



Quality Education Commission

Equity Stance

QEC Charge:

- Determine the amount of moneys sufficient to ensure the state's system of K-12 public education meets the quality goals established in statute.
- Identify best practices that lead to high student performance and the costs of implementing those best practices in K-12 public schools.
- Issue a report to the Governor and Legislative Assembly by August 1 of each even-numbered year that identifies:
 - Current practices in the state's K-12 public schools
 - Costs of continuing those practices
 - Expected student performance under those practices
 - The best practices for meeting the quality goals
 - Cost for implementing those best practices
 - The expected student performance under those practices
 - Two alternatives for meeting the quality goals (i.e.: different approach, phased implementation)

The Case for an Equity Stance:

Through the efforts of the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB), the state has developed a vision of educational equity and excellence for each and every child and learner in Oregon. The Quality Education Commission (QEC) must ensure that sufficient resource is quantified to guarantee student success. The QEC understands that the success of every child and learner in Oregon is directly tied to the prosperity of all Oregonians. The attainment of a quality education strengthens all Oregon communities and promotes prosperity, to the benefit of all. It is through educational equity that Oregon will make progress towards becoming a place of economic, technologic, and cultural innovation.

Oregon faces two growing disparities that threaten our economic competitiveness and our capacity to innovate. The first is the persistent achievement gap between our growing populations of communities of color, immigrants, migrants, and low income students with our more affluent white students. While students of color make up over 30% of our state- and are growing at a significant rate- our achievement gap has continued to persist. As our diversity grows, it is critical that we embrace the strength of our new communities, promote outreach and dialogue, and adjust systems to appropriately serve all students. Our growth in this area increases opportunity for everyone in Oregon.

The second growing disparity is an increasing performance gap between Oregon and the rest of the United States. Our achievement in state benchmarks has remained stagnant and in some communities of color has declined while other states have begun to, or have already significantly surpassed our statewide rankings. If

this trend continues, it will translate into economic decline and a loss of competitive and creative capacity for our state. We believe that one of our most critical responsibilities going forward is to quantify resources and note best practices and policies that may be implemented in order to reverse this trend and deliver the best educational continuum and educational outcomes to Oregon's Children.

By adopting this Equity Stance, the QEC is aligning with the equity efforts of the OEIB and committing to explicitly identifying disparities in Oregon's education systems for the purpose of targeting areas for action, intervention and investment.

The QEC Believes:

- Everyone has the ability to learn and that we have an ethical responsibility and a moral responsibility to ensure an education system that provides optimal learning environments that lead students to be prepared for their desired individual futures and a prosperous future for the collective Oregon community.
- Speaking a language other than English is an asset and that our education system must celebrate and enhance this ability alongside appropriate and culturally responsive support for English as a second language.
- Students receiving special education services are an integral part of our educational community and we must welcome the opportunity to be inclusive, make appropriate accommodations, and celebrate their assets. We must directly address the over-representation of children of color in special education and the under-representation in talented and gifted and college-prep programs.
- Students who have previously been described as "at risk," "underperforming," "under-represented," "under-served," or "minority" actually represent Oregon's best opportunity to improve overall educational outcomes. We have many counties in rural and urban communities that already have populations of color that make up the majority. Our ability to create an equitable education system is critical for us to successfully reach our state's 40/40/20 goals.
- Intentional and proven practices must be implemented to return out of school youth to the appropriate educational setting. We recognize that this will require us to challenge and change our current educational setting to be more culturally responsive, safe, welcoming, receptive, and responsive to the significant number of elementary, middle, and high school students who are currently out of school.
- We must make our schools safe for every learner. When students are alienated from their school communities they are inherently less safe emotionally and, potentially, physically.
- Ending disparities and gaps in achievement begin in the delivery of quality Early Learner programs and appropriate parent engagement and support. This is not simply an expansion of services -- it is a recognition that we need to provide services in a way that engages and has value to our most diverse segment of the population, 0-5 year olds and their families.
- Resource allocation demonstrates our priorities and our values and that we demonstrate our priorities and our commitment to rural communities, communities of color, English language learners, students with special needs, and out of school youth in the ways we allocate resources and make educational investments.
- Communities, parents, teachers, and community-based organizations have unique and important solutions to improving outcomes for our students and educational systems. Our work will only be successful if we are able to truly partner with the community, engage with respect, authentically listen -- and have the courage to share decision making, control, and resources.

- Every learner should have access to information about a broad array of career/job opportunities and apprenticeships that will show them multiple paths to employment yielding family-wage incomes, without diminishing the responsibility to ensure that each learner is prepared with the requisite skills to make choices for their future.
- Our community colleges and university systems have a critical role in serving our diverse populations, rural communities, English language learners and students with disabilities. Our institutions of higher education, and the P-20 system, will truly offer the best educational experience when their campus faculty, staff and students reflect this state, its growing diversity and the ability for all of these populations to be educationally successful and ultimately employed.
- The rich history and culture of learners is a source of pride and an asset to embrace, celebrate, and be included in the culture of Oregon’s educational settings; even as our diverse histories and cultures sometimes challenge the assumptions of the state’s dominant culture.
- Supporting great teaching is essential. Teachers are among the most powerful influences in student learning. An equitable education system requires providing teachers with the tools and support to be highly effective instructors for each and every student.
- Equity requires the intentional examination of systemic policies and practices that, even if they have the appearance of fairness, may in effect serve to marginalize some and perpetuate disparities.
- Data are clear that Oregon demographics are changing to provide rich diversity in race, ethnicity, and language.
- Working toward equity requires an understanding of historical contexts and the active investment in changing social structures and changing practice over time to ensure that all communities can reach the goal and the vision of 40/40/20.

Implications of Taking an Equity Stance on the QEC’s Work:

This Equity Stance will confirm the importance of recognizing institutional and systemic barriers and discriminatory practices that have limited access for many students in the Oregon education system. The Equity Stance emphasizes underserved students, such as out of school youth, English Language Learners, and students in some communities of color, low income students, and some rural geographical locations, with a particular focus on racial equity. The result of creating a culture of equity will focus on the outcomes of academic proficiency and educational attainment, civic awareness, workplace literacy, and personal integrity. The commission will focus on resource allocation, overall investments, practices, and policies.

By utilizing this Equity Stance, the QEC aims to align to a common Oregon vocabulary and protocol regarding issues of educational equity; and consider each of the following matters in the evolving development of the Quality Education Model, related reports, and other items that come before the commission:

1. Review and publish data on current and potential future impact of resource allocation and practices or policies on Oregon’s sub-group populations at all levels 0-5, K-12, and higher education.
2. Explicitly describe the impact recommended resource allocation levels and suggested practices or policies have on eliminating the opportunity gap.
3. Enumerate, explain, and develop possible strategies to overcome ideological, institutional, and other challenges to more equitable outcomes.
4. Create and implement a plan to intentionally involve members of affected communities in the consideration of data as well as suggested evidence-based practices or policies.

5. Consider resource allocation levels and practices or policies that focus on transition knowledge and skills (postsecondary and career awareness, self-advocacy, college and workforce norms, admission requirements, and financial aid options and procedures). Incorporate an appreciation for diversity and a culturally appropriate development of educational and career transition knowledge.
6. Compare Oregon's performance, practices, and policies with those of other states to better define recommended resource allocation levels and suggested practices or policies to advance the 40/40/20 goal for *all* learners.

Further, the QEC will be developing a Quality Education Model (QEM) report that is more inclusive of Oregon's diverse population. The QEM will also provide a more complete and accurate path to Oregon's 40-40-20 goal than in the past by acknowledging the barriers that exist for many learners and offering recommended resource allocation levels and suggested practices or policies that provide an equitable path to college and career for every Oregon learner.

Addendum

OEIB Definitions:

Equity: in education is the notion that EACH and EVERY learner will receive the necessary resources they need individually to thrive in Oregon’s schools no matter what their national origin, race, gender, sexual orientation, differently abled, first language, or other distinguishing characteristic.

Underserved students: Students whom systems have placed at risk because of their race, ethnicity, English language proficiency, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, differently abled, and geographic location. Many students are not served well in our education system because of the conscious and unconscious bias, stereotyping, and racism that is embedded within our current inequitable education system.

Achievement gap: Achievement gap refers to the observed and persistent disparity on a number of educational measures between the performance of groups of students, especially groups defined by gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

Race: Race is a social – not biological – construct. We understand the term “race” to mean a racial or ethnic group that is generally recognized in society and often, by government. When referring to those groups, we often use the terminology “people of color” or “communities of color” (or a name of the specific racial and/or ethnic group) and “white.”

We also understand that racial and ethnic categories differ internationally, and that many of local communities are international communities. In some societies, ethnic, religious and caste groups are oppressed and racialized. These dynamics can occur even when the oppressed group is numerically in the majority.

White privilege: A term used to identify the privileges, opportunities, and gratuities offered by society to those who are white.

Embedded racial inequality: Embedded racial inequalities are also easily produced and reproduced – usually without the intention of doing so and without even a reference to race. These can be policies and practices that intentionally and unintentionally enable white privilege to be reinforced.

40-40-20: Senate Bill 253 - states that by 2025 all adult Oregonians will hold a high school diploma or equivalent, 40% of them will have an associate’s degree or a meaningful postsecondary certificate, and 40% will hold a bachelor’s degree or advanced degree. 40- 40-20 means representation of every student in Oregon, including students of color.

Disproportionality: Over-representation of students of color in areas that impact their access to educational attainment. This term is a statistical concept that actualizes the disparities across student groups.

Opportunity Gap: the lack of opportunity that many social groups face in our common quest for educational attainment and the shift of attention from the current overwhelming emphasis on schools in discussions of the achievement gap to more fundamental questions about social and educational opportunity.

Culturally Responsive: Recognize the diverse cultural characteristics of learners as assets. Culturally responsive teaching empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes.⁵