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# POST GRADUATE SCHOLAR (SB 1537) POLICY GUIDANCE (5/10/16)

The Post Graduate Scholar Program is a safety net for high school students who have earned a high school diploma, earned below a 2.5 GPA (thus not eligible for Oregon Promise), and are ineligible for the PELL Grant or the grant does not cover one year of college tuition and fees.

## **Which students are eligible to receive State School Funds (SSF) as a post-graduate scholar?**

Students who

- a. have satisfied the requirements for a regular Oregon diploma as provided in ORS 329.451(2);
- b. have been in grades 9-12 for more than a total of four school years;
- c. are enrolled in courses at the district's local community college or contract community college that are part of a course of study approved by the school district and that may lead to a certificate or diploma;
- d. have completed and submitted the Free Application for Federal Student aid (FAFSA), if eligible to file a FAFSA;
- e. are not eligible for an Oregon Promise grant as described in ORS 341.522 because of failure to earn the minimum cumulative grade point average, or submitted a complete application but did not receive a grant.
- f. are not eligible for a federal aid grant or are eligible for a federal aid grant but it is less than the average cost of tuition, books, and fees at an Oregon community college (for the 2016-2017 academic year the amount is \$5426 for 12 credits);
- g. retain residence within the boundaries of the school district that is offering the Post-Graduate Scholar program and through which the student satisfied the requirements for a high school diploma; and
- h. Meet any school district requirements for participation in the program.

## **What does a school district need to do to expend moneys from the State School Fund for a post-graduate scholar program?**

- 1) School districts must have a written agreement with the community college that has a service area or contract within which the school district is located.
- 2) School districts need a policy approved by the school district board that:
  - a. Describes the goals of the program, including target high school graduation rates for underserved students;
  - b. Includes minimum requirements for grade point average, attendance, and participation in regular in-person meetings with school staff;
  - c. Contains an evaluation plan describing how the success of the program will be measured and monitored;
  - d. Lists the courses of study that are approved by the school district for the post-graduate scholar program; and
- 3) The majority of students from the school district that are enrolled at a community college are not post-graduate scholars or meet at least one of the following criteria:
  - a. Has received a modified diploma, an extended diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate;

- b. Is or will be a first-generation graduate of high school
- c. Is, or has been, a child in a foster home;
- d. Is, or has been, placed in a facility or an education program by a court;
- e. Is homeless;
- f. Is a parent; or
- g. Was identified as eligible for free or reduced price lunches within the preceding 12 months.

**Do districts need a staff person dedicated to providing support services to student in the post graduate scholar program?**

Yes, districts offering post-graduate scholars programs must assign at least one staff person to have a portion of their time dedicated to provide support services to students in this program, including regular in-person meetings to monitor progress, which must be held at least twice per month. Districts should use the “Position Comment” field in staff position to indicate which staff member in their district has this duty, by entering “Post-graduate Scholars” into the position comment field.

**What if a student is a transfer student and doesn’t have a legal residence within the boundaries of the school district through which they received their diploma?**

If a student was a transfer student to the district during his/her senior year and graduated or earned enough credits, then the student may continue with the district as a post graduate scholar. Students who have graduated or who have earned enough credits to graduate from District A cannot transfer to School District B for a post graduate program.

**What about students at virtual or charter schools?**

Students attending outside of their original resident district, including those attending virtual charter schools, at the time that they satisfied the requirements for a high school diploma may participate in a post-graduate scholars program offered by the district in which they were resident for state school funding purposes (i.e. the charter school’s sponsoring district, for virtual charter schools).

A charter school student may be able to participate in a school district’s program through the use of interdistrict transfer or open enrollment but the existing requirements for those laws would apply to the student.

**Can charter schools establish post graduate scholar programs?**

Yes, if allowed by their charter. Even though the bill states that a “school district may” establish a post-secondary scholars program, a charter school may choose to do one unless prohibited in their charter agreement. (See ORS 338.115 (2).) If a charter school chose to do a program the requirements of the bill would apply in conjunction with charter law.

**Are students with a modified diploma eligible for post-graduate scholar programs?**

No, students who earn modified diplomas are eligible to continue their enrollment in normal K-12 programs until they either earn a regular diploma or exceed age limits. They shouldn’t need the post-graduate scholars program, because they can attend college coursework programs and receive full ADM funding.

**How is the average cost of tuition and fees calculated?**

Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) will use prior year’s tuition, book, and fee information to set this amount. For the 2016-2017 academic year the amount is \$5426. In future year’s this information will be published in January.

**Can a student enroll in any Community College of choice?**

No, a student must enroll in the community college that has a service area within which the school district they graduated from is located. See map: <https://www.oregon.gov/ccwd/pdf/OregonCommunityCollegeDistricts.pdf>

**What can the district pay for?**

Tuition, fees and books for one school year after a student has become eligible to participate in the post graduate scholar program.

**Does the participating district have to provide transportation for Post Graduate Scholars?**

No, but post graduate scholars may use existing bus routes or transportation services provided by the school district. Any transportation costs incurred by a school district to add or extend existing bus routes or other transportation services are not considered approved transportation costs for the purposes of ORS 327.013. Best practice is for school staff to work out a transportation solution for all students participating in the post-graduate scholars program.

**How long may students participate in the post-graduate scholars program?**

Students may participate for 2 consecutive semesters/three consecutive quarters after they have met the graduation requirements and exceeded their fourth year of high school enrollment, or for a total of 36 quarter credits of post-graduate scholars enrollment, whichever limit comes first. Summer term enrollment may not be counted for post-graduate scholars ADM. Students may not extend their post-graduate scholars eligibility by delaying their entry into the program or by reducing the number of credits they attempt. Students may participate in other college coursework or expanded options prior to the end of the student's fourth year of high school without counting against the post-graduate scholars' time limit.

**Which ADM weights are post-graduate scholars eligible for?**

None. Post-graduate scholars will be excluded from the calculation of English Learners, Special Education, Pregnant and Parenting, and Small/Remote schools calculations. Poverty, Foster Care, and Neglected and Delinquent weights, which are not calculated from student-level data, will not be adjusted.

**How will ADM be calculated for post-graduate scholars?**

Post-graduate scholars will be reported based on the number of enrolled college quarter-credit-equivalent hours. One semester credit is equivalent to 1.5 quarter credits. Districts may not claim credit hours for courses from which the student has withdrawn prior to the tuition reimbursement date. Districts may not claim credit hours for courses that the student is repeating, for which the district has previously claimed ADM, if the student previously earned an "incomplete" or "withdrawn" for the course.

Districts may claim up to 36 quarter credit hours per year, per student. ADM calculation (for Annual Cumulative ADM) shall be as follows:

<b>School Year</b>	<b>ADM Calculation</b>
2016-17	1.00 * Quarter Credit Hours/36
2017-18	0.85 * Quarter Credit Hours/36
2018-19 and beyond	0.75 * Quarter Credit Hours/36

**How are the school districts getting reimbursed?**

Districts will be reimbursed through the State School Fund. A new weight is being created specifically for post-graduate scholars. For 2016-17 the ADM = 1.0; 2017-18 ADM = .85 and 2018-19 ADM = .75. This funding level assumes the student is enrolled full-time, at least 12 credits for three quarters. Students taking less than a full-load will see their funding prorated.

**How will post-graduate scholars be counted for the purpose of graduation and dropout reporting?**

Post-graduate scholars will be counted as graduates, as of the date on which their diploma is awarded. Post-graduate scholars are not dropouts.

**How should post-graduate scholars be reported in ADM?**

Districts should use a new ADM End Date Code, 4G (Completed Diploma-Track Program, Met Requirements for HS Diploma, and is Participating in Post-graduate Scholars program) to indicate that the student has been awarded their diploma but is expected to return for the post-graduate scholars program. All enrollments occurring after the student meets the qualifications as a post-graduate scholar should be reported using new ADM Program Type Code 16 (Post-graduate Scholars).

**Is a student required to take other funding sources first instead of becoming a Post Graduate Scholar?**

- 1) If the student qualifies for the Oregon Promise the student may not be a post graduate scholar
- 2) If the student qualifies for Pell Grant that is greater than or equal to the average cost of tuition, books, and fees at an Oregon Community College \$5426 for the 2016-2017 school year. The student is not eligible for a post-graduate scholar program.
- 3) If the student is eligible for a federal grant that is less than the average cost of tuition and fees at an Oregon Community College (\$5426 is the prior year cost for 2015-2016) the student is eligible to participate in a post-graduate scholar program. School districts should counsel the students on the benefits or disadvantages of the program with the student and if the student chooses to participate in the post-graduate scholar program they will need to decline the federal financial aid. The student may be eligible to use other private scholarship programs and should work with community college and high school staff to determine the best options.

**Are students who qualify for the Post Graduate Scholar Program able to use financial aid for things besides tuition, books, and fees (i.e. transportation, housing?)**

No, however, a student can apply for privately funded scholarships or grants to address living and other expenses

**Are students eligible for the Post Graduate Scholar Program if they missed the Oregon Promise and/or FAFSA deadlines?**

No, missing deadlines is not a valid way to qualify for a post-graduate scholarship program. Students MUST complete the Oregon Promise application if they could meet the minimum qualification (2.5 GPA). Students who are close to earning a GPA of 2.5 should be encouraged to complete the Oregon Promise application. Students must complete and submit the FAFSA if they are eligible for federal financial aid.

**Are undocumented students eligible to participate in the postgraduate scholars program?**

Yes, if they meet the requirements outlined above and any additional school district requirements they are eligible.

**May students or districts delay the award of a diploma in order to delay the student's post-graduate scholars eligibility?**

No. Students who complete high school prior to the end of their fourth year in grades 9-12 may delay the award of their diploma to the end of their fourth year, but no further and districts must not counsel students to delay.

**Should a district award a diploma to post-graduate scholars?**

Yes, districts must award diplomas to students who complete diploma requirements and have been in school for four or more years.

**Can a post-graduate scholar have a break in school enrollment between getting their diploma and attending CC as a post-graduate scholar? For example after graduating in June can they take a break from school until winter term to start the program?**

Maybe, a student must meet all the eligibility requirements for a post-graduate scholar program. From the time they meet graduation requirements they are eligible to participate in the program for one year.

**What are the timelines for declaring the intention of participating in post-graduate scholar program?**

The Department does not need to collect data on post-graduate scholar participation until the fall of the academic year in which the post-graduate scholar is enrolled. As a district it is useful to have an enrollment process in the spring before the students will participate in the program. Because of the timing of Oregon Promise awards and changes in FAFSA filing information the 2016 and 2017 are potentially messy years. Districts should plan to allow for some flexibility in the timing of admitting students to their post graduate scholar program because of these uncertainties.

**Are students who graduate in less than four years eligible for a post-graduate scholar program?**

No, the students must have been in grades 9-12 for more than a total of four years. There is nothing requiring a district to graduate a student early. Students would be eligible to complete their full four years of high school and participated in any expanded options programs, dual credit, or other courses offered by the school district. Students who meet diploma requirements early but remain enrolled to pursue courses offered by their school district should be reported with ADM End Date Code 4F.

**What about programs that are designed to take five years, with one or more graduation requirements place in year five, does that program need to be redesigned in order to qualify?**

Yes. Students need to have the opportunity and guidance on how to finish their diploma within four years for a program to be eligible to use State School Funds to offer a Post-Graduate Scholar program. Districts wishing to use state school funds for a five year program need to redesign your program so that students would have the opportunity to finish their high school requirements in four years. There are five year program models where students earn both a high school diploma and an associate's degree. Schools are welcome to create these models, but should only use State School Funds for the four years of a student's high school education.

**What is my local community college service district?**

You can find your local community college service district on the CCWD website.

<https://www.oregon.gov/ccwd/pdf/OregonCommunityCollegeDistricts.pdf>

**What does "retain legal residence" mean?**

Legal residence for students is defined under ORS 339.133. Typically this is where a student resides. A student who has been admitted to a district under open enrollment (HB3681) retains residency at their admitted district for purposes of the Post Graduate Scholar program even though they have graduated. Under interdistrict transfer if the receiving district extends the transfer agreement to allow for an additional year after the student meets the graduation requirements they are a legal resident of the school district they attend.

## **Oregon Promise Related Questions**

### **What if a student's GPA falls below the 2.5 GPA in the 8<sup>th</sup> semester? Does that impact their eligibility for Oregon Promise?**

If a student has a 2.5 GPA on his/her 7<sup>th</sup> semester transcript that is sufficient evidence to meet the Oregon Promise grant requirements. Students will not be asked to reapply at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> semester if their GPA falls below the required minimum during the 8<sup>th</sup> semester.

### **What if the Oregon Promise or Pell Grant funds do not cover the first year of tuition and fees fully? Are students required to take this money, or can they enroll in a Post Graduate Scholar program instead?**

Before a student can become a Post Graduate Scholar, they MUST apply for Oregon Promise and fill out a FAFSA, if eligible. If they are awarded an Oregon Promise scholarship, they cannot become a post-graduate scholar. If they submit a FAFSA and are eligible to receive a federal grant equal to or greater than the average cost of tuition, books, and fees at a community college (\$5426 is the prior year cost for 2015-2016), they cannot become a post-graduate scholar.

### **A student did not apply for Oregon Promise because their GPA was below 2.5. Are they still eligible for a post-graduate scholarship program and how do schools document this?**

The student's transcript that shows a GPA below 2.5 will be sufficient to show ineligibility for Oregon Promise.

### **Will student participating in a post graduate scholar program be eligible for an Oregon Promise grant when they finish?**

No, the Oregon Promise program requires participation within 6 months of graduation.