Over the last month, I have traveled across Oregon – from the painted hills in the east, through the Rogue Valley, and to the rural communities along the Idaho border – to listen and learn about how we can reimagine education in our state. The dialogue and discourse has been powerful. In my visit to Ontario, one educator made a comment that resonated with me when she said, “Not only do we need to meet students where they’re at, we need to take them where they want to go.” This is just one example of the passion I see within our educators.

The community forums are an important way for me, and my colleagues at the Oregon Department of Education, to hear directly from Oregonians about their vision, values, and priorities for education. The feedback we are collecting from these discussions will help inform the State Plan we will be drafting over the coming months as required by the new Every Student Succeeds Act.

Several themes have emerged from these listening and learning sessions, including the desire to have an educational experience that is rigorous, relevant, and engaging for all students; the need to personalize and individualize a students’ learning so they can acquire new knowledge and real-world skills; and to ensure all students have access to a well-rounded education, regardless of where they live. Students and teachers have also talked about putting the right systems of support in place in order to develop meaningful relationships.

While traveling, I have visited schools, met with board members, and learned more about early learning and community college partnerships. While the Every Student Succeeds Act offers us an opportunity as a state to innovate and enhance our larger state vision, it also reinforces the fact that we have many systems that are working well. I have been truly inspired by the models of success and examples of schools and districts that are beating the odds.

I am excited to continue to travel and hear from more Oregonians. Please stay engaged in this conversation by visiting our continually updated webpage and by submitting questions and ideas to ESSA.Oregon@state.or.us.

Thank you for all that you do for students to make sure every learner is on a path to success!
Story Time

Reimagine Education in Oregon
A snapshot of Salam’s travels across the state

Oregonians are invited to Reimagine Education in Oregon by sharing their hopes and values for Oregon schools and education. Community input will help inform the Oregon State plan under the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA allows Oregon to create a State Plan with increased flexibility in the areas of assessment, accountability, school improvement, and educator effectiveness. Please consider attending one of the remaining forums. Below are photos and quotes from Salam’s travels around the state.

“We need to build an education system that places an emphasis on a love for learning – how do we take the next step so that students are hungry and want to learn more?”- Umatilla County participant

Jackson County - April 20, 2016

Umatilla County - April 11, 2016

“We have a unique opportunity to reshape the way we educate to match the changing times of the 21st Century.” – Clackamas County participant

Malheur County - May 2, 2016

“The most valuable part of ESSA is the opportunity to provide students with an individualized education that matches their desires and abilities.” Marion County participant

Central Oregon - April 25, 2016
Teacher Talk

TELL Survey

Earlier this month, results of the 2015-16 Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) survey were released. The survey showed that educators reported improved teaching and learning conditions. In its second biennium, the survey had over 18,200 educator responses, providing an opportunity for teachers and administrators to share their perspectives related to teaching and learning conditions in Oregon schools and districts.

“I would encourage schools and districts to use this data to inform their strategic and continuous improvement planning, said Deputy Superintendent Salam Noor. “I know that as we build our State Plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act, the Oregon Department of Education will be reviewing these results and incorporating what we learn in our work.”

The results of the TELL survey are available here: http://www.telloregon.org/

#GoOpen Initiative

Oregon has joined 13 other states in a national collaboration to support and leverage Open Education Resources (OER). States will share effective strategies and ideas for creating, curating, and vetting OER. Oregon is committed to supporting the transition to high-quality, openly-licensed educational resources for Oregon schools. You can find more information about GoOpen-Oregon on the Oregon Educator Network at here. Please contact Carla Wade at (503)-947-5631 with any questions.

Vroom Update

The Early Learning Division is pleased to announce the newest Vroom pilot sites: the South Coast Regional Early Learning Hub (SCRELH) and Oregon Teen Parent Programs (OTPP). SCRELH coordinates services for kids in Coos, Curry, and western Douglas counties so they’re ready to learn by the time they reach kindergarten. OTPP connects a number of smaller communities around the state serving special populations of parents, such as the local Teen Parent Programs and Parent/Child Residential Treatment programs. With 24 pilot sites around the state building Vroom into their home visiting networks, parenting classes, and other programming, these sites have been able to reach more than 32,000 families in Oregon with the Vroom early-learning tools. Learn more about the Vroom program and our other pilot sites here.

Electronic Benefits Transfer Card Program

How can we stop “the summer slide?” Nutrition helps! Oregon is the recipient of a grant to provide funds to children suffering from food insecurity in many of our counties and some specific schools this summer. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) Child Nutrition is supporting the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Card for Children program by collecting data from schools. If your school is eligible, you have already received an email from ODE. Additional letters will be sent out to households from the Department of Human Services. Please send in the information and talk to your community about this much needed assistance coming after school ends! Contact Damasita Sanchez at (503)-947-5625 with any questions.
Steps to Success

NAEP 2015 Grade 12 Results

The National Center for Education Statistics has released results from the 12th grade National Assessment of Educational Progress mathematics and reading assessments. From January – March, 2015, NAEP tested nationally representative samples of U.S. 12th graders. The math average score for U.S. seniors decreased from 2013, driven by declines for lower-performing students at the 10th, 25th, and 50th percentiles. The reading average score for U.S. seniors was not statistically significantly different from the score in 2013. However, the score for students at the 90th percentile increased, while scores for students at the 10th and 25th percentiles decreased. For more information, visit The Nation’s Report Card website or contact Oregon’s NAEP State Coordinator at beth.laduca@state.or.us or (503) 947-5836.

New Director of Assessment

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) is very excited to announce that Mary Anderson has joined our team as the new Director of Assessment. Mary joins ODE from Portland Public Schools, where she most recently served as Senior Manager of Educational Measurement and Assessment in the Department of Systems Planning and Performance. In this role, she transformed school support for the administration of local and state testing, as well as partnered with other departments and schools to report, analyze, and use assessment results across the district. In her previous role as District Test Coordinator, Mary managed Portland Public’s transition to the Smarter Balanced Assessments, which included a comprehensive communication and technology deployment plan for the first operational year. Mary is delighted to be serving the students and schools of Oregon. Mary can be reached at (503)-947-5721.

Test Fee Program

The 2015-16 exam fees chart for the Test Fee Program has been recently updated. The Test Fee Program provides federal and state funding to support students taking AP and IB exams. The new, more expensive AP Seminar and AP Research exams will receive additional support with state funds. Please click here to view the chart, and contact Andrea Morgan at (503) 947-5772 with any questions.

April Joint Board Meeting

The State Board of Education and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission met for a joint meeting on April 14, 2016 at the Oregon Legislature. The Joint Boards discussed transitions from high school to postsecondary education, accelerated learning, math pathway, and CTE/STEM. The Joint Boards also passed a motion that the Joint Boards, working closely with postsecondary math chairs, put a priority on building an aligned math system that includes clear pathways, clear articulation of standards, and advising to guide students. This work is to be a future budget priority for the Joint Boards.
Upcoming Opportunities

Blue Book Contest

The upcoming Oregon Blue Book will focus on outdoor recreational activities with its color insert celebrating the Pacific Crest Trail, specifically through the Oregon cascades, and by engaging our elementary, middle, and high school students to participate in the second ever Blue Book essay contest. Click here to access the essay questions for each level. Selected essay winners will be included in the Oregon Blue Book and will be invited to the Capitol for the Blue Book release and celebration. The submission deadline is October 12, 2016. Student entries should be mailed to Mary Beth Herkert, State Archivist at the Oregon State Archives.

FIRST Robotics Grant

FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) is an international program devoted to inspiring young people to become science and technology leaders through mentor-based programs. The Oregon FIRST Robotics Grant supports this mission through a competitive grant managed by the Oregon Department of Education and funded by the Oregon Legislature. There are three categories: FIRST LEGO League (grades 4-8), FIRST Tech Challenge (grades 7-12), and FIRST Robotics Competition (grades 9-12). Click here for a 2016-17 application, available May 16. The deadline for submissions is June 17, 2016. Please contact Linda Simeone with any questions.

Reach Higher Oregon Summit

Registration for the Reach Higher Oregon Summer Summit is now open! The Summit will be held July 19-20, 2016 in Bend, Oregon. Before registering, consider who will represent your College and Career Readiness teams (School Administrators, Counselors, Graduation Coaches, Community School Outreach Specialists, Student Advisors, College Access Professionals, and other similar positions). During the Summit, attendees will receive information on college and career readiness, be involved in collaborative activities, and leave recharged with a College and Career Readiness Action Plan for the new school year. Following attendance at this event, there will be funds made available through the Regional Advisory Councils and several Education Service Districts to support this work. Click here for more information and to register. Please contact Beth Wigham at (503)-947-5708 with questions.

Oregon Ed Tech Cadre

Applications for the 2016-17 Oregon Ed Tech Professional Development Cadre will be available on June 15, 2016. Watch for a link to the application in the next Education Update and on the ODE Digital Learning page. For additional information, please contact Carla Wade at (503)-947-5631.

Safe Routes to School Grant

The Oregon Department of Transportation has released applications for Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program grants. The goals of a SRTS Program are to increase the ability and opportunity for K-8 students to walk, bicycle, and roll safely to and from school; promote a culture of walking and bicycling to/from school and encourage a healthy and active lifestyle; and facilitate the planning, development and implementation of projects that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption and air pollution within two miles of the school. This is a competitive call for applications, and $300,000 is available per year for (non-infrastructure) programs beginning October 1, 2016. Applications are due June 15, 2016. More information on this grant opportunity can be found here.