

Oregon's Quality Education Model: A Tool for School Districts

The Quality Education Model (QEM), developed in 1997, is a research and data-driven tool to evaluate educational practices and estimate the funding required to meet Oregon's 40-40-20 educational goals.¹ In 1999, the Oregon Legislature created the Quality Education Commission with the goal of enhancing the QEM to promote a better-informed decision-making process that leads to better-prepared students, a more equitable system, more successful citizens, and a more productive economy in the state.²

The Quality Education Model continues to evolve as a useful guide to policy. The Commission has improved the model through ongoing research based on the experiences in Oregon schools. The QEM gives policy makers and other district leaders:

- A tool to evaluate the costs and expected impacts on student success of specific policy proposals to help policymakers and educators make resource allocation decisions.
- A guide to assess specific challenges faced by Oregon schools, such as improving student transitions between schools, increasing attendance, and helping students stay on track for graduation.
- Ongoing research that helps district leaders make more informed decisions.

Key Findings and Recommendations of the Quality Education Commission

- Oregon's on-time high school graduation rate increased to 75 percent in 2015-16, up from 68 percent in 2008-09,³ but it will take substantial further increases if Oregon is to meet its educational goals.
- Attendance rates are highly correlated with high school graduation, so policies that can increase attendance by expanding student engagement have the potential to substantially boost graduation rates.
- Schools must utilize best practices and intentional collaboration with the early learning community to assure that all students read at grade level by the third grade.
- The state must increase its understanding of the social, economic, and cultural factors that impact students so it can help districts develop strategies to assist specific student groups.
- For African American, Hispanic, and white students, raising attendance and academic performance is the most effective way to lift graduation rates.
- Other students, particularly Native American, low-income, and male students, face additional barriers to graduation that require additional supports to overcome.
- Schools must continue efforts to provide more individualized instruction time, particularly for struggling students, and to provide time for teacher collaboration to meet student needs.
- The state must increase education funding. To accomplish this, the Legislature should take action to raise more revenue.

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¹ The 40-40-20 goal is to have 40 of students earn a bachelor's degree or higher, 40 percent earn an associate's degree or other post-secondary credential, and 20 percent earn a high school diploma as their highest credential.

² The QEM reports are published in August of even-numbered years and can be found at the following link: <http://www.oregon.gov/ode/reports-and-data/taskcomm/Pages/QEMReports.aspx>

³ 2008-09 was the first year Oregon used its current method of calculating graduation rates.