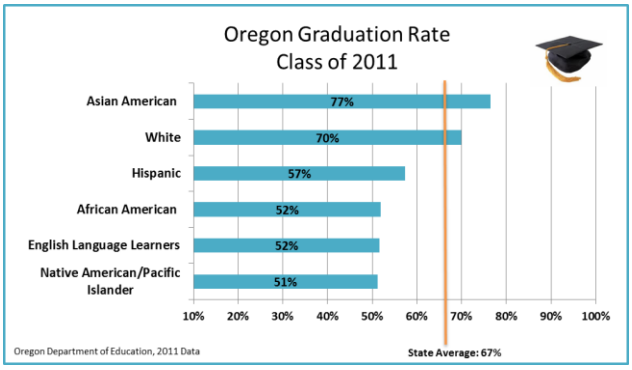
CALLING ALL OREGON ELECTED AND APPOINTED LEADERS:

ADDRESS THE INEQUITIES FACING STUDENTS OF COLOR AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

"We have far to go in creating a public education system that delivers equity for all students no matter their race. We know that students of color and English Language Learners have lower graduation rates, higher discipline rates, and are far less likely to have the opportunity and preparation to take advanced classes necessary to prepare them for college. This is not an overwhelming challenge, but rather a great opportunity. By increasing the number of students of color and English language learners who come to school prepared, graduate from high school, and access post-secondary education, we improve outcomes for our entire state. " **Governor John Kitzhaber**

OREGON STUDENT BODY IS CHANGING

- According to ODE, students of color comprised 16.3% (88,196) public school enrollment in 1997. Today, students of color make up about 33.7% (189,134) enrollment.
- Half of Oregon's 561,000 public school students qualify for free and reduced lunch, compared to 30% in 1997 (ODE).



OREGON IS BEHIND OTHER STATES

- Oregon is one of seven states where the NAEP score gap between higher and lower-income students widened from 2003 to 2011.

OREGON STUDENTS ARE NOT GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL PREPARED OR WITH ACCESS TO COLLEGE

- According to state data, among African American, Native American and ELL students, only half graduated on time with a regular diploma in 2010.

We'll feel confident that elected and appointed leaders are addressing these important issues when we see:

- **A consistent effort to close the achievement gap.** English Language Learners, students of color, and low-income students account for an increasing share of Oregon children. Therefore, Oregon needs a targeted strategy to reach these students by having cohesive early learning opportunities, a plan for closing the achievement gap in k-12 schools and improving college access and completion.
- **A clear plan for identifying and Aiding the lowest performing schools and districts**. By having comprehensive information about low performing schools, community partners can play a critical role in helping to make improvements and engaging in turnaround plans and action.
- **An excellent system of support for principals and teachers**. Any effort to better prepare students for college depends on the interactions teachers and principals have with students on a daily basis. Teachers who work with historically underserved children need additional time and resources to help their students make the significant learning gains they need.
- **Cultivate a diverse workforce:** According to the Oregon State Report Card, only 8.4% of our teachers are minorities while 33.7% of our students are racial minorities. As our minority student population grows, it is essential to make concerted efforts to hire and retain teachers of color.
- **Recognition that successful education includes both in and out of school time.** We must make sure that our resources include the wraparound services necessary to support the whole child's ability to function as a ready learner. And meaningful parental/community/school partnerships become the norm in Oregon.
- **A commitment to keep students in school and to find alternatives to suspension and expulsion.** Distressing new federal data and Oregon Department of Education data show that there are racial disparities in school discipline. In order for students to be successful, it is essential that we keep students in school.

WE, THE OREGON COMMUNITIES OF COLOR AND ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS BELOW, ARE READY TO HELP AND BE COUNTED AS MEANINGFUL PARTNERS IN ACKNOWLEDGING INEQUALITIES AND FINDING SOLUTIONS

Stand for Children, Salem/Keizer Coalition for Equality, Chalkboard Project, Self Enhancement Inc., APANO, Black Parents Initiative (BPI), CAUSA, NAACP Branches from Portland, Salem, Corvallis, & Eugene, Centro Cultural of Washington County, Casa Latinos Unidos of Corvallis, Latino Network of Portland, Latinos en Liderazgo from Reynolds, Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Oregon Native American Community Organizations, Partnership for Safety and Justice, Portland Parent Union, Portland Urban League, Unete from Medford & Una Voz Coalition from Jackson County, *Siwash Resources, Oregon Diversity Institute,* Mano a Mano Family Center, Adelante Mujeres, Oregon Commission on Black Affairs, Si Se Puede Oregon, Oregon Action, Oregon Indian Education Association (OIEA), Latinos Unidos Siempre (LUS), & PCUN.