

The Every Day Matters and High School Success Programs: Supporting Regular Attendance and On-Time Graduation

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The Every Day Matters and High School Success Programs: Supporting Regular Attendance and On-Time Graduation

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Executive Summary

The High School Success (HSS) and Every Day Matters (EDM) programs were created by voters and state legislature to address improving Oregon's educational system. With on-time graduation rates at 76.8% in 2014-15 and Regular Attender rates at 82.6%, the state recognized that support was needed to improve student outcomes. The goals of these grants are to increase regular attendance, increase on-time (four year) high school graduation, and improve college and career readiness through strategic improvements in school districts, education service districts, and partnerships with community business and organizations.

HSS and EDM are now components of the Integrated Programs, a complementary set of education improvement initiatives in Oregon, and strategies for improvement are framed using the four common goals: Equity Advanced, Engaged Community, Well-Rounded Education, and Strengthened Systems and Capacity.

These grant funds are currently supporting these goals statewide through activities like professional development for staff in the realm of social-emotional learning, trauma informed practices, and equitable grading practices; hiring ninth grade on-track coaches; hiring staff to support students and families with attendance; and creating additional opportunities for students to engage in college level coursework and career technical education (CTE) programs.

Challenges include finding adequate staff to fill positions, particularly in rural and remote school districts, addressing staff burnout, the COVID-19 pandemic disruption, and improving education as one piece of a greater system-wide set of needs.

As part of the Integrated Programs, the HSS and EDM initiatives have supported schools and districts to align their strategic plans, center on equitable student needs, and design continuously-improving education for each community. The grant-in-aid for the initiatives allows the focus to remain on implementation of key strategies that empower students and move them into lasting careers. While education outcomes have improved in Oregon, gaps remain; utilizing research-backed strategies will continue progress.

Introduction

Ensuring that students graduate on time, prepared for college or a career remains a central goal of the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). Drawing on resources from the ODE's Every Day Matters (EDM) and High School Success (HSS) teams, including their March 2025 presentation to the Quality Education Commission, this white paper addresses this need by presenting a framework of practices designed to maximize opportunities for student success.

This paper reviews the context for the two initiatives and describes the key performance measures related to them. Next, the paper explores the challenges districts face, and, using the framework of four common goals, identifies key strategies for increasing on-time (4 year) graduation and regular attendance. Finally, state resources and impacts attributed to the programs are discussed.

Background and Literature Review

High School Success

Measure 98 was passed by voters in Oregon in 2016, establishing the High School Graduation and College and Career Readiness Fund. Measure 98, also known as High School Success (HSS), provides direct funding to school districts and charter schools to improve student progress toward graduation beginning with grade nine, increase the graduation rates of high schools, and improve high school graduates' readiness for college and career. Grant recipients are required to spend these funds in three areas: dropout prevention strategies, college-level educational opportunities for students, and career and technical education (CTE) programs. In addition to the required spending areas, the statute established eligibility requirements each grantee must meet to receive Measure 98 funds. These eligibility requirements include time for teachers to collaborate around data, practices to reduce chronic absenteeism, systems to support on time graduation, and creating equitable assignments of students to advanced coursework. Having these systems in place increases the likelihood of success for all students.

Every Day Matters

The Every Day Matters (EDM) program was also established in 2016 through House Bill 4002 and has two programmatic goals: to increase statewide capacity to address the root causes of chronic absenteeism by centering student engagement and belonging, and to increase regular attender rates statewide. There is an important distinction between these two goals—identifying and addressing the root causes of chronic absenteeism is deep, focused work and impacts both individual students and their families as well as the focal student groups more

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broadly. The second goal is to demonstrate shifts in the entire system to increase regular attendance: each student group as well as the Oregon student population overall.

Key Performance Measures

Both the High School Success and the Every Day Matters programs support districts in meeting the state's accountability measures, improving graduation rates, ninth grade on-track rates, and regular attender rates.

Figure 1: Oregon's Key Performance Measures: 2015-16 or 2017-18 Actuals¹

	Regular Attender 2016 Actual Rate	9 th Grade On-Track 2018 Actual Rate	4-Year Graduation 2016 Actual Rate
All Students	81.3%	84.5%	74.8%
Students of Color	79.0%	78.8%	68.3%
Special Education Students	74.8%	71.4%	55.5%

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the agency set a 2020 goal of an all-student regular attender rate of 84%, 81% for students of color, and 78% for students experiencing disabilities.² Progress was made toward meeting those goals; however, COVID-19 deeply disrupted student attendance, both nationally and in Oregon. As seen in Figure 2 below, the 2024-25 regular attender rate was still below pre-pandemic rates and far below the Key Performance Measure (KPM) goal.

2017-18 rates for ninth grade on-track were nearly 85% for all students, with students of color and special education students lower at 78.8% and 71.4%, respectively. The ninth grade on-track rate KPM goal for all students in 2024-25 was 90%, 88% for students of color, and 83% for students with disabilities.

In 2016, graduation rates in Oregon were 74.8% for all students, 68.3% for students of color, and 55.5% for students with disabilities. The 2024-25 graduation rate KPM goal for all students is 86%, 84% for students of color, and 82% for students with disabilities.

¹ The first year of published ninth grade on-track rates was 2017-18

² The goals referenced in this report are the Key Performance Measure targets; learn more about the KPMs here: <https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/lfo/Pages/KPM.aspx>

Figure 2: Oregon’s Key Performance Measures: 2024-25 Target Versus Actuals

	Regular Attender 2025 KPM Goal	Regular Attender 2025 Actual Rate	9 th Grade On-Track 2025 KPM Goal	9 th Grade On-Track 2025 Actual Rate	4-Year Graduation 2025 KPM Goal	4-Year Graduation 2025 Actual Rate
All Students	85%	66.5%	90%	86.6%	86%	83%
Students of Color	82%	59%	88%	81.6%	84%	79.1%
Special Education Students	79%	59.8%	83%	76.8%	82%	72.2%

While regular attender rates, ninth grade on-track rates, and graduation rates have risen since the COVID-19 pandemic school closures, current rates have not met state goals.

Even though graduation rates have continued to rise, nearly one in five Oregon students are not graduating on time. Rates are even more concerning for historically and currently marginalized student populations such as students experiencing poverty, houselessness, or foster care, students with disabilities, and students of color. This trend of disparities is consistent in ninth grade on-track and regular attender rates.

Established Research

Regular Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism, or missing 10 percent or more of enrolled days, is a challenge for families, educators, and students—but the problem is not spread evenly across student groups. The 2017 *Chronic Absenteeism Report* from Oregon’s Chief Education Office found that “Students who experience racism, who are more likely to be disciplined than others, who do not see themselves or their communities reflected in the curriculum, who cannot connect school to their life goals, and whose families have experienced historic trauma associated with schools are less likely to come to school. In addition, students not attending school are often working in other ways to support their family stability” (pg.72). The National Education Association’s 2018 brief affirms that students of color, students in high-poverty school districts, students with disabilities, and students enrolled in urban school districts experience higher rates of chronic absenteeism. In Oregon, gaps in regular attendance for historically and currently marginalized student groups persist. As reported in the 2023-24 Oregon Statewide Report Card, gaps

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continue to widen between the Regular Attender rates for all students and individual student groups with the most significant differences.³ These groups are:

- Students experiencing homelessness
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students
- Non-binary students
- Students experiencing poverty

National data indicates that districts with high poverty have chronic absenteeism rates four times higher than the national average, which implicates factors related to social inequities.

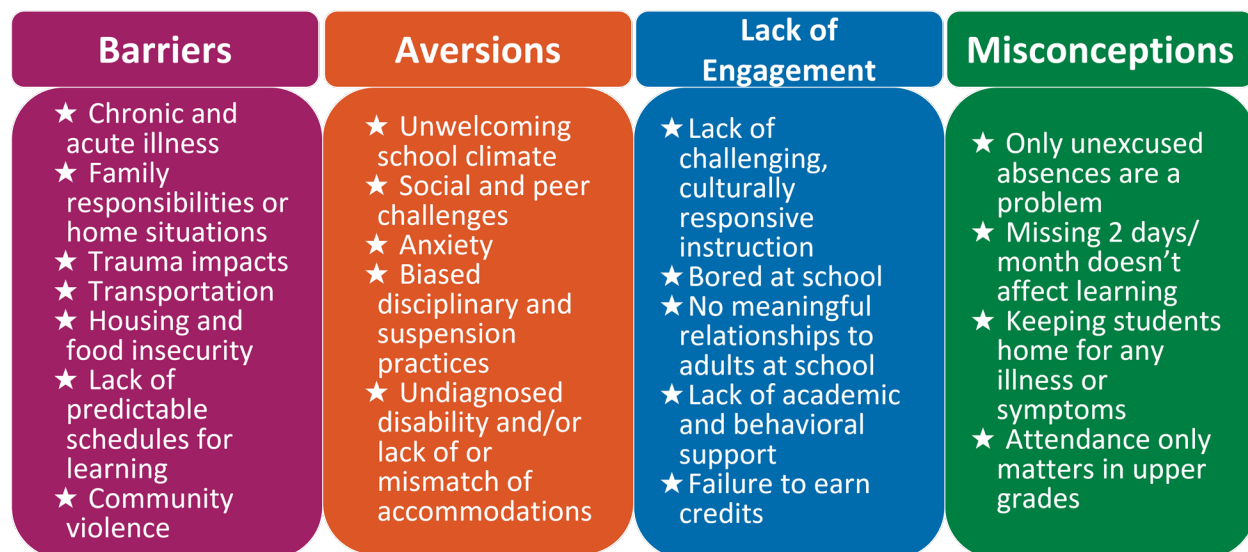
Chronic absenteeism has both long- and short-term impacts. When students are out of school, they miss the consistent instruction needed to build and strengthen academic skills.

Additionally, chronic absenteeism can lead to a disconnection with teachers and peers, increasing a sense of social isolation. Students who are chronically absent for multiple years between preschool and second grade are less likely to be reading at grade level by the third grade. In turn, students not reading at grade level by the third grade are four times less likely to graduate high school.

The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted student attendance—school districts that had high chronic absenteeism rates between 20% and 30% pre-pandemic increased to 50% or higher; nearly half of students in those districts missed a month or more of school each year. “Even districts and schools which have prior experience with chronic absenteeism and response systems in place, find their experience and systems strained by the sheer volume of chronically absent students” (Balfanz, 2024, pg.2). Personal, social, economic, health, and educational impacts during the pandemic have continued for many students—and this disrupts classroom learning for all as teachers work to get students caught up on missed material (Balfanz, 2024, pg. 1).

³ See the [2023-24 Statewide Annual Report Card](#)

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There are many reasons that students miss school. Research places these root causes into four main categories (Attendance Works, 2025):

- Barriers (students can't go to school)
- Aversions (students don't want to go to school)
- Lack of engagement (students don't know or feel the point of going to school)
- Misconception (student or family beliefs about attendance)

Examples of the root causes include chronic physical or mental health challenges, lack of affordable transportation, responsibilities to family such as caring for younger children or employment, experiences of being bullied, or embarrassment over struggling academically. The root causes of absenteeism are broad, and no single strategy can overcome them all.

Departments across school districts work together to address each of these barriers. For example, staff working on curriculum and learning promote high quality, engaging instruction; special education staff support the specific needs of students with disabilities; and the transportation department works hard to overcome barriers to reliable transportation to school.

The use of early warning and monitoring systems supports attendance improvement, as these data systems identify students at risk of negative school outcomes. Also important to improving student attendance is family engagement, including identifying root causes and devising solutions; and mitigating lost learning and weak social connections for students that have missed school (Attendance Works, 2024).

Attendance Connection to Graduation

Analyses of data from multiple states and school districts... consistently found chronic absenteeism to be among the strongest predictors of dropping out of high school, stronger even than suspensions, test scores, and being overage for grade, after having controlled for student demographics and backgrounds.

– Balfanz and Byrnes, 2012, pg. 25

The ODE 2021 report, *Predictors of On-Time High School Graduation*, demonstrates that for on-time graduation in Oregon, regular attendance is one of the highest predictors; students who were not on-track to graduate at the end of their ninth grade year who were regular attenders for four years graduated at 80.4%, compared to 39.2% for students who did not attend regularly for any of their high school years. Even prior to high school, studies show that students in middle school who missed 15 or more days graduated at up to 50 percentage points less compared to students who missed 0 to 5 school days (Balfanz and Byrnes, 2012).

Graduation

The long-term consequences of not graduating from high school include lower lifetime wages, poorer health outcomes, and an increased risk of incarceration. “In 2020, the median weekly earnings for full-time workers with a high school degree but no college was \$781. This is \$162 higher than the median weekly earnings for full-time workers without a high school degree” (U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services). A high school diploma is required for many jobs, limiting earning potential and career development for those without one.

Nationally, the graduation rate was 87% in 2021-22—this showed marked improvement from a decade prior, when it was 80% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024). Oregon’s rate was 81.3% in 2021-22, well below the national average. National rates for races and ethnicities falling below the average were: American Indian/Alaska Native students, 74%; Black students, 81%; and Hispanic students, 83%. Additionally, students with disabilities graduated at 71%, English learning students at 72%, economically disadvantaged students at 81% and students navigating housing instability (homelessness) at 68%.

In Oregon, although nearly all student populations have experienced increases in graduation rates over the past few years, gaps between groups have persisted. The groups experiencing the greatest disparities are:

- Students currently or formerly incarcerated
- Students navigating foster care
- Students experiencing houselessness
- Emerging bilingual students

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The strongest predictor of on-time graduation is being on-track to graduate at the end of the ninth-grade year (OR Dept of Education, 2021). Students who complete one-quarter of the required credits needed for graduation prior to beginning their tenth-grade year are more than twice as likely to graduate than those who do not. This indicator remains constant among all student populations.

Easing the transition to high school, including the development of freshman academies, the hiring of ninth grade on-track coaches (US Dept of Education, 2008), and an emphasis on regularly reviewing student data (US Dept of Education, 2016)(Faria et al., 2017), are imperative to boost freshman success, and reduce high school dropout rates.

Additional strategies for supporting students through graduation include dual credit programs (US Dept of Education, 2017a); utilizing engaging coursework connected to careers; engaging mentors or adult advocates to students at risk of dropping out; personalize learning; and providing academic support through homework assistance, tutors, or intensive programs (US Dept of Education, 2017b)(US Department of Education, 2008).

The complexity of supporting students to complete graduation is due to the many factors influencing it—from disengagement with curriculum and teachers to family needs to employment. The challenge is both individual and systemic; support, therefore, also needs to be both individual and systemic.

School Connectedness

As stated in the EdResearch for Action’s *Strengthening School Connectedness to Increase Student Success*, “Students are more likely to succeed when they feel connected to school”.

Research also shows that there are several factors that, together, increase student connections to school: supportive peer group belonging, feeling accepted for who they are, staff caring about them, and engagement in social activities where they feel supportive of others.

Connection in school leads to higher attendance rates, fewer disciplinary events, and greater academic outcomes, including high school graduation and post-secondary achievement. Mental health is improved as well—with lower anxiety and depression and less engagement with risky behaviors.

Proposed Solutions

Effective strategies to support students align with foundational research about connection, belonging, and engagement. Districts and schools support student attendance through many holistic strategies that aim to address various root causes of chronic absenteeism. Belonging and engagement are at the center of the student experience. This carries into the work to support students in achieving an on-time graduation. Students that see themselves in the

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curriculum, see connections between their learning and their future careers, and feel supported in their learning and development are more likely to graduate. Reviewing student progress, attendance, and behavior regularly increases the ability to intervene early, if needed, and increases likelihood of success.

ODE's Integrated Programs⁴ share four common goals: equity advanced, engaged community, well-rounded education, and strengthened systems and capacity. These goals provide scaffolding for strategies to improve regular attendance and on-time graduation in Oregon's schools.

Equity Advanced

Implement data-informed practices to support the unique perspectives and social experiences of BIPOC children/youth

Align to recommended ratios for school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists to support student mental health (250:1)

Equity advanced is working towards ending the predictable disparity in academic success and student well-being. Reviewing disaggregated data (data at the student group level) is

Increase equitable access to physical, social, mental, and behavioral health.

critical, both regionally and locally. A key effective strategy in disaggregating data is to utilize an Early Indicator and Intervention System, sometimes referred to as a Student Success System or an Early Warning System.

Culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogy and practices supports regular attendance and student success. Within this work, ODE recognizes the historical, systemic, multisystem barriers historically and currently

marginalized students and families face in education systems and the impact these barriers have. Use of language is important to advance equity as well. Ensuring that the challenge is framed as a systemic problem rather than an individual shortcoming puts the focus on the whole-system inequities and barriers rather than blaming parents, students, or individual educators.

Strategies to advance equity to improve regular attendance and increase on-time graduation include:

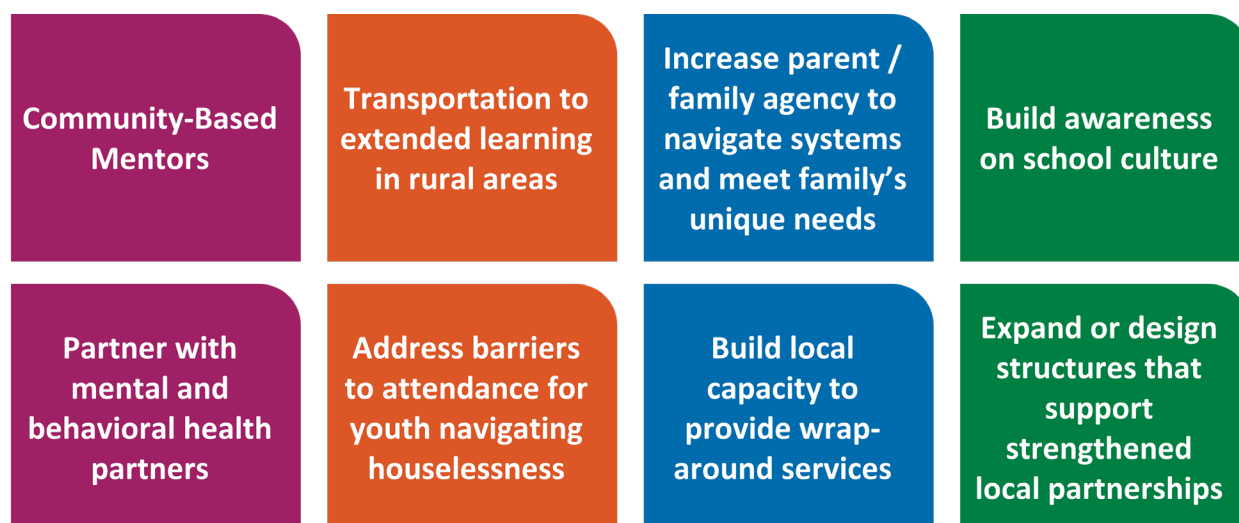
- Creating a positive school climate and culture that is welcoming and inclusive of students, families and school staff.

⁴ The ODE's Integrated Programs include HSS and EDM; learn more about them here: <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/StudentSuccess/Pages/Innovation-and-Improvement.aspx>

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- Reviewing disaggregated data regularly to see which student groups are most and least supported in their course enrollment and completion, advanced coursework, discipline, use of mental health supports, etc. Address disparities found.
- Making laundry facilities, clean clothing, food, and personal hygiene available.
- Ensuring that all students have regular connections with career counselors.
- Using culturally-responsive, high quality curriculum and instructional materials.
- Recruiting and supporting staff that reflect the student population's race, culture, gender, etc.
- Establishing connections or mentors for students with professionals of similar culture and background in their desired field.

Engaged Community



The engaged community goal recognizes that caring and reciprocal relationships and partnerships are needed to achieve equitable outcomes and healthy systems. This includes the school community through multi-disciplinary teams, recognizing that the root causes span multiple aspects of school systems. Best practices for supporting regular attendance and student success emphasize support across a school system.

Community partnerships support this work through proactive interventions at the community level that address specific root causes and enhance the infrastructure and systems that support youth and their families. Schools are an important part of a community ecosystem. Student success and attendance is not just a classroom or school level issue; supports and interventions should expand across multiple sectors.

Having intentional conversations with families and community allows educators to understand the values of the community, learn what's working well and what continues to be a problem,

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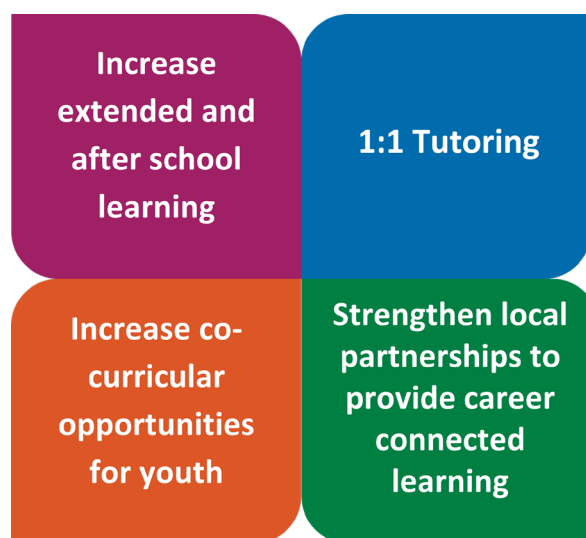
and get feedback on strategies for improvement. If the school develops a robust improvement plan that doesn't reflect the values of the community, students and families are unlikely to feel deep connection and trust with the school staff.

Strategies to engage with community to improve regular attendance and increase on-time graduation include:

- Center children/youth engagement and re-engagement strategies around caring connections and healthy relationships with students, families, and communities.
- Tend to long-standing harm or impact that marginalized communities have experienced.
- Engage students in climate surveys and empathy interviews to understand their views on school belonging and safety.
- Deepen schools' connections with their communities through intentional, authentic, and frequent engagement of students, families, educators, school staff, advocates, tribal partners, community-based organizations, business and industry partners, and elected leaders including school board members.
- Facilitate meaningful engagement with licensed, classified, and unrepresented staff including district and school administrators.
- Sustain ongoing engagement and consultation through intentional practices and feedback loops.
- Provide transparent and accessible information on the status and priorities of the school.

Well-Rounded Education

Well-rounded education moves beyond the courses students take and into the essential knowledge and skills students need to thrive. This requires a focus on the whole student. This means student mental and behavioral health, safety, and well-being cannot be separated from academic opportunities. Programs and experiences that excite and motivate students are a key strategy for increasing attendance. CTE programs, school-based activities, integrated social-emotional learning, experiential learning, and extracurricular activities also support regular attendance by addressing the root cause of engagement.

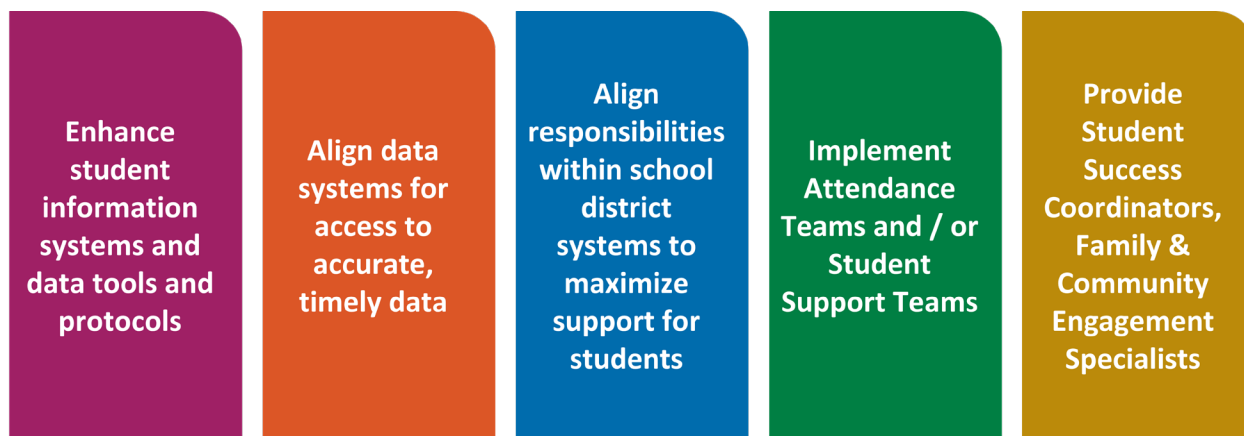


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Strategies to create a well-rounded education to improve regular attendance and increase on-time graduation include:

- Utilizing multiple types of information to build and refine support systems to address the holistic needs of students.
- Providing engaging extracurricular opportunities like sports, drama, debate, marching band, podcasts, etc.
- Fostering avenues for learners to share and communicate their dreams/aspirations, understand their strengths, interests, and talents, develop goals and build the skills, knowledge and support to attain their goals.
- Providing instruction, modeling, and classroom norms that promote students' social competency, self-efficacy and essential employability skills.
- Applying personalized learning and universal design principles to meet the unique needs and ensure strong growth of each individual student.
- Strengthening local partnerships to connect career to learning.
- Increasing co-curricular opportunities for youth, such as volunteer work, leadership experiences, Model UN, etc.
- Providing career and technical education programs that are aligned with local industry and of interest to students.

Strengthened Systems and Capacity



Educational systems are made up of people, practices, policies, resources, community assets, and partnerships. Shared responsibility and accountability for the success of students in Oregon's schools requires systemic change. This includes actions that: leverage continuous improvement practices to redesign for educational processes that center care, connection, and relationship; support strengths-based reporting, monitoring and evaluation practices in service to a continuous improvement process, including how we collect, analyze, use, and share data; and more.

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Strategies to strengthen systems and capacity to improve regular attendance and increase on-time graduation include:

- Coordinating support between educators and community service providers focusing on the accessibility of resources, information, and extended learning opportunities.
- Implementing attendance teams, ninth grade on-track teams, and student support teams to regularly review data and engage with students and families.
- Recruiting, hiring, developing and retaining racially and linguistically diverse educators that represent students being served.
- Applying data-informed decision-making routines to review progress and goals at both district and school levels with a regular cadence.
- Using data to describe system health, perceptions, disaggregated student outcome data, transition points, staff evaluation feedback, educational community and partner input.
- Leveraging regional assets and partnerships aligned to continuous improvement.

It is vital to support the well-being of adults in the system who carry the day-to-day work of engaging with students. Building adult capacity is integral to building relationships with all students and families and addressing root causes of chronic absenteeism and support student success. Currently few, if any, districts are focusing efforts on supporting the adults and staff burnout has been an area of concern statewide.

Key State Investments and Impacts

Joining both the Every Day Matters and High School Success programs in the Integrated Programs is the Early Indicator and Intervention System (EIS) grant to implement data systems. These systems use data to identify which students are most in need, track which interventions have been tried, and which have been demonstrated to work most effectively. EIS promote consistency of support, rather than random acts.

Oregon has three main routes to support strengthened systems and capacity through the HSS and EDM initiatives: technical assistance dollars to ESDs, funding through the Integrated Community Partnership grant, and funds to school districts.

Attendance Improvement Funds

ODE specifically invests in two key areas for building capacity to improve attendance, which helps inform best practices and what works across the state. The first is technical assistance funds to Education Service Districts (ESDs) across the state; the second is partnership grants for community organizations.

Education Service District Technical Assistance

First, ODE believes ESDs are important partners in this initiative, with each ESD receiving technical assistance funds from ODE. Overall, this amounts to \$3M per biennium. With these funds ESDs identify staff members and/or contractors who support organizational changes to address the deep, systemic issues at the core of chronic absenteeism. Foundational learning and knowledge about how to center students and families in the work to reduce chronic absenteeism is carried through the ESDs and woven into coaching and collaborative work between ESDs and school districts—further infused into teacher, leader, and staff learning at the school level. ODE supports the ESDs through a community of practice that started in the 2024-25 school year.

Primary ESD support areas include:

- Staffing for a Student Engagement Specialist
- Professional Learning and Communities of Practice with districts
- Contracting with national organizations
- Translation services
- Student engagement tools

ESDs are also sharing and promoting common resources and engaging in a statewide Community of Practice, which allows staff central to this work across the state to discuss challenges and potential solutions together.

The map displays the following school districts and their locations relative to the color-coded regions:

- NW Region (Blue):** Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook, Washington, Clackamas, Clackamas, Marion, Polk, Yamhill.
- Willamette Region (Green):** Linn, Benton, Lincoln, Linn, Lane, Douglas, Josephine, Jackson, Klamath.
- S. Coast Region (Pink):** Coos, Curry.
- Central/East Region (Purple):** Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Morrow, Union, Wallowa, Umatilla, Baker, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Lake, Deschutes, Crook, Jefferson, Wheeler, N. Central ESD, Intermountain ESD, Region 18 ESD, Columbia Gorge ESD, Multnomah ESD, Multnomah, NWRES.

Yellow stars are located in the following districts: Clackamas, Marion, Lane, Douglas, Jackson, Klamath, Grant, and Malheur.

The second investment of a little more than \$4M per biennium is toward integrated community partnership grants. This grant provides opportunities for community partners to offer local, community-rooted approaches that address the root causes of chronic absenteeism in partnership with schools, districts, or ESDs, and with a focus on specific focal student groups. It currently funds sixteen organizations across Oregon, including 4 ESDs, 9 community-based organizations, 2 culturally specific organizations, and a tribal government. Projects must include both direct services to students and/or families, as well as capacity-building strategies and activities.

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support each other, discuss successes and promising practices as well as collaboratively problem-solve barriers together.

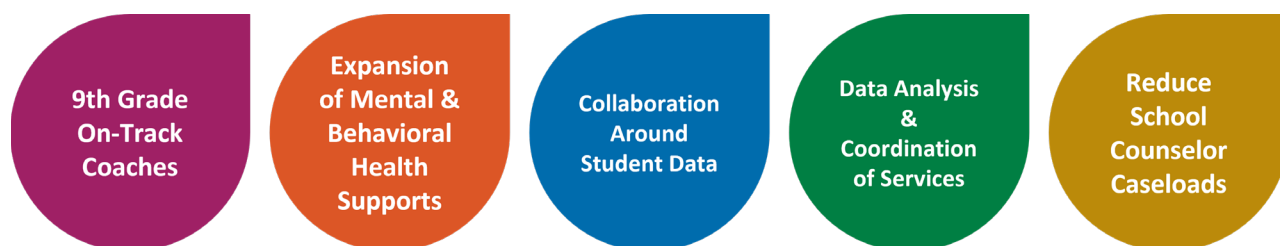
The Every Day Matters team supports and encourages the use of positive, strength-based intervention approaches that are designed with students and families rather than ‘for’ them. Some common strategies that have been utilized to address attendance include:

- Strengthening community partnerships
- Creating time for staff to work with data, and co-design solutions with students and families throughout decision making processes
- Investments in embedding SEL throughout the school day, CCL, mentorships, and trauma-informed practices
- Providing Mental/behavioral health and wellness support for students and staff

High School Success School District Grants

Spending supported by High School Success funds are centered on the three programmatic goals of the program: dropout prevention, college-level educational opportunities, and career and technical education (CTE).

Dropout Prevention



Dropout prevention strategies include providing teachers the training, resources, and time needed to collaborate around student data, bolstering student academic supports through mentors, tutors, and graduation coaches, increased opportunities for learning before, during, and after school, and helping students meet basic needs – clothing, food, hygiene, transportation, and technology and internet access.

It is strongly recommended to support the staffing of ninth grade on-track coaches statewide. In 2023-24, approximately 45,000 ninth grade students attended 411 high schools in 192 school districts. To meet the 250:1 student to counselor ratio recommended by the American School Counselor Association, an additional \$18 million would be needed to cover staffing, along with an additional \$900,000 for professional development.

College-Level Educational Opportunities



The types of college-level educational opportunities include increasing options and pathways for students to receive college credit while in high school through dual credit programs, Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate (AP/IB) courses, and partnerships with higher education institutions through programs such as Regional Promise. Schools and districts have also provided students with exposure to colleges and universities through visits, tours, and other programs such as AVID, along with hiring college and career counselors to support students and families navigate the admissions and financial aid process. These funds have also gone to support students within marginalized populations by expanding academic support and covering tuition and test fees connected to receiving college credit.

Career Technical Education

Spending on career technical education is required to support programs of study relevant to the job market in the community that the school or district serves. Since the implementation of High School Success, the number of CTE programs has increased by over 42%. Funds have also updated facilities and equipment used within existing programs to meet industry standards and provided professional development and licensure for staff. Again, a spending theme seen across the entire High School Success initiative is the removal of barriers for students. Within CTE, this means paying for tuition, test fees, and transportation for students, along with student certifications in trade areas such as health care, welding, and electrical engineering.

HSS and EDM Grant Impacts

To access funds, grantees name specific activities to be funded, along with the outcomes these activities are expected to influence. Grantees report on progress towards these outcomes on an annual basis, along with challenges faced and barriers overcome.

Additionally, grantees with more than 80 students are required to set Longitudinal Performance Growth Targets for five metrics: four-year graduation rate, five-year completer rate, ninth grade on-track rate, regular attender rate, and the Grade 3 English Language Arts (ELA)

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proficiency rate.⁵ The data from 2023-24 indicates strong progress towards meeting these targets.

Most grantees met their first year of targets for most metrics. Exceptions include baseline targets for the Grade 3 ELA proficiency rate and gap-closing targets for the five-year completer rate. Additionally, a higher rate of change is seen for the combined focal student group than for all students in all five metrics, suggesting that the disproportionality is decreasing. The largest increases were seen in the regular attender rate, with 54 grantees surpassing their 2027-28 baseline targets. Growth in these metrics will continue to be assessed, along with progress towards meeting each individual grantee's outcomes, on an annual basis.

Other impacts of the Every Day Matters and High School Success grants include increased access to resources to help them reduce barriers for their students, such as support to get basic needs met, food, clothing, housing, mental and physical health support, etc. This reduces disparities for our students, increasing students' well-being and increasing attendance and academic success. These impacts are shared during regular, ongoing dialogue between grantees and ODE staff.

Another area of growth which can be attributed to High School Success spending is the increase in Career Technical Education programs available to students statewide. There has been a 42% increase in the number of CTE programs since the implementation of the High School Success grant, with the number of students enrolled in programs increasing by over 10%. Equity of enrollment has improved for current English Learners/Emerging Bilinguals, students with disabilities, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students, and to a lesser degree for Black/African American students and female students.

Challenges in Implementation

Schools, districts, and Education Service Districts have been using the High School Success and Every Day Matters grants for about seven years—and some challenges in both implementation and impact have remained. For one, school districts cannot solve shortages in staffing alone—attempts to find qualified educators, mental health providers, and specialists are challenging across the state, even more difficult in rural and remote parts of the state. Concurrent with staffing challenges are *not enough hours in the day* challenges. When an educator is juggling teaching, reaching out to families, deepening instructional material content, meeting with support teams to discuss necessary student intervention, and more, picking up the slack due to

⁵ The Longitudinal Performance Growth Targets and the requirements around them were replaced in 2025 with the Education Accountability Act. See the Performance Growth Target website for more information: <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/accountability/Pages/PGTResources.aspx>

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short staffing are impossible. Unfortunately, the items likely to be dropped are the educator's investments in themselves: professional development, wellness, and preventing burnout.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted life for everyone in the educational system—and the impacts for students and staff on belonging, wellness, and safety continue. While the Key Performance Measures of regular attendance and ninth grade on-track rates have started to rebound, the declines were severe.

Finally, many of the challenges that students face in attending regularly and graduating on time are social factors that exist outside of the classroom. Poverty, housing instability, availability of good wage jobs, medical services, and transportation are not systems that education alone can fix. While efforts to collaborate across agencies have strengthened, challenges continue.

Conclusion

The foundational principles of the initiatives to support regular attendance and high school success highlight the importance of culturally responsive practices and policies; building relationships; addressing systems that cause harm to students and educators and ensuring that systems are re-designed in ways that are informed by current educational research.

Using the four common goals of the Integrated Programs as scaffolding for continuous improvement allows districts and schools to align to the research: Equity Advanced, Engaged Community, Well-Rounded Education, and Strengthened Systems and Capacity. The Every Day Matters and High School Success initiatives support growth and improvement for school districts through grants—funneling funds toward improvement in regular attendance rates, ninth grade on-track rates, and on-time graduation.

Continued state funding for the Every Day Matters, High School Success, and Early Indicator and Intervention Systems will build on the impacts already seen. While the COVID-19 pandemic had detrimental effects on Key Performance Measures in the state, funds to school districts, Education Service Districts, and community organizations have supported the rebound that has been seen in regular attendance, ninth grade on-track, and on-time graduation rates.

Expansion of funding would further support the efforts of the initiatives and, therefore, the efforts of local educators; expansion of CTE programs, increased college and career opportunities, robust systems to support mental health, increased counselors and career support, professional development for staff, and family liaisons are all key to improving education in Oregon.

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