

Increasing Accelerated Learning Opportunities in Oregon

Students who take college credit in high school are more likely to graduate from high school and enroll and persist in college, academic research and state data shows. These courses are especially beneficial to students traditionally underrepresented in higher education. Oregon offers a variety of options, known as accelerated learning programs, to give students this opportunity; however, issues persist in Oregon around credit transferability, equitable access around the state, qualified instructors, and adequate support for students and their families.

Sustainable Solutions for Accelerated Learning (SSAL) Work Group

To address these challenges, the Chief Education Office convened a Sustainable Solutions for Accelerated Learning Work Group. Thirty-six members from K-12, community colleges, universities, state agencies and community partners met for more than a year, during which they studied previous legislation, developed topical work groups, reviewed research from Oregon and other states, analyzed results from student surveys and developed financial scenarios. The group met with student panels, who shared many insights including:

- Many other students could be taking advantage of these courses.
- Better communication from teachers and exposure to classes during earlier years may help encourage more students to participate.
- Clear information is needed on the benefits and drawbacks of taking college level courses while in high school.

"I would highly recommend taking college courses because they have made me a more confident student. College is a huge step and these courses are a great stepping stone in between education levels."
Oregon High School Student

The SSAL work group drafted recommendations for the Governor and the Legislature to support access to high quality accelerated college credit programs across Oregon.

Areas of Focus and Recommendations

1. **Equitable Access:** expanding opportunities for students in areas of Oregon where there is limited access to accelerated college credit options.
 - Build on the success of Regional Promise Replication Grants and focus grant funding in 2019 to seed new accelerated learning partnerships that expand options for access to college credit for students in high school in areas with limited offerings.
 - Establish new program account to reimburse accelerated learning partnerships between school districts, community colleges and public universities for college credits completed by high school students. The formula-based grant would be weighted for traditionally underrepresented students.

2. **Credit transferability:** ensuring that credits earned by students in accelerated Learning programs transfer when they subsequently enroll in Oregon public postsecondary institutions.
 - Use HB 2998 “Foundational Curricula” as a guideline for Oregon high school based partnerships offering accelerated college credit coursework.
 - Align accelerated learning offerings with Unified Statewide Transfer Agreements (USTA) when available.
 - Improve communication and information on what courses transfer where in Oregon.
3. **Student support:** services that help students succeed and choose the right option.
 - Expand Career College Collaborative (C3) services and outreach.
 - Develop student portal for high school students, families, college access and school staff to consult and verify which college-level courses offered in high schools will be accepted at community colleges and public universities.
4. **Qualified instructors:** increasing the supply of qualified teachers and instructors able to teach accelerated learning courses.
 - Expand support for school districts and education service districts to train and qualify accelerated learning course instructors.
 - Develop and offer online graduate coursework applicable to high school based dual credit courses offered in Oregon.
 - Address wide range of dual credit instructor qualifications in Oregon.



Governor Kate Brown meets with high school students to discuss accelerated learning.

