

APPENDIX D: SUMMARY OF QEC BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

In August of each even-numbered year, the Quality Education Commission (QEC) presents the Oregon Legislature with a report that outlines best educational practices, makes recommendations for actions that the legislature and Oregon's schools can take to improve student outcomes and estimates the funding level needed to meet Oregon's K-12 education goals.

The [August 2020 Quality Education Model Final Report](#) recommendations build upon earlier versions, attend to current circumstances including the impacts of the Coronavirus, add new recommendations, and include a new district spending and student outcome analysis tool.

The integrated planning process will require districts to build systems that cultivate continuous improvement and use a needs assessment for equity-based decision making. The [August 2018 Quality Education Model Final Report](#) stresses building system capacity and coherence and warns against plans focused primarily on discrete programs, activities and interventions. These specific recommendations draw on the work previously completed for the August 2018 Quality Education Model Final Report as well as for prior reports dating back to the original report in 1999. More detail on the recommendations can be found in the [individual QEM reports](#).

SUMMARY OF GUIDANCE FROM THE COMMISSION

- **Oregon should make educational equity and eliminating gaps in opportunity and achievement its primary education goals.** We should no longer tolerate an educational system that delivers inequitable results, disadvantaging students of color, English learners, disabled students, and students from low-income families. An inadequate education will disadvantage them throughout their lives

- **We should focus our educational improvement efforts on system and process improvement.** We should avoid the temptation to rely on discrete programs, activities, and interventions that only treat the symptoms, not the root causes, of the system's inadequacies

In the short-term, these actions are the most important:

- Continue implementing the foundational elements of the Student Success Act
- Develop plans to assist students who were the most adversely affected by the school closures

In the longer-term, focus on these actions:

- Institutionalize equity based practices within schools
- Increase equal opportunity and access to high-quality early learning programs
- Pay attention to social and emotional learning.
- Build systems designed to continuously improve.
- Distribute resources to individual schools based on measures of student need
- Work cooperatively with partners to effectively implement the provisions of the Student Success Act

Elements of a coherent continuous school improvement model include:

- **A Shared Vision** that promotes a positive school culture and environment that emphasizes academic excellence, shared responsibility, collaboration, and mutual trust and respect
- **A Common Understanding of the Problems to be Solved** through honest discussion with staff, students, and parents to identify which aspects of the existing system, practices, and processes are at the root of the problems so that those parts of the system can be made better

- **Effective Teachers** supported by high-quality induction, support, and mentoring and contains these elements:
 - context-specific professional learning that builds capacity for small group facilitation
 - analysis of individual student needs strategic planning to address root causes of underachievement, and partner networking
 - time and support for data analysis and diagnosis of student needs and sharing of expertise in solving teaching challenges
 - meaningful evaluations and feedback about standards aligned classroom performance and professional collaboration
 - including teacher leadership (trying, evaluating, and planning new practices) in the career path
- **Strong and Stable School Leaders** who foster a shared vision and culture of trust and support, develop and empower effective teachers, coordinate support staff and external partners, and assure the coherence of the processes and practices that ensure every student and teacher has and meets high expectations
- **Well-coordinated Support Staff** who promote a culture of learning through support of both academic and personal issues
- **Community Partners** who add value by working on the ground to directly assist families, students, and schools in solving challenges, providing wraparound services, and connecting schools to their neighborhoods
- **Engaged Parents** who have the necessary information to help their students stay on track and to get involved and connected to the larger school community

The Commission recommends districts use the following framework to build coherence and to deploy resources in the most productive way.

- Institute a coherent governance system coordinated across the school, district, and state levels, with well-articulated priorities at each level and a clear vision of where cooperation is needed
- Provide strong supports (high-quality Pre-K, affordable healthcare, family wrap-around supports) so children arrive at school prepared, healthy, and eager to learn
- Ensure that students with the highest needs have access to the best teachers
- Develop a highly coherent instructional system
- Create clear pathways for students through the system, set to global standards, with no dead ends
- Ensure an abundant supply of highly qualified teachers through grow your own programs that begin with high school students
- Recruit and invest in the leadership development of teachers and staff so they can lead and develop strong systems of instruction
- Professionalize teaching by providing supports and incentives for learning and continuous improvement, increasing teachers' role in decision-making through communities of practice, and providing more non-classroom time to improve instruction
- Create an effective system of career and technical education and training that requires high-level academic performance from all students

While the above elements and framework are a necessary component for long-term and sustainable improvement in student outcomes in Oregon, they are not sufficient. Also critical are effective educational practices and investments that are well implemented. Because needs can vary tremendously among districts and schools, each district should evaluate the investments that will have the greatest impact in each of their schools, as identified in their needs assessments. Many of these practices and investments have been discussed in the QEM reports over the years and are summarized here. The summaries are followed by a list of further sources of information that may be of interest to districts and schools.

QEM 2018 REPORT

The [2018 report](#) focuses on the structures and systems required for a sustainable school improvement model. The key elements of such a model were described at the beginning of this document, but more specific recommendations include the following:

- Districts and schools need to develop “network improvement communities” that provide a framework for creating coherent systems and processes for long-term improvement. ODE should assist districts and schools in doing this work; and
- All levels of the education enterprise should pay more attention to equity. The state must pay attention to the equitable distribution of funding to school districts, and districts must pay attention to the equitable distribution of resources to individual schools. Schools, for their part, must assure that the high-needs students in their care get an education that is tailored to their specific needs

QEM 2016 REPORT

The [2016 report](#) focuses on preparing students for post-secondary success.

- Schools should promote a culture of college-going, particularly among students that don’t have a history of college-going in their families;
- This requires a collaborative effort among administrators, teachers, staff, students, families and the community; and
- Schools need to design structures that help staff get to know students well.

QEM 2014 REPORT

The [2014 report](#) focuses on resource allocation.

- Resources must be allocated to the uses where they have the most positive impact on student learning;
- More resources should be allocated to the early grades and to schools that have more students with higher needs, including students from low-income families, English learners and students with disabilities; and
- Districts and schools should work to reduce the rate of chronic absenteeism, with attention paid to creating a school environment and culture that is more engaging for students and promoting closer connections between students and staff.

QEM 2012 REPORT

The [2012 report](#) focuses on teacher collaboration and formative assessments.

- Enhance the collection and use of data from formative assessments;
- Spend at least 60 minutes per week analyzing assessment data with colleagues;
- Give feedback to students and parents frequently;
- Promote teacher collaboration and devote enough time and resources so it is implemented well; and
- Teacher collaboration should include setting specific goals for improving student achievement, including for individual students.

QEM 2010 REPORT

The [2010 report](#) focuses on math instruction, course-taking, and content articulation. The key recommendations are:

- Start offering Algebra for high school credit in the 7th or 8th grade. Analysis on Oregon coursetaking data show that students who struggle with Algebra in the 9th grade are at risk of not completing their math requirements in time to graduate;
- Provide for smaller class sizes in math classes;
- Seek out teachers who have advanced endorsements in math; and
- Develop frameworks for the articulation of math courses from 4th grade through high school, and build a solid foundation in the early grades.

QEM 2008 REPORT

The [2008 report](#) focuses on adequate instruction time for students, adequate collaboration time for teachers and expanded use of formative assessments.

- Add more instruction time and double-dosing in core classes for struggling students;
- Add teacher FTE in math/reading/science to allow smaller classes and more individual attention;
- Provide staff time for study, collaboration and data review aimed at better serving specific students;
- Fund more school-level leadership development; and
- Provide more resources to develop formative assessments and early indicators of students at risk of not succeeding.

QEM 2006 REPORT

The [2006 report](#) focuses on allocating resources to the uses that have the most impact on student learning.

- Provide more funding to early childhood development, Pre-K programs and early reading efforts; and
- Continue high school restructuring efforts, including individual education plans, small learning communities, work-site based learning and extra-curricular programs that promote student engagement.

QEM 2004 REPORT

The [2004 report](#) focuses on staff development, curriculum alignment and resources for students with disabilities.

- Target staff development so teachers can more effectively help students meet state standards;
- Improve the alignment between the K-12 curriculum and Oregon's post-secondary and employment needs;
- Look for efficiencies in providing services to high-cost special education students; and
- Encourage the state to provide more funding for those students.

QEM 2002 REPORT

The [2002 report](#) focuses on indicators of quality and improving the equity of student outcomes. Its key recommendations are:

- Create a personalized education plan for each student and base instruction on individual student needs; 73
- Use data to inform their decisions about individual student needs;
- Have a comprehensive induction plan for new staff;
- Provide and encourage student connections with significant adults;
- Develop career-related learning opportunities with community-based and worksite learning options;
- Offer college course-taking and dual credit opportunities; and
- Provide wraparound services at school sites.

QEM 2000 REPORT

[This report](#) builds on the 1999 report and recommends the following:

- Focus resources on the early grades to build a solid foundation for later learning;
- Tailor professional development to the particular needs of students in each school; and
- Focus on the social-emotional needs of students that research shows have long-term positive impacts on student outcomes.

QEM 1999 REPORT

[This is the original QEM report](#) which describes the key elements and components of a quality education as reflected in the Quality Education Model. Its key recommendations are:

- Targeted reductions in class sizes, particularly in the early grades;
- Provide more professional development for teachers and principals;
- Provide more instruction time, particularly for struggling students;
- Do more community outreach to promote more parent and community involvement; and
- Provide more instructional support so the benefits of good instruction are maximized.