

# Research Agenda

## 2025-27

Oregon Department of Education

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# Introduction

## **Developing this Research and Engagement Agenda**

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) gathered research questions from internal staff and from our Data Justice Stewards advisory committee, an external advisory group representing communities across the state. We organized the questions we received into topic areas, and grouped topic areas by the five priorities for student success established in Oregon's Reimagined Accountability Framework. An average of 10 topic areas were identified for each priority area.

We then worked with the Data Justice Stewards to refine the topics and rank them, and selected the highest-interest topics in each priority area for inclusion in the research agenda.

Ideas for future research agenda topics? Submit them [here](#)!

## **Our Commitment to Equity**

The Oregon Department of Education centers the full capacity of children and learners of all ages and backgrounds - ensuring that they flourish academically, socially, emotionally, and holistically at every stage of their educational journey. In doing so, students grow into actively engaged citizens—ready to learn, ready to earn, and ready to contribute meaningfully to their communities and families.

ODE is committed to the anti-racist and equitable implementation of policy, practices, procedures, and legislation that translates into resource allocation, education rigor, and opportunities for historically and currently marginalized & underserved youth, students, and families including civil rights protected classes. This means the dismantling, reenvisioning and restructuring of systems, services and institutions that create a dichotomy of barriers and beneficiaries over oppressed & marginalized peoples. Equity without honoring Tribal trust responsibility is inequity by design.

## **How We'll Use This Agenda**

This agenda is intended to support research-practice partnerships between ODE and agency-authorized researchers across the state in designing studies and evaluations that are targeted to meet the needs of the K-12 education community. The agenda will also inform which proposals and requests for external data-sharing are approved by the Data Governance Committee. ODE will prioritize projects closely aligned with the research agenda in determining where to allocate staff resources and student data.

### **Expected Products**

ODE has an obligation to the students and guardians whose secure data is entrusted to us, to ensure that the data are protected, handled ethically and legally, and use the data to support these students and those who come after them. Research projects that are expected to produce actionable recommendations and results aligned with the topics identified in this agenda will be prioritized for ODE support, including access to ODE staff expertise and ODE's stores of data. For more information on requesting secure data, see [Oregon Department of Education: Data Governance](#).

### **Acknowledgements**

Thanks to the Research Core Team, staff across ODE, and our external partners for their contributions to this research agenda.

## Research Agenda

The following sections outline our vision for the Oregon Department of Education’s Research and Engagement Agenda, 2025-27.<sup>1</sup> Five [priority areas](#) encompass the research agenda: 1) High-Quality Learning Experiences for All Students; 2) Aligned and Focused Educational Systems; 3) Engaged Partners and Communities; 4) Safe and Inclusive Schools; and 5) Committed and Supported Staff.

Within each area, ODE partnered with community experts to identify and prioritize specific research topics that were most aligned with the needs of our students, teachers, schools, districts, and communities. **Each topic is accompanied by example research questions - these are intended to be illustrative of the topic, not restrictive.** ODE is interested in broad areas of research on the prioritized topics.

### High-Quality Learning Experiences for All Students

*Every student in Oregon experiences daily learning that is rigorous, relevant, and rooted in high expectations—regardless of their background or learning needs.*

#### Why this Research is Important

Oregon educators rely on research and data to support their choices of curriculum and instructional practices to support all students in accessing a high-quality and rigorous education. Research in this area can support the adoption and implementation of effective materials and changes to policy and practice that foster all students to feel safe, seen, welcome, and prepared to learn.

#### Topic Areas and Potential Research Questions

##### Topic Area H.1. Early literacy and numeracy

This topic includes practices associated with development of strong literacy and numeracy skills in early childhood (up to third grade), including instructional practices and materials, specific grant goals and activities, professional development, community engagement, health supports, and other related topics.

Example research questions in this area:

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<sup>1</sup> The [UChicago Consortium on School Research](#) informed this structure. Research and Engagement Agenda, 21-25. UChicago Consortium on School Research (2021).

- How are the early literacy curriculum and strategies used in a classroom related to student performance on English Language Arts assessments?
- What curriculum and instructional practices are effective in supporting students who are learning English while also developing literacy skills in English Language Arts? How do they differ from effective practices for students developing literacy skills in Spanish?
- Which professional learning and coaching approaches best empower educators to leverage student strengths and increase engagement in literacy and numeracy?
- How can we leverage early literacy practices—such as vocabulary building, sequencing, and comprehension—to also strengthen early math concepts like pattern recognition, problem-solving, and reasoning, ensuring our strategies are integrated and holistic?
- How do early childhood educators effectively utilize early literacy screening and progress monitoring data to inform instruction, monitor student literacy development and progress toward grade level standards, and implement targeted supports for diverse learners, in alignment with Oregon’s Early Literacy Framework?

### **Topic Area H.2. Self-efficacy beliefs and socio-psychological development**

This topic focuses on research on student beliefs about their academic capabilities, and how perceptions of their own abilities interact with their social and emotional development and academic success. In turn, educational environments can foster positive development in both areas and can be shaped by targeted interventions offered by schools.

Example research questions in this area:

- How do student self-efficacy beliefs vary across grade levels, ability, current gender/sex marker, and student demographic groups, and how is it associated with academic outcomes and sense of belonging?
- How are students developing in ways that are not captured by standardized tests, and how can schools better recognize and support this growth?
- To what extent are schools supporting students’ academic confidence and development across different grade levels and groups? What teaching strategies best support student self-efficacy?

### **Topic Area H.3. Career and technical education (CTE), work-based learning, and industry-recognized credentials (IRCs)**

This topic area focuses on students participating in approved CTE [programs of study](#). How do these students differ from other students prior to entering the program? What are their outcomes compared not just to all other students, but to students of similar backgrounds?

Which specific CTE experiences are most valuable to students in their careers and education after high school?

Example research questions in this area:

- How do CTE concentrators differ from other students, in background and outcomes? What factors predict a student opting into and successfully completing a CTE concentration?
- What are the secondary and post-secondary outcomes for CTE concentrators, compared to non-concentrators of similar backgrounds and achievement?
- How does the perceived value of specific industry-recognized credentials (IRCs) differ by region or focal population?
- Do some IRC programs show greater benefits than others? Are there specific IRCs that are cost-prohibitive, but valuable enough to incentivize partnerships for sponsorship?
- How are CTE programs in interpretation and translation being implemented across Oregon schools? To what extent are these programs helping students earn credits toward their high school diploma and work experience as a professional interpreter/translator?

#### **Topic Area H.4. Curriculum and instruction**

This area examines how instructional models impact student engagement and achievement, the extent and effects of culturally responsive teaching on belonging and performance for learners across focal populations, and the influence of professional development on curriculum integration. This area also explores how shifts in instructional practices shape learning outcomes, providing evidence to guide effective, equitable, and culturally sustaining teaching strategies statewide.

Example research questions in this area:

- To what extent are culturally responsive teaching practices and instructional models being implemented in classrooms across Oregon, and what is their association with student sense of belonging and achievement for students from diverse backgrounds?
- How is [transformative social and emotional learning](#) being implemented statewide, and how could the implementation be improved?
- What is the impact of increased instructional time or varied scheduling practices (e.g. 4-day weeks) on student learning?
- What is the impact on student achievement on student focal groups who have teachers who are supported by regular and consistent instructional coaching and feedback models?

- How do outcomes vary for students in dual-language immersion or tribal language programs?

## Prior ODE and Education Partner Research on High-Quality Learning Experiences

- [Student Sense of Belonging in Schools: Predictive Factors](#)
- [Student Sense of Belonging in Schools: Connection to Outcomes](#)
- [Extracurricular Participation and Barriers](#)
- [Summer Seed Survey Report](#)
- [Algebra I Repetition: Predictive Factors](#)
- [Participation in College-Level Coursework](#)
- [Impact of High School Success on CTE Programs and Enrollment](#)
- [Predictors of On-time High School Graduation](#)
- [Freshman On-Track as a predictor of junior year achievement and outcomes](#)
- [Virtual Schools](#)
- [Dropout Indicators](#)
- [English Learner Report](#)
- [Summer Learning: Unfinished, Not Lost](#)
- [Summer Learning Best Practice Guide](#)
- [Jump Start Kindergarten Toolkit](#)
- [LETRS Implementation & Impacts in Multnomah County](#)
- [Formative Instructional Practices, Self-Efficacy, and Math Achievement in 4th Grade](#)
- [National R & D Center to Improve Education for Secondary English Learners](#)
  - [English Learners' Access to Core Content](#)

## Aligned and Focused Educational Systems

*When systems are fully aligned and responsive, educators are freed to focus on what matters most: supporting students' growth and ensuring every learner has access to a meaningful, inclusive education.*

### Why this Research is Important

System alignment reduces administrative overhead for both teachers and students/parents, allowing them to focus on instruction and ensuring that students are seamlessly prepared at each level for their next steps.

### Topic Areas and Potential Research Questions

#### **Topic Area A.1. Preparing early learning systems to support a seamless transition into kindergarten and beyond**

This topic focuses on the conditions under which kindergarten students are entering the K-12 system. What experiences are they having prior to entering, and how do those experiences support them in kindergarten and beyond? What supports are needed, and how can we best identify students in need of those supports?

Example research questions in this area:

- What are the early learning and care experiences of entering kindergarteners? In what ways have early learning and care experiences impacted entering kindergarteners' social, emotional, and academic wellbeing? How do students' kindergarten experiences vary based on their pre-kindergarten experiences?
- What interventions and supports are effective in helping students have success in kindergarten?
- What cultural and linguistic strengths are families describing that their children bring into kindergarten and how can these strengths be best leveraged to support student transition and learning?
- Which early learning and care experiences do families of entering kindergarteners find most helpful / meaningful?

#### **Topic Area A.2. Intervention and support systems**

This area focuses on how schools identify, implement, and evaluate targeted supports, such as [Tier 2 interventions](#) and student-centered programs like [AVID](#). It examines trends in intervention needs, availability of disability-specific professional development, and effective use of resources. Findings inform strategies to improve academic, social, and behavioral

outcomes for students requiring additional support, ensuring equitable access to high-quality, responsive educational services statewide.

Example research questions in this area:

- How has the demand for Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions changed over the past five years, and what factors contribute to this trend?
- What is the availability and effectiveness of disability-specific professional development, resources, and curriculum in supporting educators to deliver Tier 2 and 3 interventions?
- How do student-centered programs such as AVID impact academic achievement, engagement, and postsecondary readiness for historically underserved student populations?
- What implementation factors (e.g., staff training, resource allocation) most influence the success of student-centered programs in Oregon schools?
- How do intervention and support systems vary across districts, and what practices are associated with the greatest gains in student outcomes?

### **Topic Area A.3. Multilingual English learners, recent arrivers, and newcomers**

This topic area includes instructional materials for Multilingual English learners, community inclusion, professional development for educators (those who specialize in English Language Development and those with other specializations), the intersection between Multilingual English learner/newcomer/recent arrivers status and Special Education, academic outcomes, and related themes.

Example research questions in this area:

- How do schools and districts support dually-identified students (Multilingual Learners in Special Education) to ensure equitable access to class offerings, extra-curricular activities, and peer interaction?
- How do resources such as peer support, inclusion in advanced coursework, and in-class attention from instructors affect student outcomes?
- What kinds of expanded learning options (tutoring online, in person, summer school, other credit options) are most effective with students who come to Oregon schools with limited or interrupted formal education?
- How are dually-identified AI/AN students (Multilingual Learners of Tribal heritage languages) supported, and are Tribal heritage languages equitably resourced alongside world languages?

## Prior ODE and Education Partner Research on Aligned and Focused Educational Systems

- [Student Mobility in Graduation](#)
- [Key Data Points for Students Experiencing Foster Placement](#)
- [Post-Graduation Planning | Oregon Department of Education](#)
- [An Analysis of Integrated Program Funded Mental and Behavioral Health Programs at Oregon School Districts](#)
- [Students Navigating Housing Instability: Education Overview](#)
- [Understanding the Formal Identification of Houselessness as a Culmination of Stressors](#)
- [Whatever we need to do for them": A case study of McKinney-Vento service providers at four Oregon school districts](#)
- [Students Navigating Housing Instability: A Summary of Three Research Briefs](#)
- [A Study in Equity: Oregon's Ninth Grade Transition](#)
- [Community-Informed Recommendations for Equitable Graduation Outcomes](#)
- [Understanding EIIIS: Oregon's Student Success Systems](#)
- [DICE PLUSS](#)

## Engaged Partners and Communities

*Families, communities, Tribes, and students are active co-creators of Oregon's education system, shaping policies, practices, and supports through authentic partnership. Engagement goes beyond communication to build trust, shared responsibility, and collective power.*

### Why this Research is Important

Strong community and family engagement and partnership with schools is central to effective school improvement efforts within Oregon schools as seen within ODE's [Student Investment Account Community Engagement Toolkit](#) and as a general strategy for educators to partner with families and community members to support positive student engagement and outcomes.<sup>2</sup> In addition, meaningful Tribal Consultation is a critical component of this engagement work, ensuring that Tribal Nations are respected as sovereign governments and that their voices are included in shaping educational policies and practices that impact American Indian/Alaska Native students. Tribal consultation is a requirement for many districts, and a best practice for all.

When educators collaborate with families, communities, and Tribes, students benefit across multiple dimensions.<sup>3,4</sup> By centering these relationships, schools can better respond to local needs and create inclusive environments that support all learners.

### Topic Areas and Potential Research Questions

#### **Topic Area E.1. Family and community engagement; meaningful partnerships with community members, community-based organizations, and collaboration with Tribes**

This area focuses on the ways in which schools, districts, and the state partner with and engage with their communities, including parents, community members, CBOs, and Tribal governments. What is learned from these engagements, and how can they be structured to be most effective? ODE is interested in strategies for engagement and capacity building, insights from that engagement, and meaningful tribal partnerships and collaboration.

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<sup>2</sup> Karen L. Mapp and Paul J. Kuttner, *Partners in Education: A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family–School Partnerships* (Austin, TX: SEDL, 2013), <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED593896>.

<sup>3</sup> Blair Wriston and Nancy Duchesneau, *How Student, Family, and Community Engagement Impacts Students' Social, Emotional, and Academic Development* (Washington, DC: The Education Trust, 2024), <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED658221.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Childs, Joshua, and Ain A. Grooms. "Improving school attendance through collaboration: A catalyst for community involvement and change." *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)* 23, no. 1-2 (2018): 122-138.

Example research questions in this area:

- How do schools and districts partner with families and community members to improve student outcomes? What strategies and supports do educators report as effective in initiating, maintaining, and deepening these partnerships?
- To what extent do school-based family and community engagement strategies (e.g., community listening sessions, surveys, open-houses, etc.) build educator knowledge and understanding about family and community needs and experiences? What are family and community perceptions of these events?
- How can schools and districts offer engagement that builds data literacy in their communities and builds capacity for community advocacy?
- How does engagement with Tribes affect student outcomes, both specifically for students who are members of Tribal communities and for general student populations? What resources are required for schools and districts to communicate and collaborate effectively with Tribes, families, and communities?
- What nuances exist within the American Indian/Alaska Native community (e.g. connection to tribe; reservation or urban community) and how can those nuances inform the needs of those students?

### **Topic Area E.2. Student attendance and absenteeism**

Increasing the rate at which students attend school is a high priority for the state. This research is around effective interventions to reduce absenteeism, and improvements to the way absenteeism data are captured and analyzed.

Example research questions in this area:

- What is the impact of school-based mental health investments on increasing regular attendance?
- How could current attendance metrics better account for cultural practices and other unique experiences of Native students, and what alternative approaches could be used to capture their attendance realities? How could this be applied to other students from marginalized communities, or with cultural practices that do not align with typical school schedules?
- How could we meaningfully capture attendance data for students with high mobility and/or short durations of enrollment?
- What can we learn from attendance data at the classroom or daily level? Where do we see patterns in absenteeism?

- How have concerns about immigration enforcement impacted student sense of belonging and attendance since January 2025?

### **Topic Area E.3. Systems-impacted youth**

This topic focuses on how K-12 schools can effectively support students impacted by other systems, including students navigating housing instability, students who have previously been incarcerated or have incarcerated parents/caregivers, students who have been involved in the child welfare and foster care system, and students in recovery from substance use disorders.

Example research questions in this area:

- What is the relationship between regional rates of student incarceration and district suspension, expulsion, and push-out?
- How do schools and districts help transition systems-impacted students into new or returning school environments? This includes elements such as record transfers, continuation of services, peer and adult mentorship, and access to case workers, advocates, or specialists.
- What programs and processes have the strongest positive effects on academic outcomes for systems-impacted youth? (e.g., relationships between resources such as peer or adult mentoring, tutoring, counseling, or CTE and outcomes in areas such as assessment, attendance, or graduation)
- To what degree are systems-impacted youth able to access extracurricular activities such as athletics and clubs; how does participation in these programs affect students; what barriers to participation, if any, exist; and how might such barriers be remediated?

### **Topic Area E.4. Geography and access to services, community resources, and learning resources**

This research topic explores how geography influences access to educational and community resources across diverse student populations. It investigates disparities in availability of learning supports, such as tutoring, study spaces, and school supplies, based on demographic and geographic factors, especially comparing rural and urban settings. The topic also examines the distribution of specialized staff and programs, including mental health professionals and advanced Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, & Mathematics (STEAM) opportunities, and how successful rural models might inform broader equity strategies. Additionally, it considers the multifaceted role of schools in smaller communities as hubs for public services and events, aiming to identify ways to strengthen these community functions.

Example research questions in this area:

- How does access to learning resources—such as study space, adult support, school supplies, adequate substitute staffing, and tutoring—differ by student demographics and geographic location (e.g. rural vs. urban)?
- How does access to full-time counselors, mental health professionals, and specialized staff (e.g., ESOL endorsed teachers) vary across districts, student populations, and their communities?
- How are specialized programs (e.g., advanced STEAM education, CTE Programs of Study) and engagement opportunities (e.g., extracurricular programs, clubs, extended learning opportunities) distributed across the state? Where such programs exist in rural areas, how can these serve as a model for expanding opportunities to underserved schools and districts?
- What systemic barriers within rural communities (e.g., lack of transportation, housing, healthcare, services, internet access) and their opportunities to learn (e.g., remote learning, libraries, youth centers, industry partnerships) uniquely impact students within rural areas, and what strategies are effective to mitigate their impact?

## Prior ODE and Education Partner Research on Engaged Partners and Communities

- [Key Data Points for Students Experiencing Foster Placement](#)
- [Community-Informed Recommendations for Equitable Graduation Outcomes](#)

## Safe and Inclusive Schools

*All Oregon schools are safe, inclusive spaces where students, staff, and families feel a deep sense of belonging, affirmation, and possibility.*

### Why this Research is Important

The Oregon Department of Education recognizes that student health and safety are the cornerstone of education and that all students are entitled to a high-quality educational experience, free from discrimination or harassment based on perceived race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin, and without fear or hatred, racism or violence. All staff and leaders are also entitled to work in environments that are free from discrimination or harassment, and visitors should be able to participate in school activities without fear for their safety. Strategies for ensuring that students and staff are safe, supported, and included help all students succeed.

### Topic Areas and Potential Research Questions

#### **Topic Area S.1. Mental and behavioral supports for students and staff**

This research area examines the availability, accessibility, and effectiveness of mental and behavioral health supports in Oregon's K-12 schools, for both students and educators. It explores disparities in access to full-time school counselors, school psychologists, and social workers across districts, as well as the impact of staffing shortages and multi-role educators on service quality. The focus includes identifying barriers to equitable provision of supports, understanding how mental health resources influence student outcomes, and assessing their role in educator retention and well-being. By analyzing models of comprehensive school mental health systems and measures of program effectiveness, this research aims to guide policies and practices that ensure all schools implement comprehensive school mental health systems.

Example research questions in this area:

- How do Oregon school districts vary in the availability and accessibility of mental and behavioral health supports (including staffing levels for school nurses, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, community health workers, care system coordinators, school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers) for students and staff across different district characteristics, including:
  - district size,
  - geographic location and urbanicity, and
  - student demographics?

- What is the relationship between the availability of mental/behavioral health supports and:
  - student outcomes such as attendance, academic performance, and behavior?
  - staff outcomes such as educator retention, job satisfaction, and absenteeism?

### **Topic Area S.2. School culture and climate**

This topic is centered around how students feel welcome, safe, empowered, and like they belong in schools. We are interested in research that centers strategies and practices for helping ensure that all students belong and are in a psychological place from which they can effectively learn and grow. We are also interested in research around specific strategies for ensuring that students from focal populations feel respected, safe, and included within their schools.

Example research questions in this area:

- How does the wellbeing of school staff affect sense of belonging, inclusion and welcome among students?
- Does sense of belonging vary based on student group / demographics? How does sense of belonging vary in AI/AN, AI/AN+, and tribally affiliated students in school districts geographically adjacent or near a tribal community?
- How can we safely capture data about [LGBTQ2SIA+](#) students' sense of belonging, as well as other hard-to-reach student groups?
- What systems-level factors and practices impact students' sense of belonging? What challenges do schools and districts face when implementing practices designed to increase student belonging?
- In what ways do affinity groups support belonging among students from marginalized populations? What features of affinity groups or practices within affinity groups drive such associations?

### **Topic Area S.3. Special education services**

Students with disabilities are entitled to individualized education programs (IEPs), individualized family service plans, and/or section 504 plans to support them in accessing a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. This topic area includes research on inclusive practices, accommodations and supports, and disparities for this focal population.

Example research questions in this area:

- What forms of ongoing professional learning lead to demonstrable shifts in teacher practice and school climate for students with disabilities?
- How are special education services moving beyond compliance to create truly inclusive learning environments?
- In what ways are districts addressing over-identification and under-identification of students with disabilities, particularly among historically marginalized groups (e.g., Native, Black, emergent bilingual students)?
- How are families of students with disabilities, especially from underserved communities, engaged as decision-makers in the design and monitoring of services?
- How do schools honor and integrate Indigenous, cultural, or community ways of knowing into special education services?

#### **Topic Area S.4. Discipline practices and informal removals**

This topic centers around exclusionary discipline practices, including suspensions and expulsions as well as alternatives such as restorative discipline, the reasons discipline occurs, the impacts of discipline and removal from the instructional setting on students and their peers, and the impacts of policy changes on school culture and climate.

Example research questions in this area:

- How can we address disproportionality in the discipline students experience across diverse demographics and backgrounds?
- What types of offenses are associated with demographic groups, school environments, or differential outcomes?
- What is the impact of punitive consequences for substance abuse in comparison to treatment-centered responses?
- What are the long-term impacts of school discipline practices on students who experience these practices and/or attend schools that implement these practices? What discipline practices are effective at ensuring that all students experience safety and belonging in school?
- What changes have occurred in offense types and discipline practices over time? Is the incorporation of restorative justice practices associated with improvements in school climate and student safety?

#### **Topic Area S.5. Restraint and seclusion incidents**

This topic focuses on students who have experienced [restraint or seclusion](#), and staff involved in these incidents. ODE is interested in learning how we can reduce or eliminate harmful and exclusionary discipline practices such as restraint and seclusion, and in how we can support

both students and staff holistically to prevent incidents; as well as before, during, and after an incident, to reduce impacts on health and well-being.

Example research questions in this area:

- What trends exist in the frequency of restraint and seclusion incidents across Oregon school districts?
- What are the long-term academic and social-emotional outcomes for students who have experienced restraint or seclusion?
- How do school-level policies and staff training influence the frequency and type of restraint and seclusion incidents?
- What practices, policies and procedures are districts in Oregon or nationally using to reduce or eliminate restraint and seclusion, and what alternative strategies for responding to disruptions and dysregulation are effective?

## **Prior ODE and Education Partner Research on Safe and Inclusive Schools**

- [Creating Schools where LGBTQ2SIA+ Students can Thrive](#)
- ["We're Trying to be Superhuman": An Analysis of Integrated Program Funded Mental and Behavioral Health Programs at Oregon School Districts](#)
- [Extracurricular Participation and Barriers](#)
- [LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Success Plan](#)
- [Immigrant Refugee Student Success](#)
- [Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Student Success](#)
- [African American/Black Student Success](#)
- [Latino/a/x & Indigenous Student Success Plan](#)
- [American Indian/Alaska Native Student Success Plan](#)
- [American Indian/Alaska Native Students in Oregon: A Review of Key Indicators](#)
- [Mental Health Resources and Guidance](#)

## Committed and Supported Staff

*Oregon's educators and leaders are valued, supported, and continuously developed through a system that recognizes their expertise and invests in their growth. Through meaningful collaboration, evidence-based feedback, and aligned professional learning, staff are equipped to meet the evolving needs of students and communities.*

### Why this Research is Important

Research suggests that educators have the largest impact on the learning and success of students, more than any other school resource or factor.<sup>5,6,7,8,9,10</sup> ODE is committed to programs to support the retention and equitable advancement of dedicated and qualified educators, and ensure that all students have access to qualified, caring, and experienced teachers.

### Topic Areas and Potential Research Questions

#### Topic Area C.1. Educator equity

This area examines how compensation, mentoring, and career advancement opportunities affect educator retention and promotion in Oregon school districts. Research explores geographic pay differences, the impact of mentorship on novice educators, women, and educators of color, disparities in salary progression, and limited opportunities for career advancement. It considers how subject area, extracurricular duties, and administrative roles contribute to wage gaps, with the goal of informing equitable compensation and professional growth policies statewide.

Example research questions in this area:

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<sup>5</sup> C. Kirabo Jackson, "What Do Test Scores Miss? The Importance of Teacher Effects on Non-Test Score Outcomes," *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 10, no. 1 (2018): 82–123.

<sup>6</sup> Daniel Aaronson, Lisa Barrow, and William Sander, "Teachers and Student Achievement in the Chicago Public High Schools," *Journal of Labor Economics* 25, no. 1 (2007): 95–135.

<sup>7</sup> Eric A. Hanushek, John F. Kain, and Steven G. Rivkin, "Teachers, Schools, and Academic Achievement," *Econometrica* 73, no. 2 (2005): 417–458.

<sup>8</sup> Barbara Nye, Spyros Konstantopoulos, and Larry V. Hedges, "How Large Are Teacher Effects?" *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 26, no. 3 (2004): 237–257.

<sup>9</sup> William L. Sanders, Sandra P. Wright, and June C. Horn, "Teacher and Classroom Context Effects on Student Achievement: Implications for Teacher Evaluation," *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education* 11, no. 1 (1997): 57–67.

<sup>10</sup> William L. Sanders and June C. Horn, "Research Findings from the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) Database: Implications for Educational Evaluation and Research," *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education* 12, no. 3 (1998): 247–256

- How do educator pay and wellness benefits differ across geographic areas of Oregon and does this impact retention?
- To what extent are bilingual educators receiving differentiated pay/stipends? Do these benefits impact recruitment and retention?
- In what ways and to what extent does access to high-quality mentorship matter for retention and career advancement for women and educators of color in Oregon?
- To what extent do gender identity, sexual orientation, and racial disparities exist in educator salary progression within districts?
- What is the impact of Indigenous administrators, staff, and teachers on AI/AN student attendance, sense of belonging, and graduation?

### **Topic Area C.2. Educator characteristics and qualifications**

This area explores educator preparation, qualifications, and staffing challenges in Oregon school districts. It examines the recruitment and retention of bilingual educators, strategies rural and remote districts use to fill diverse course offerings, and gaps in access to fully qualified educators. This research investigates student outcomes in schools relying on emergency credentialed staff and considers the role of mentoring, administrative support, and available resources used to shape educator success.

Example research questions in this area:

- How do districts identify and recruit highly qualified bilingual or multilingual educators?
- What strategies are rural and remote school districts utilizing to ensure qualified educators are available to staff access to a wide array of courses that provide students with a well-rounded education? What gaps exist?
- What are the root causes of educator shortage areas, and how can districts address those shortages?
- What are barriers to recruiting/retaining Indigenous administrators, staff, and teachers?

### **Topic Area C.3. Staff, leadership, and school board turnover and retention**

This research topic focuses on understanding the dynamics of staff, leadership, and school board turnover and retention in K–12 education. It explores how changes in district leadership may impact student outcomes, and identifies educator characteristics that predict early career exits. The topic also examines how school-level and district-level factors, including poverty concentration, professional development access, staffing ratios, working conditions, and personal circumstances influence staff decisions to remain in or leave Oregon school districts.

Example research questions in this area:

- Which educator-level characteristics predict higher likelihood of exit within 1, 3, and 5 years?
- How do school-level characteristics predict staff turnover rates?
- What district-level policies, resources, and working-conditions predict teacher attrition?
- How do non-work factors (e.g., commute time, housing affordability, etc.) influence staff decisions to leave Oregon districts or schools?
- How do staff mental health supports influence educator retention, job satisfaction, and absenteeism?

#### **Topic Area C.4. Teacher attendance and absenteeism**

This research topic investigates patterns and causes of teacher attendance and absenteeism. It examines whether burnout affects attendance differently across various school roles, such as teachers, administrators, and support staff. The topic also explores potential correlations between teacher and student absences, including whether one may drive the other. These insights aim to inform strategies for improving staff well-being and student engagement.

Example research questions in this area:

- How are staff mental health supports impacting teacher attendance?
- Does burnout and stress impact staff attendance differently across roles (administrator, staff, teacher, etc.)?
- To what extent do teacher absences have an association with student absences?
- To what extent do large class sizes or the number of subjects/classes taught impact teacher attendance and retention?

### **Prior ODE and Education Partner Research on Committed and Supported Staff**

- [Oregon's Teacher Workforce Study \(2025\)](#)
- [Regional Educator Network \(REN\) Data Briefs \(2024\)](#)
- [Oregon Educator Equity Report \(2024\)](#)
- [Building a Diverse Workforce Report \(2024\)](#)
- [Oregon Educator Public Employment Report \(2024\)](#)
- [Oregon Educator Workforce Dashboard](#)
- [Teacher Workforce Demographics Data Brief \(2022\)](#)
- [Just Not Ready for a Female: An Examination of the Inequities in Oregon's Superintendency \(2021\)](#)
- [Exploring the Lived Experiences of Superintendents of Color in Oregon \(2022\)](#)
- [Educator Development and Student Achievement Gaps Report \(2019\)](#)

## Communications and Engagement Agenda

ODE's commitment to data justice principles involves using research and data transparently to improve learning for all students, especially those from focal groups who have been historically underserved. This mission is the driving force behind ODE-sponsored and supported research initiatives. Research-to-Practice Partnerships (RPPs) are a key strategy to achieve this by connecting ODE with diverse research partners across the state, who can in turn devote resources to questions of high salience for Oregon communities. This shifts power dynamics, ensuring that research questions are relevant and that the findings lead to meaningful, equitable change in schools.

More ideas for future research agenda topics? Submit them [here](#)!

### Research Agenda Engagement Strategies

#### **Strategy 1. Fostering Equitable Partnerships**

Build and sustain authentic, collaborative research-practice partnerships with a diverse range of partners.

- Strategy: Develop a framework that outlines clear principles for collaboration. This framework would define roles, responsibilities, and power-sharing mechanisms. It would also establish transparent processes for community and family engagement in shaping research questions and interpreting data.

#### **Strategy 2. Transparent Data Sharing and Communication**

Ensure that data and research findings are accessible, understandable, and culturally responsive for all communities.

- Strategy: Publicly share the results of ODE's RPP work on our website, with clear and accessible summaries of the findings.

#### **Strategy 3. Continuous Improvement and Policy Advocacy**

Use insights gained from RPPs and data to inform policy and practice for long-term systemic change.

- Strategy: Establish an RPP advisory group composed of educators, researchers, and community leaders. This group would meet regularly to review research findings and develop policy recommendations for ODE leadership and the State Board of Education. This ensures that the insights from research are directly translated into actionable policies and administrative changes that benefit students.