon's public universities should update their admissions criteria to allow admissions for qualified recipients of the 2014 revision of the GED.

Your committee concluded that Oregon inadequately prepared for the launch of the new exam and to take advantage of the data offerings of the new GED program.

The foundation of action must be better information. GED Analytics can provide detailed information about test takers and preparation programs that would allow officials to better gauge success and share best practices. The state should actively engage with GED Testing Services to acquire that information and use it in ways that protect the privacy of individual test takers.

The fifth recommendation has six parts that can be summed up as follows: ***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.***

Recommendation 5.1:

Oregon’s chief education officer, State Board of Education and Oregon Education Investment Board should adopt administrative rules to allow collection of disaggregated information about GED participants while protecting students’ personal privacy.

Recommendation 5.2:

Oregon’s chief education officer, Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development director, deputy superintendent of public instruction and the State GED administrator should coordinate with GED Testing Services to take full advantage of the GED Analytics tool and to begin collecting disaggregated data about GED takers and completers.

As the state gathers and processes the information, analysts should ensure that they present fine-grained detail. Rural areas, urban areas, communities of color, non-native English speakers and other groups each have particular characteristics and needs that should be considered so that Oregon officials can determine which preparation programs serve which groups well.

Recommendation 5.3:

Oregon’s chief education officer, deputy superintendent of public instruction and OEIB should collect data about the success of GED instruction programs in diverse geographic, cultural and institutional locations.

While gathering the above information, officials must not lose sight of the fact that a high school diploma is preferable and different from a GED certificate. State education officials, the public, the business community and other stakeholders would benefit from disaggregating the two groups in the context of 40-40-20.

Recommendation 5.4:

Oregon's chief education officer, deputy superintendent of public instruction, OEIB, the State GED administrator and any other individual or entity that assesses state performance toward meeting 40-40-20 goals should track and report GED recipients separately from high school graduates.

In order to evaluate the new GED test as well as test preparation programs, the state needs accurate performance data about people who receive the GED certificate. Their aggregate ability to succeed entering college and career should be the core indicators of the value of the 2014 GED revision.

Recommendation 5.5:

Oregon's chief education officer, Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development director, deputy superintendent of public instruction and the State GED administrator should collect data on how well GED recipients perform in college and career.

Once the above information has been collected, state education officials will be in a position to provide an assessment of the GED. A detailed analysis of how well students perform under the 2014 revision and how well preparation programs succeed would allow the state to engage in a frank discussion about where to direct resources and other support.

The GED must be part of an ongoing discussion, and Oregon must react to performance changes. An annual report would facilitate that discussion and provide current data.

Recommendation 5.6:

Oregon’s chief education officer, deputy superintendent of public instruction, State GED administrator and OEIB should use the data collected on the performance of GED recipients to produce a report no later than 2017 that assesses the performance of the 2014 GED test for students and in the context of the 40-40-20 plan. Thereafter, an annual public report should be delivered to the governor and the Legislature.

Oregon government also must turn its eyes inward and assess how well it supports the GED. Because such data now are lacking, the state cannot determine whether it is investing the right amount in the right programs to maximize the opportunity for adult learners to succeed in college and career. The fact that spending on services related to the GED remains a mystery creates a significant barrier to serious strategic planning and allocation of resources.

Recommendation 6:

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.

The HiSET and TASC both aspire to provide viable alternatives to the GED, and some other states have adopted them. Oregon should consider whether to use these alternatives in the future based on the college and career success of adults in other states who earn these credentials. State officials should not predicate their analysis on the notion that any single test is appropriate or needed. A fair, open analysis will entertain the options that some or all of the high school alternative programs are suitable to serve Oregonians’ diverse needs.

The seventh recommendation has three parts that can be summed up as follows: ***Officials should take a fresh look at alternatives to the GED in a few years.***

Recommendation 7.1:

Oregon's chief education officer, deputy superintendent of public instruction, State GED administrator and Oregon Education Investment Board should use Recommendation 5.6's annual report to assess the suitability of the 2014 GED revision for specific populations, including non-native English speakers, who might be better served by alternative tests.

Recommendation 7.2:

Oregon's chief education officer, deputy superintendent of public instruction, State GED administrator and OEIB should collect information about the performance of the HiSET, TASC and any other approved GED alternative in other states, focusing in particular on how well recipients of those credentials perform in college and career.

Recommendation 7.3:

Oregon's chief education officer, deputy superintendent of public instruction, State GED administrator and OEIB should consider, as soon as possible but no later than 2018, whether alternatives to the GED would better serve Oregonians from diverse backgrounds and make recommendations to the governor and Legislature.

Although Oregon has not adopted one of the alternatives to the GED, adults will begin earning those credentials in other states. Inevitably, some of those people will move to Oregon. If the review conducted for Recommendation 7.2 above finds that HiSET and TASC recipients have similar outcomes to GED recipients, regardless of whether Oregon uses those exams, it should treat those credentials as equivalent to the GED.

Recommendation 8:

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.

Finally, two topics came up repeatedly throughout your committee’s research that were beyond the scope of this report but warrant further investigation by City Club of Portland, state agencies or other interested researchers.

Avenues for future research 1:

Your committee focused on adults 19 to 25 years old who dropped out of school. Additional challenges arise with older adults, and further research is needed to develop ways to re-engage them in pursuit of an educational credential such as the GED.

Avenues for future research 2:

The need for the GED and other alternatives arises only because students drop out of school. More research should be done to address the question of how to keep more young people in school through graduation.

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Witnesses

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Appendix A: Why 19 to 25 year olds?

Admittedly, when considering the effectiveness of the GED, any age range is somewhat arbitrary.

The study charge for this report originally requested that your committee make recommendations for disconnected young people aged 16 to 25. As your committee conducted its research, however, it concluded that the GED is a more appropriate path for adults 19 years old and older than for younger students. Youths in the 16 to 18 range are better served within the established public education system working toward a high school diploma. Portland Public Schools, for example, offers many alternative and dropout-prevention programs designed specifically to work with students in this age range. Moreover, Oregon law makes school attendance compulsory for students between the ages of 7 and 18 who have not yet completed 12th grade.*

A report by the National Governor’s Association supported this split. It cautioned, “Governors seeking to support GED programs should also consider how to do so without undermining dropout recovery programs that lead to a traditional high school diploma.”†

In 1955, when more states began offering the GED to non-veterans, test-takers had to be at least 20 years old. That minimum age requirement was put in place to prevent the GED from becoming a replacement for high school. It wasn’t until the 1980s that many states lowered the minimum age to 16. Some states other than Oregon still maintain a higher minimum age under state law.‡

In its State of Black Oregon report, the Urban League of Portland called on parents and educators to work together to keep young African Americans in school. It noted, “Dropping out of school leads to a future of unemployment and underemployment. Differential treatment in

* Oregon Revised Statute §339.010 (https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws/lawsstatutes/2011ors339.html)

† Princiotta, Daniel and Ryan Reyna. “Achieving Graduation for All,” 2009, p. 29. (<http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/0910ACHIEVINGGRADUATION.PDF>)

‡ Heckman, James, John Eric Humphries and Nicholas Mader. “The GED,” 2010, National Bureau of Economic Research. <http://www.nber.org/papers/w16064.pdf> (accessed Oct. 7, 2013), p.59.

the criminal justice system, decreased access to health care and limited access to college all combine to limit the prospect of a prosperous, successful future.”*

At 19, students pass beyond the traditional age for high school. Although Oregon allows for enrollment to continue until age 21 for some special circumstances, students who reach 19 without graduating typically pass beyond the reach of the public K-12 system. Portland Public Schools is an exception to this and contracts with nonprofits and other providers to serve students until they are 21.

The upper end of the study’s age range is more flexible. Twenty-five serves as a convenient demarcation because it is commonly used for demographic purposes. The U.S. Census Bureau, for example, frames many datasets around that age point.

Some barriers to education tend to become more acute as one ages. By the time they reach the age of 25, many people have children, jobs, health problems or other challenges that inhibit their ability to prepare for the GED exam.

Moreover, the longer one has been removed from formal education, the more difficult it can be to reengage.

Bowen Adajian, a GED instructor at Portland Community College’s Portland Metropolitan Workforce Training Center, described his experience with adult learners to your committee.

“As a general rule, the longer people are out of school, the harder time they have. I’ve had students who are 20, 21 years old. They usually have a much easier time of it than a student who is 30 years old and hasn’t been in school for 10 or 15 years,” he said.

Twenty-five, then, is a convenient point for discussion while acknowledging that individual circumstances differ.

That said, many of the findings, conclusions and recommendations in this report are age-independent. They would improve the second chance of success for all adult students.

* Urban League of Portland, “The State of Black Oregon,” p. 31. <http://ulpdx.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/UrbanLeague-StateofBlackOregon.pdf>.

Appendix B: The Common Core State Standards

Each state sets its own standards and processes for developing, adopting and implementing student education and achievement standards. What schools teach and what students might learn can vary from state to state.

At the same time, students compete on a national and international stage, often with students whose state or countries have more rigorous educational requirements. Oregon and other states recognize the importance of having an education system that equips its students to compete both nationally and internationally and therefore supported and adopted the Common Core State Standards.*

A multistate initiative organized by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officials developed the Common Core. The initiative formally commenced its efforts in 2009 with the support and involvement of 49 states.[†] It released standards for mathematics and English language arts (ELA) in June 2010.[‡] Since then, 45 states, the District of Columbia, and four territories have adopted the standards.[§]

The Oregon State Board of Education adopted the standards in 2010, and schools have been implementing them since then. New, tougher tests to assess how well students perform under the Common Core roll out in 2015.

The standards set learning expectations for all K-12 grade levels.

The standards are designed to ensure that students graduating from high school are ready for college or to enter the workforce without any further remedial preparation. Standards were designed with the intent that high school graduates would be prepared for credit-bearing courses in two or four year college programs. The standards' developers further explain, "The standards are clear and concise to ensure that parents, teachers, and students have a clear

* Oregon Dept. of Education, "Common Core Standards – Historical / Background Information" <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?=3253>

† National Governors Association. "Forty-Nine States and Territories Join Common Core Standards Initiative," http://www.nga.org/cms/home/news-room/news-releases/page_2009/col2-content/main-content-list/title_forty-nine-states-and-territories-join-common-core-standards-initiative.html

‡ Education Northwest, "Spotlight on the Common Core Standards," p. 1, http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/1106

§ Common Core State Standards Initiative, "In the States," <http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>

understanding of the expectations in reading, writing, speaking and listening, language and mathematics in school.”*

The standards are intended to ensure that no matter where students live they are “well prepared with the skills and knowledge necessary to collaborate and compete with their peers in the United States and abroad.” Shared standards should foster collaboration among states in developing textbooks and teaching material, common testing and assessment systems and changes needed to help support educators and schools in teaching to the new standards.[†]

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (ELA) set standards broadly across those subjects and specify that students be able to read, write, speak, listen and communicate effectively in those various content areas. The literacy standards in history, social studies, science and technical subjects, however, do not replace content standards in these areas but supplement them.[‡]

Other features of the ELA standards include:

- Reading standards focus on text complexity and growth of comprehension, placing equal emphasis on the sophistication of what students read and the skill with which they read.
- Writing standards acknowledge the fact that while some writing skills, including the abilities to plan, revise, edit and publish, apply to many types of writing, other skills relate to specific types of writing, such as arguments, informative/explanatory texts and narratives.
- Speaking and listening standards focus on flexible communication and collaboration, requiring students to develop a range of broadly useful oral communication and interpersonal skills, not just skills needed for formal presentations.
- The language standards cover conventions (grammar), effective use and vocabulary. They not only include the essential rules of standard written and spoken English, but also look at language as a matter of craft and making choices.[§]

* Common Core State Standards Initiative, “Frequently Asked Questions: What is the Common Core Standards Initiative?” <http://www.corestandards.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions>

[†] *Ibid.* “Frequently Asked Questions: Why is the Common Core State Standards Initiative important?”

[‡] Common Core State Standards Initiative, “English Language Arts Standards,” <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>

[§] Education Northwest, p. 2.

The mathematics standards “define what students should understand and be able to do in their study of mathematics.” They focus on both procedural skill in undertaking computations and mathematical understanding, deeming those “equally important” and “assessable” according to the developers of the standards.^{*} Therefore, two types of standards are used, “one for mathematical practice (how students are able to apply and extend math principles) and one for mathematical content (what students know about math). The two are linked together while students are learning.”[†]

^{*} Common Core State Standards Initiative, “Mathematics,” <http://www.corestandards.org/Math>

[†] Education Northwest, p.3.

**Appendix C:
Demographics of GED test takers (2012)**

	Oregon		United States	
	GED test takers	All Oregonians	GED test takers	All U.S. residents
Male	59%	50%	55%	49%
Female	41%	50%	45%	51%
Hispanic	22%	12%	17%	17%
American Indian/Alaska Native	4%	1%	5%	1%
Asian	2%	4%	2%	5%
African American	6%	2%	23%	13%
White	66%	85%	52%	74%

Sources: GED Testing Service and U.S. Census Bureau.

About the City Club

The mission of City Club is to inform its members and the community in public matters and to arouse in them a realization of the obligations of citizenship.

Additional copies of this report are available online at www.pdxcityclub.org.

All photos, tables, graphs and figures used with permission

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2015-17 Budget Strategies and Initial Priorities

*Oregonians are prepared for lifelong learning, rewarding work, and engaged citizenship.*¹

Background

The Need

Never before has education been more critical to the lives of Oregonians and to our ability to prosper as a state. In an ever-changing economy, we know Oregon's workforce needs higher levels of knowledge and skills than ever before. With a population that is becoming increasingly diverse, we know improving educational outcomes for our historically underserved students represents our biggest opportunity for growth, as well as the only way to reach our goals. To ensure a strong and vibrant state, Oregonians must commit to a shared sense of responsibility for moving all Oregon students along their educational pathway to lifelong learning, rewarding work and engaged citizenship.

Oregon's cohort graduation rate tells us the percentage of students who entered high schools – as freshman or as later arrivals – that graduated with a regular diploma in four or five years. From that measure, in 2011, only 67 percent of Oregon students graduated on-time in four years, and only a total of 70 percent graduated in five years. Looking at a more expansive measure of students who earned a regular diploma, modified diploma or GED, one in five students (21 percent) still does not complete within five years. And far too many Oregon students don't even get captured in the cohort graduation or federal dropout rates because they leave school even before the ninth-grade starting point for those calculations.

Each year, well-paid jobs requiring only a high school diploma – the millwork or manufacturing jobs of the past – are replaced with new jobs that increasingly demand post-secondary education, technology skills and advanced training above the high school level. The shift is happening quickly. Over the next decade, 61 percent of all Oregon jobs will require a technical certificate, associate's degree or higher level of education. This proportion will only accelerate by 2025. Today, Oregonians with associate's degrees earn at least \$5,000 per year more than those with high school diplomas. Those with bachelor's degrees earn approximately \$17,000 more per year. Eighty-nine percent of family wage jobs, jobs paying more than \$18 per hour, will require a technical certificate/associate's degree or higher level of education. Students

¹ Governor's 10-Year Education Outcome

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emerging into this market need skills and education to compete and therefore need to complete a post-secondary education.

However, education is not just about improving personal income and job security. Higher levels of education are associated with better health, longer lives, greater family stability, less need for social services, lower likelihood of involvement with the criminal justice system, and increased civic participation. All are benefits to not only the educated individual and their family, but also help support healthy, thriving communities across Oregon.

Oregon's Equity Imperative

Perhaps the most pressing issue faced by Oregon is that, on nearly all measures, the achievement rates for low-income learners, English language learners, special education students and students of color are significant as compared to the general student population. According to the November 2011 NAEP, Oregon is one of few states where the achievement gap is not closing. Additionally, low-income students in Oregon rank among the lowest performing in the nation, having lost ground since 2003. Low-income high school graduates are roughly one-third less likely to enroll in college immediately after graduation than their higher income peers (38 percent of low-income students vs. 59 percent of students with higher family incomes). NEED UPDATED DATA

Oregon's next generation, those of school and preschool ages, include greater proportions of students of color, students who are not native English speakers, and students from economically disadvantaged households. It is vital to ensure student success among all populations across the continuum through focus on Oregon's changing demographics and demonstrated ability to well-serve the needs of all student populations and the growing percentage of Oregon's high school graduates needing basic skills upon entry into community college. The stark increase in tuition rates (and decreasing access) in post-secondary over the past two decades are signals that a significant, intentional and focused review of current policy and investment is needed in Oregon.

Improving performance in every corner of the state while also addressing the disparity in student achievement results that exists for underserved student populations will not only greatly accelerate progress toward the 40/40/20 Goal, but will determine our success in reaching it. Thus, Oregon must act immediately and courageously to address and overcome the barriers that too often deter students, particularly our students of color and from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, from achieving success in the education system.

The 40-40-20 Goal

Recognizing the urgency and pressing need to improve educational attainment for its citizens, Oregon has committed not only to improving, but to becoming one of the best-educated populations in the world. In 2011, the Oregon Legislature adopted an ambitious goal to ensure that by 2025:

- 40 percent of adult Oregonians have earned a bachelor's degree or higher.
- 40 percent of adult Oregonians have earned an associate's degree or post-secondary credential as their highest level of educational attainment.

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- 20 percent of all adult Oregonians have earned at least a high school diploma, an extended or modified high school diploma, or the equivalent of a high school diploma as their highest level of educational attainment.

The goal, known as “the 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, with Oregon’s diversity – of race, ethnicity, gender, home language, socioeconomic status and geography – equally well-represented in each stage.

Building the OEIB

The Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB) was created in 2011 for the purpose of overseeing a unified system of public education from birth to college & career (SB 909). The legislation specifically charges the OEIB with recommending strategic investments “targeted to achieve the education outcomes established for the state.” Based on these statutory charges, the OEIB developed a strategic plan in 2012, aimed at ensuring the state reaches the 40-40-20 Goal. The OEIB strategic plan is built on three key strategies:

- Strategy 1: Create a coordinated, student-centered education system, from birth through college and career readiness
- Strategy 2: Focus state investment on achieving key student outcomes
- Strategy 3: Build statewide support systems

The three strategies are overlapping, driven by student learning outcomes, and aimed at transforming – rather than simply adjusting – the state’s education system. The strategies represent, for the student, a promise of educational excellence at all levels; for the educator, an invitation to lead and commitment to improving student achievement; for the taxpayer, a return on investment; and to parents, community leaders, employers, policymakers, and educational organizations, a new partnership to strengthen education for every student across Oregon.

In 2012, the legislature approved the establishment of achievement compacts between OEIB and each school district, ESD, community college and public university in the state. A primary purpose of the achievement compacts is to focus all parties on key outcomes, and memorialize a shared responsibility between and among the state, educational institutions and communities to achieve those outcomes. Through the achievement compacts, institutions set goals around critical educational outcomes, chosen because research and evidence have shown them to be highly predictive of student success. The outcomes adopted by the OEIB include:

- More children entering Kindergarten ready to learn
- More 3rd graders reading at or above grade level
- Fewer 6th graders who are chronically absent
- More 9th graders finishing on track with credits and strong attendance records
- Increased numbers of students getting college credit in high school

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- Increased high school completion rates and college enrollment rates
- Increased certificate & degree attainment
- Closing achievement gaps that exist on all outcomes for underserved students (students of color, economically disadvantaged students, students receiving special education services, and non-native English speakers)

In 2013-15, for the first time, the Governor's Recommended Budget was built by examining what investments were likely to achieve this set of key outcomes rather than by simply adjusting "current services levels." Working together, the Governor and Legislature were able to significantly increase funding for education at all levels (INSERT dollar amount), to support our youngest Oregonians by advancing the early learning hub system, and to agree on changes to post-secondary governance that will allow increased autonomy while promoting improved access and outcomes for Oregon's students.

The 2013-15 Legislatively Approved Budget (LAB) for education also included a set of strategic investments developed by the OEIB and Chief Education Officer. This \$74 million in investments – in strategies to improve early literacy, support 9th graders to be on track, ensure students have opportunities for STEM, STEAM and CTE, and support educators – were selected to rapidly improve performance on the compact outcomes, close achievement gaps, encourage collaboration, leverage resources, and provide the state a platform through which to replicate best practices across the state.

Lastly, the 2013-15 LAB provided for the development of a Regional Achievement Collaborative pilot. The purpose of the pilot is to examine the feasibility and impact of having representatives from across the Birth to College and Career continuum engage collectively around the compact outcomes. The twelve (12) regions engaged in the pilot are also building collective responsibility, by engaging community leaders, businesses, social service providers and parents, thereby broadening responsibility for student learning and success beyond school walls.

OEIB Strategies & Priorities

Strategy 1: Create a seamless public education system from Birth to College & Career

In the past two and a half years, the Governor and legislature have made significant progress in transforming the state agency system to be more seamless – from creating the OEIB and appointment of a Chief Education Officer charged with direction and control of the P-20 system, to establishing the Early Learning and Youth Development Divisions within the Oregon Department of Education, to creating a Higher Education Coordinating Commission that will, for the first time in Oregon's history, oversee community college, public universities, and need-based aid within one agency.

However, to truly create a seamless public education system, focus for the next biennium must be on the student experience – forcing the question of how our state can move from a segmented system focused on institutions to individual pathways that lead all students to successful learning experiences, productive careers and lifelong contributions to the community. To begin building that seamless, student-centered system, OEIB believes focus must be on the following:

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- Critical Student Transitions
- Supporting Out-of-School Youth
- Post-Secondary Governance & Alignment with Workforce Redesign

Section 1.1 Critical Student Transitions

In order to ensure a coordinated system from birth to college & career, specific attention must be paid to the transition points between educational experiences. Compelling evidence suggests that it is in these transition points – into Kindergarten, middle school, high school, community college and university – that most students fall behind, get disengaged, pushed out, or simply fail to complete. First and foremost, attention must be paid to strategies that are preventative in nature – investing in early learning, building strong foundations for school attendance and college-going culture, and creating incentives for systems to work together in collective responsibility models. Second, it is crucial for Oregon to research and examine the factors leading to risk of failure, identify students who have been put at risk, deliver evidence-based interventional strategies, and continuously monitor progress of children and students to ensure they remain on track.

1.1.2: Increased Alignment for Age 3 to Grade 3

To support the 40-40-20 Goal, OEIB is focused on several early milestones in the lives of young learners – that every child is ready for school when they enter Kindergarten and that they are reading at grade level by third grade. In order to meet these goals, we must ensure that every child is put on a trajectory to success as early as possible (See Section 2.2), and create a seamless transition into Kindergarten. Creating this seamless connection between early learning and K-12, from “Age three to Grade as the efforts has been called, is a key OEIB priority. Current initiatives in this area include:

- Early Learning/Kindergarten Readiness Partnership & Innovation Fund: The OEIB and the ELC have identified this fund, created by HB2013, as a key vehicle for linking pre-K and K-12 systems. The practices and programs that are developed through this fund could serve as models for broader best practices dissemination and investment.
- Kindergarten Assessment: Oregon’s Kindergarten Assessment, which provides a snapshot of children’s literacy, numeracy and approaches to learning upon kindergarten entry, has recently concluded its first year of statewide implementation, and data have been released publicly. Assessment data provide a valuable “look forward and look back” for both K-12 districts and early learning practitioners.
- Implementation of Full Day Kindergarten: Increasing access to free full day kindergarten is a key strategy for eliminating achievement and opportunity gaps in the early elementary years. Starting in 2015, school districts will receive full ADM if they choose to offer full-day Kindergarten. A critical priority should be ensuring that districts are supported to offer high-quality Kindergarten programs, using best practices and high leverage strategies, in order to ensure the state’s increased investment yields results.
- Enhanced Assessment Grant (EAG) Consortium: Oregon is part of a nine state consortium that will develop a common K-3 formative assessment system that will

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provide teachers with snapshots of individual student learning and development, and use the data to inform teaching and learning.

A coordinated and collaborative state-level approach to these initiatives will strengthen each initiative individually, while also laying the foundation for increased alignment between Pre-K and K-12 and helping Oregon's communities identify and implement appropriate solutions to meet local needs.

1.1.2: Redesign of Grades 11-14

Oregon's 40-40-20 Goal has focused needed attention on increasing access for Oregon students to college-bearing credits while still in high school. The research is clear that early college access contributes to articulation, success and retention in postsecondary education, and can reduce students' time to a degree or certificate, financial burdens, and the need for remedial/developmental education courses.

Despite steady increases in Advanced Placement and dual credit/dual enrollment courses, offerings in Oregon are still fragmented, confusing to students and their families, and often vary substantially by district and school, creating inequitable access particularly for under-represented students.

Senate Bill 222 tasked an Accelerated Learning Committee with examining methods to encourage and enable more students to obtain college credits while still in high school. The recommendations they are bringing forward will:

- Better align state funding, assessments, and procedures between high schools and post-secondary institutions
- Encourage efficiencies for students and remove unintended barriers; and
- Create more equitable access and affordable postsecondary options for all eligible Oregon students

State funding models for the programs will be proposed that keep costs to students and their families at a minimum and that support the contributions of both high school and postsecondary partners. The course offerings will need to contribute to meaningful course sequences (meeting general education or career and technical pathway requirements) and transfer cleanly across Oregon public postsecondary institutions. More efficient use of students' senior year, early advising, and remediation supports for students in high school will be needed to create a more seamless transition for students from high school to postsecondary institutions.

1.1.3 Supporting Out of School Youth

Each year, thousands (get more exact number) of high school students drop out, are pushed out, or simply fail to complete high school – this shocking number does not even capture those students whose journey to 40-40-20 ended in middle school or before. The OEIB's responsibilities for creating a seamless "Birth to College and Career" system, and managing student transitions for the purpose of ensuring outcomes are achieved, necessitate that it also pay close attention to those students and young adults who don't fit neatly into one category or another. Further, states that have rapidly increased their rates of diploma and degree attainment have done so by an intentional focus on students who have been pushed out or put at risk, who are being served in alternative settings, or who could benefit from alternative

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pathways such as GED. (ODE to provide research). The 2015-17 biennium should include an investment in strategies and policies aimed at ensuring the populations of youth who have, or are at risk of, dropping out do not inadvertently fall through the cracks that heretofore may have existed between education agencies.

Ask Iris for language

1.1.4 Post-Secondary Governance & Alignment with Workforce Redesign

Ben & Agnes will provide content

Strategy 2: Focus investments on achieving student outcomes

Since its appointment, the OEIB has engaged in deep thinking around the significance of Oregon's 40/40/20 Goal – what policies, partnerships, strategies and investments are necessary to achieve the goal, and what the trajectory to 40/40/20 could be in the context of Oregon's current student demographics and achievement levels. Acknowledging Oregon's long history of local control, and the failure of top-down accountability systems such as No Child Left Behind, the OEIB sought an instrument that incented shared responsibility and harnessed local involvement to create effective and sustained change. Formal recognition of this approach came in 2012 (Senate Bill 1581), with the OEIB's adoption of achievement compacts.

Through the compacts, institutions set ambitious but attainable goals for student success around key outcomes considered critical for student success in college and in the workforce. The key outcomes for K-12 districts include 3rd grade reading & math proficiency, 5th grade math proficiency, 6th grade on track, 9th grade on track, college credits earned in high school, high school completion, and post-secondary enrollment. Key outcomes for colleges and universities include enrollment, persistence (15/30 credits earned) and certificates and degrees awarded. Each of these outcomes is predictive in some critical way of student achievement and career readiness; together, they comprise a compelling snapshot of our collective progress toward the 40-40-20 Goal.

While the achievement compacts have prompted critical conversations, OEIB recognizes that setting goals around key outcomes alone isn't enough to foster lasting, positive change. Institutions, in conjunction with their boards and community leaders, must have the courage to change their strategies, practices and funding priorities to achieve these goals. At all levels, the education system must commit to a laser-like focus on improving the key outcomes, using best practices, and creating high-quality continuous learning environments that will support and motivate students and educators alike. For its part, the OEIB, along with the Governor, the State Legislature and its partner agencies, must put in place policies, systems and supports that can help institutions reach their goals. The state should tackle its issues with unstable and inadequate revenue, continue efforts to contain costs such as health care and prison costs, and use a variety of budget and accountability tools to drive investment toward achieving these outcomes.

The following are critical to achieving the state's 40-40-20 Goal:

- Increasing Investment at All Levels
- Continue Prioritizing Oregon's Early Learning System
- Focus Base Funding for K-12 and Post-Secondary on Improving Key Outcomes
- Make Transformational, Innovative and Effective Strategic Investments
- Invest in Regional Collaboration and Collective Responsibility

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Section 2.1 Increasing Investment at all Levels

It is widely accepted that education in Oregon is underfunded at all levels and fluctuates wildly from biennium to biennium in ways that make reinvestment difficult. From 2009-2013, the Great Recession had a great toll on K-12 education – forcing school districts to cut millions from their budgets, laying off valued teachers and staff, reducing school days, and shutting down schools and programs against the wishes of the community. In post-secondary, Oregon’s disinvestment has resulted in the loss of valued programs and faculty, as well as an unacceptable shift in costs to students and families through rising tuition.

The tide turned significantly in the 2013-15 LAB when education funding increased significantly across all levels. **Need correct figures.**

In addition, 2013-15 yielded significant success in terms of controlling costs that had begun to far outpace general inflation, hitting all public education institution budgets hard and shifting resources out of the classroom. **Need specifics**

The Governor’s 10-year budget strategy for education is based on two important ideas: invest more strategically and invest more. To allow for increased investment in education, the State must move forward on strategies to bend the cost curves of health services and prisons, which are taking up an ever-larger percentage of Oregonians’ personal income. Without relieving these cost pressures, investment in education – as a share of Oregonians’ personal income, and as a share of the state discretionary budget – is likely to continue to decline. Ultimately, the state strategy must be to continue working to bring the costs of health care and corrections down in order to increase the overall investment in the education system. The state must work to ensure a stable and sustainable base of funding is available to educational institutions, including the early learning system.

In addition

Section 2.2 Continue Prioritizing Oregon’s Early Learning System

??

Decades of research confirm early investments are key to later educational success. A well-functioning coordinated system identifies the needs of at-risk children and families as soon as possible, and offers useful assistance quickly, effectively and efficiently. This includes identifying risk factors early and coordinating services and supports that enable learning. Ensuring that children enter the education system with the skills and developmental assets needed sets the trajectory for the child complete their high school education.

- Continue to support the development of the early learning hub system
- Support early screenings and intervention efforts, aligned with health care system
- Increase high-quality early learning programs

Public and private child care and early learning programs play a critical role in ensuring every Oregon child enters kindergarten ready to learn, and should receive increasing level of

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investment. In addition, an even broader view of the term “early learning” is required, one that encompasses more than traditional pre-school environments, but also includes settings such as childcare and health and human services. Investing in universal screening, a child care quality and rating improvement system for early learning programs, and other key strategies recommended by the Early Learning Council.

Section 2.3 Focus Base Funding for K-12 and Post-Secondary on Improving Key Outcomes

Billions of dollars of the state’s general fund are invested in education each biennium, with 98 percent of that amount flowing through the hundreds of entities delivering education. For those entities, Oregon’s education funding is centered on inputs and enrollments across the education continuum. How many students are served plays a much larger role in an institution’s fiscal position than how effectively students are educated. Funding levels for school districts, colleges and universities are based on existing staffing ratios and inflation expectations for salaries, benefits, materials and supplies. Contracts with Oregon Pre-Kindergarten programs are based on the number of children served, not how well those children progress in their readiness for school. Moreover, budgets are too frequently developed, both at the state and local levels, based on current service levels without consideration or prioritization of the outcomes sought to be achieved.

While outcomes-based budgeting has been ascribed various meanings, the critical feature is the intentional focus of dollars to achieve the desired results – setting budget priorities and aligning spending to deliver the specific outcomes desired for students. At the local level, institutions set goals around key outcomes through the achievement compact process. However, the process of setting goals around critical indicators, and defining strategies to achieve these goals, is somewhat meaningless unless it is used to directly inform an institution’s budgeting process. While performance on the Achievement Compact is not currently related to the level of funding institutions receive, compact goals should drive budget priorities. Achievement Compacts should incent educational entities to “budget the plan, not plan the budget.”

To truly leverage base funding for achievement of traditionally K-12 outcomes, OEIB should commit to providing additional support and communication to school districts in completion of the achievement compacts. In addition, the OEIB should engage deeply in examining the system for potential for formula redesigns, such as in the 11-14 system redesign described in Section 1.1.2 or funding for English Language Learners, as well as particular outcomes for which some level of “incentive” funding could serve to more rapidly lead to improve, such as closing the achievement gap for 3rd grade reading.

In post-secondary, HECC has committed to working with community colleges and 4-year universities to recommend models for the distribution of budgeted funds to institutions, paying attention to: (1) what is not working well under the current formulas; (2) rewarding the desired outcomes and eliminating barriers to effective achievement; and (3) providing enough lead time for institutions to respond to changes. This model must ensure that costs are not simply redistributed to students and families, but rather incent reduced costs, achieve new efficiencies and/or accelerate completion.

Section 2.3: Transformational, Innovative and Effective Strategic Investments

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The current strategic investments have successfully mobilized school districts and community-based organizations in many corners of the state: focusing the conversation on best practices, incenting partnerships and collaboration, and accelerating improvements in key outcomes in places where the investments were more deeply felt. However, as OEIB embarks on the 2nd round of strategic investments, some considerations must be: (1) how to streamline and focus the investments; (2) how to ensure they incent change at all levels, not just K-12; (3) whether tools other than Requests for Proposals (RFPs) can help make the process more effective and less burdensome; (4) how to ensure investment flows to successful community-based organizations and other culturally specific providers; and (5) how we differentiate the purposes of base funding – which the state passes to education institutions specifically for the purpose of achieving key education outcomes – with strategic investments.

2.3.1 Strategic Investment Criteria

Strategic investments must be transformational, innovative and effective, designed to radically redesign the education system such that the promise of the 40-40-20 Goal can be achieved for each and every Oregonian. Identifying some key criteria, or more aptly characteristics, of strategic investments will provide OEIB a framework from which to prioritize strategic investment concepts for the Governor's, and legislature's, ultimate consideration. Education agencies, institutions, stakeholders and partners should consider the following:

- Models that are highly transformative, leading the state toward a new vision for education
- Preventative models that will reduce costs and improve outcomes further along the pathway
- Models that have a strong possibility for scaling across the larger system
- Models that produce powerful results, such that communities will be strongly compelled to continue funding the activities over time
- Models that leverage other state and private investments
- Models that have a significant return on investment (high yield for low cost) or multiplier effect
- Models that promote flexibility, student empowerment & individualized learning

2.3.2 Leverage Points for Consideration

All sections of this Budget Priority paper identify key priorities and strategies for which investment should be considered. In addition, there are several key leverage points that the OEIB believes are critical for strategic investments:

- Systems for Ensuring All Students Are Reading at Level by 3rd Grade. Add narrative and reference to ODE.
- Post-secondary access and affordability: To reach our 40/40/20 Goal, the state must be strategic in instilling a college-going culture across the continuum, and in making, and honoring, a promise that post-secondary education will be within reach for all learners who achieve the important outcome of earning a high school diploma. We must persuade a much larger share of learners that a post-secondary degree brings returns in

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the job market, and create a clear state policy on affordability that ensures increases in tuition are matched by increases in aid to protect those least able to afford higher education. Reference to the HECC [here](#).

- Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM): Currently Oregon's education system is producing only about one-third of the STEM graduates employers will need to satisfy new openings and replace the positions of retiring baby boomers. Investments in STEM education are required to lift the math and science skills of younger learners, expose students to exciting STEM careers, and ensure access and affordability of degree attainment. These investments must include a review of the depth of STEM preparation for Oregon educators, particularly in the early grades, reviewing the depth of STEM curriculum across the PK-20 system, and incentives for obtaining STEM related degrees, certificates or other related post-secondary achievements. Reference to the STEM Council [here](#)

Section 2.4 Invest in Regional Collaboration and Collective Responsibility

Every year, 40,000 children are born in Oregon. Of those, roughly 40 percent are exposed to a well-recognized set of socio-economic, physical or relational risk factors that adversely affect their ability to develop the foundations of school success. These risk factors include poverty, unstable family backgrounds, substance abuse, criminal records and negative peer associations. Oregon Department of Human Services data for November 2011 indicates that 116,218 children ages five and under received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food assistance, ADD MEDICAID data, and a 2011 US Census report shows that 183,859 children in Oregon live in poverty. If not addressed, these risk factors have an almost linear correlation with school failure, school dropout, substance abuse, social dependency and involvement in the criminal justice system. They also set lifestyle patterns that lead to the chronic conditions that account for most of the costs in the health and criminal system. These factors, known as social indicators, are set during the early years of a child's life. Ultimately, these social indicators produce a workforce that struggles to compete successfully in a global economy and citizenry that is a liability rather than an asset to Oregon's future.

Faced with such deep, pervasive and systemic poverty issues, Oregon must acknowledge that investments in education must be leveraged by investments in whole communities. Teachers, parents, businesses, colleges, nonprofits, social services, local governments, and students themselves – all more powerful when aligned and focused on the same outcomes.

Through the Regional Achievement Collaborative (RAC) pilot, OEIB has seen the fruits of collective responsibility across the birth to college & career continuum. In 12 regions across the state – from Multnomah County to Lane County to Southern & Eastern Oregon – education leaders from all levels are joined by business, nonprofit and other leaders to making a shared commitment to improving the achievement compact outcomes for all children and students in a region.

Further, as communities begin to dig in to the root causes of educational disparities and poor achievement, the interconnected nature of education with health, workforce, housing, transportation and other key areas becomes clear. Through the Governor's leadership, RAC's are beginning to leverage opportunities across other community-based transformation efforts – such as early learning hubs, Coordinated Care Organizations, Poverty to Prosperity projects

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and Regional Solutions Centers – sharing resources and aligning outcomes across multiple sectors in the name of achieving regional prosperity.

OEIB recommends examining innovative regional models of investment and infrastructure to support expansion of Regional Achievement Collaboratives, as well as to incent innovative cross-sector approaches across other policy areas.

Strategy 3: Build State Systems of Support and Accountability

The state's role is not to deliver education, but rather to invest in and support the thousands of institutions and providers across the state that do. To succeed, Oregon must engage educators and leaders, students and families, communities, and employers to achieve the educational excellence envisioned for Oregonian students. The state will continue to set standards, provide guidance, and conduct assessments, coordinated along the education pathway. In addition, critical state support must come through further developing the Network for Quality Teaching, providing an accountability to support continuous improvement in schools and institutions, and a policy database and research consortium to research and disseminate information about best practices and the effectiveness of key investments.

- Network for Quality Teaching & Learning
- Support for School and Institutional Improvement
- P-20W Policy Database
- Research and dissemination of best practices

Section 3.1 Network for Quality Teaching & Learning

Of all the in-school factors influencing a student's success, effective teaching is the most significant. Oregon's investment in education must prioritize supporting early learning educators, teachers, administrators, school personnel specialists, and post-secondary faculty in doing their best work to improve student achievement, at every stage of public school education. Oregon needs a strong pipeline of instructional leaders who can positively impact teaching and learning and who mirror our schools' culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Oregon is moving in the right direction with its initial \$45 million investment in high quality educator preparation models, mentoring for new hires, ongoing and meaningful performance evaluations and professional development.

The creation of a Network for Quality Teaching and Learning has just begun now to support professional learning that is ongoing, collaborative in nature, and aligned to the needs of educators to better serve students. Full implementation of the Network is needed to:

- Enhance educators' ability to innovate and enquire into one's practice
- Improve access to instructional expertise and resources
- Promote the scaling up of the most effective practices across the state
- Support and structure more effective professional development opportunities
- Link to other community-based efforts such as Regional Achievement Collaboratives, Early learning Hubs, and STEM Networks
- Develop stronger connections with postsecondary partners preparing educators and conducting research on key issues in education

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Efforts to build capacity, enhance the collaborative professionalism of educators to support student learning will change the culture of schools and districts across Oregon and put us on a clear path to the 40-40-20 Goal.

Full implementation must include professional development for educators across the system designed to support them in meeting the needs of all learners at all ages, including those living in poverty, earning with disabilities, learning English as a second language learners and students of color. With that focus, efforts to build capacity, enhance the collaborative professionalism of educators, promote the learner as individual will change the culture of schools and districts across Oregon and put us on a clear path to the 40-40-20 Goal.

Section 3.2 Support for School and Institutional Improvement

Need intro

- Develop a framework for accountability at each level of the Birth to College & Career System
- Invest in a strong system of improvement for Oregon's lowest performing schools & districts

3.2.1: Develop a framework for accountability at each level of the Birth to College & Career System

Oregon, along with the rest of the nation, learned valuable lessons from No Child Left Behind about the perverse incentives of a system that rates buildings (and students) as failing without providing a path to success, and about the limits of a system that does not require local districts and their communities to actively participate in setting expectations and developing solutions. From these lessons, Oregon is committed to advancing a system that includes broader measures, motivates and supports improvement rather than simply demands it, and requires communities to become active participants in improvement and accountability.

To be effective, OEIB believes that a system of accountability must tap the intrinsic motivation of students and educators. Oregon cannot rely on a system of sanctions, punishments, and threats to reach the 40/40/20 Goal. Oregon must insist on policies and systems that build capacity, enhance the collaborative professionalism of educators, promote the learner as individual, focus on ambitious but attainable outcomes, and change the culture of schools and districts across Oregon.

For school districts that demonstrate success, the OEIB is committed to providing increased flexibility and room for innovation to the extent possible, in the form of freedom from state mandates and reporting requirements. However, for districts and institutions that consistently fail to make progress on key outcomes, particularly where our most vulnerable children and students are concerned, OEIB has asked the agencies under its direction and control to develop an accountability framework. The system as a whole must be prepared to offer support and, where necessary, an increasing level of prescriptive intervention for those institutions who are not meeting their obligations to Oregon's learners.

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The charge from Chief Education Officer Nancy Golden to the Early Learning Council, State Board of Education and Higher Education Coordinating Commission issued in February 2014 asked each entity to develop a framework for accountability is designed to create systemic change based on the following premises:

- Oregon's 40/40/20 Goal requires a strong system of continuous improvement for all schools and institutions, not just those that are most struggling or that receive Title I funding.
- Accountability and assistance should be delivered through the district or institution, not just focused on an individual building, in order to build system capacity and support broad and sustained improvement
- Support and interventions must be developed in response to deeper diagnoses and tailored to the specific needs of the community.

OEIB should monitor and recommend investment in ensuring systems of accountability across levels are developed and implemented.

3.2.2 Invest in a strong system of improvement for Oregon's lowest performing schools & districts

While Oregon's 40/40/20 Goal requires a strong system of continuous improvement for all schools, the state must make a strong commitment to supported and sustained efforts at improving the performance in Oregon's lowest performing schools, districts and post-secondary institutions. Support and interventions for schools and districts that appear to be struggling must be developed in response to deeper diagnoses and tailored to the specific needs of the community. Diagnosis and assistance should be delivered through individuals and systems that have experience and significant success in supporting improvement efforts. In K-12, these efforts should be delivered through the district, not just focused on changes within a school building, in order to ensure system change and build districts' capacity to support and guide improvement in all schools. OEIB recommends investing more deeply in the ability to support a robust K-12 accountability and support system.

Section 3.3 P-20W Policy Database

Ask PETER to help

Section 3.4 Research and dissemination of best practices

To ensure that decisions and budgets are built around outcomes, the state must invest in the capacity to not only collect data, but to research that data and provide much deeper analysis of what is working across the continuum. Research and data will allow educators to become more rigorous about predicting the likelihood of dropping out on a student-by-student basis and understanding which conditions—inside and outside the school—raise the odds of graduation. Teachers need reliable and vetted resources proven effective with the learners in their classrooms, particularly those that are at risk for low achievement.

Further, the state must build a viable and effective strategy for disseminating research and best practices to all educators and communities. For too long, educators in Oregon have been left

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without a central way to collaborate with other educators across the state facing common challenges. The collection and distribution of a high quality, comprehensive body of knowledge, expertise and research on proven or promising practices is essential to support an education system that continually improves itself.

DRAFT



A Proposed Oregon College and Career Readiness Definition

Why develop a comprehensive definition? (“Are college and career readiness really the same?”)

Although it may initially seem counterintuitive to include both career readiness and college readiness in the same framework, this approach helps to break down the “silos” in which education and workforce sectors often operate. In addition, significant research has shown that although the knowledge, skills, and applications of learning required for success in particular fields and programs of study vary, the overarching skills and strategies required for students of all ages entering colleges and careers are consistent.

How has Oregon approached the development of this draft definition?

Initial work on the draft CCR definition evolved from community college staff and faculty involved with a Core To College grant. Their research and draft document was then shared with a College and Career Readiness Cross Sector Planning Group formed by Oregon Education Investment Board staff. Leads from the Oregon Department of Education, Community College Workforce Development, Oregon University System, Early Learning Division, Youth Development Division, Oregon Student Access Commission, Higher Education Coordinating Commission, and the Oregon Workforce Advisor to the Governor engaged in reviewing work of other states and related research. An online state survey gathered input from over 280 individuals then analyzed for the Cross Sector Planning Team and resulting in revisions in the proposed definition.

What other sources influenced the development of the draft definition?

The proposed definition draws heavily on definitions adopted by other states and a variety of resources including the Oregon State Standards, Oregon Adult Basic Skills Standards, the National High School Center, the American Diploma Project, the Educational Policy Improvement Center, Achieve, the National Career Readiness Partnership, the American Youth Policy Forum, and the CCSSO Innovation Lab Network.

What working principles are important to consider in reviewing the definition?

We believe the common definition of college and career readiness should:

- Reflect Oregon secondary completion requirements which prepare students for postsecondary pursuits
- Reflect postsecondary expectations for students of all ages, backgrounds, cultures, and identities
- Articulate a foundation for readiness which is common across postsecondary programs and career paths
- Ensure equitable opportunities for every student
- Guide the policies and actions of agencies and stakeholders

What are some of the ways in which a CCR definition can have an impact on P-20 education?

- Strategic planning at local, regional, and state levels to address achievement gaps and increase college readiness
- Communications planning
- Student, family, and community awareness and engagement
- Cross-sector vertical and horizontal educational alignment
- High school reform and 12th grade redesign
- Grades 11-14 model
- Postsecondary placement and developmental education reform
- Assessment
- Data collection and analysis

Beyond communicating what College and Career Readiness is to students, parents and educators, how will schools need to use a common statewide definition?

- Align secondary level coursework to reflect indicators in the CCR definition
- Develop and use formative assessments that provide feedback to students on their level of College and Career Readiness
- Offer students more exposure to various postsecondary opportunities and readiness supports¹

¹ Summarized from Conley, D. T., McGaughy, C. L. (2012, April). College and Career Readiness: Same or Different? Educational Leadership, 69(7), 28-34.



A Proposed Oregon College and Career Readiness Definition

College-and-Career-Ready Oregonians have acquired knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors that provide a starting point to enter and succeed in workplace, career training, or college courses leading to certificates or degrees.

Key Indicators

I. Learning strategies, thinking skills, and academic knowledge

A College and Career Ready Oregonian....

- Reasons, researches, analyzes logically in order to investigate topics, and to evaluate, integrate, and present ideas and information
- Exhibits the following attributes: reflection, curiosity, openness, internal motivation, persistence, resilience, and flexibility
- Evaluates and/or applies prior knowledge of content and situations, including cultural understanding, to support comprehension
- Tracks and reflects on progress toward educational and vocational goals
- Employs effective speaking and active listening strategies for a range of purposes, audiences, and contexts
- Distinguishes between opinions, interpretations, and facts;
- Uses technology to access and evaluate the reliability, credibility, and utility of information and is able to produce and/or present information
- Locates, analyzes and critiques perceptions, information, ideas, arguments, and/or themes in a variety of text
- Produces clear, effective, and accurate writing grounded in textual evidence for a range of purposes, genres, and audiences
- Constructs clear and precise arguments to support their reasoning and to critique the reasoning of others

- Explains and applies mathematical concepts, carrying out mathematical procedures with precision and fluency in a variety of settings
- Solves a range of complex problems in pure and applied mathematics
- Makes productive use of knowledge and problem solving strategies
- Analyzes complex, real-world scenarios

II. Transition skills and workplace behaviors

A College and Career Ready Oregonian....

- Has positive values such as: caring, equity, integrity, honesty, responsibility, and restraint
- Practices personal, time, and budget management through planning and decision-making
- Has a sense of support and empowerment
- Is able to self-advocate
- Engages in civic and community activities
- Works productively in new cultural settings
- Relates and responds to individuals from various cultures
- Works productively in teams
- Understands postsecondary education options, expectations, costs, and processes
- Understands and evaluates career options and pathways
- Understands workplace requirements and business cultures
- Has appropriate interviewing skills
- Is timely and reliable
- Has appropriate workplace behaviors and occupation-specific skills
- Is able to accept and use feedback
- Has both personal and academic integrity and is an ethical decision maker

Further Resources

Key elements of Oregon's Definition for College and Career Readiness are already embedded in:

- Oregon Content Standards (<http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/results/?id=53>)
- Oregon Essential Skills and Diploma Requirements (<http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=1670>)
- Oregon Adult Basic Skills Learning Standards (<http://oregonabslearningstandards.org/>)



Timeline for Development of the Proposed Definition

December 2011	Oregon receives Core To College grant
September 2012-February 2013	Institutions' "Readiness Teams" developed draft College and Career Readiness definitions
March 2013	A statewide convening was held to examine and begin synthesizing the draft definitions
April – September 2013	Draft definition vetted through various stakeholder groups
October 2013	Draft definition was presented to the College and Career Readiness Cross Sector group for feedback
October – December 2013	On-line survey developed and distributed through state agency channels for feedback
December 2013	Feedback analyzed, presented to the CCR Cross Sector group for final edits
January 2014	Final draft definition developed
January 2014	Final draft definition presented to OIEB Best Practices and Student Transitions Subcommittee
March 2014	Final draft definition presented to OEIB for adoption
March – May 2014	Definition presented to the State Board of Education, the State Board of Higher Education, the Oregon Workforce Investment Board, the Early Learning Council, and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for adoption