

N1 Vision, History and Context. The overarching vision for the Northwest Promise (the NWP) is that every student in our region will leave high school with a diploma, a clear plan for their post-secondary education or career, and the college credits or career certification they have identified in their plans. We will achieve this by developing and implementing the five main components of the NWP so that they reach every one of our 120,000 students. Our realization of the five components, or “pillars,” follows.

Pillar I: Ensure equity of opportunity and achievement for all students. In the first two years of the promise we aim to increase the attainment of early college credit by traditionally underserved students (students with disabilities, African/American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latino and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and economically disadvantaged students, and English Learners) by 15%. We also intend to increase the percentage of credit obtained by white students by 10%. We intend to accomplish this by ensuring that we (1) adopt policies and procedures that are fully aligned with Oregon’s Chief Education Officer’s Equity Lens; (2) make decisions about program components that are based on research and best practice as they relate to underserved populations; (3) ensure our staff and advisors are representative of the students they serve; (4) develop a rigorous program evaluation component that prioritizes the success of the NWP in reaching these target populations; and (5) actively include, reach out to, and support students so they receive the benefits of the NWP. We understand that equity of opportunity cannot be an “add on” to our work. As we design each of the other four pillars of the NWP, equity practices will be infused.

Pillar II: Create a college-going culture. Our districts are already engaged in many forms of college culture building. Our vision is that each school district implements an on-going program to create and sustain this culture that encompasses work it has already begun, and that fits its unique characteristics. The NWP promise will work with each school district to adopt practices that are universal (that they reach every student), that they begin early in a student’s academic career (at least by middle school),

and that they are evidence based or best practice based. Each district's program will include explicit accommodations to include families and students of underserved populations.

Pillar III: Accelerated College Credit. Our vision is that a core set of AAOT eligible credits will be available to every student through one or more of the following mechanisms: traditional dual credit; Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate classes, CTE classes, and the NWP "Achievement Credit" approach. The NWP Achievement Credit will transform high school classes that all students take into low-cost/low-risk opportunities to earn college credit. Since the credit will be offered in classes students need for graduation, the opportunity will reach every student. We have agreement to develop the following classes within the guidelines of the Higher Education Coordinating Council (HECC) rules: Writing 121 and 122; Math 95, 105, and 111; Spanish 101, 102, and 103; Spanish 201, 202, and 203; College Success, and Senior Inquiry. Classes will be offered from the institution most closely aligned with a student's school district.

High school counselors, case managers and teachers will identify and assist students who are not likely to see themselves as college-goers. With strong advisement practices, these students can attempt college level work and make good decisions regarding the transcription of their grade if they encounter difficulty. Other specific practices will support the non-traditional college-goer. For example, we have selected the Spanish sequences so that native Spanish speakers will have an opportunity to achieve proficiency based credit and in order to "front load" success for these students.

Pillar IV: Cross Sector Partnerships. The NWRESD will facilitate on-going partnerships with our 20 school districts and our higher education partners: Portland, Tillamook Bay, and Clatsop Community Colleges and Portland State University. At the core of these partnerships will be a representative governance board (the NWP Board of Directors) that will promote the development of the project, identify and remove barriers to implementation of the NWP, and assist each other in sustaining the NWP. The

project will operate under a Strategic Plan with an operational component. This plan will be reviewed annually and will be informed by the evaluation of the program.

Pillar V: Cross Sector Professional Learning Communities. Cross sector PLCs will be a key feature of the NWP. Specific PLCs will be conducted on an on-going basis for (1) teachers and college faculty, (2) counselors, advisors, special education case managers, and advocates, and (3) administrators or curriculum leaders. The purpose of the PLCs will be to ensure the content of Achievement Credit classes meets higher education standards; is based on agreed upon assessments; that professionals engage in practices and utilize skills that reach all target populations, and that they critically examine and refine their practices in light of student data. PLCs will be operated by facilitators with advanced training and experience. Based on the experience of other Promise programs, we know that deep change in instructional and educational practice can be effected through PLCs as professionals work together to address what seem to be routine issues such as course content, assessment methodology, and policies and procedures.

The strengths our partners bring to the project. The NWP will operate under the leadership of the NWRESD superintendent, Rob Saxton. Mr. Saxton oversaw the Promise Grant program at the Oregon Department of Education, has experienced the power of the approach, and is committed to scaling it up. In his tenure, he has worked assiduously to forge the NWP partnerships. In the meantime, he has ensured that the region's partnership with the Willamette Promise will continue as the NWP is built. Another significant strength is that a majority of our partners have experience in other Promise endeavors or similar efforts. They know that without a cohesive regional approach, opportunity for early college credit attainment and the building of a college going culture will not be uniformly available to every student in our region. With this experience and Mr. Saxton's leadership, some challenges such as class offerings and transcription practices have already been successfully negotiated.

Our history and context. The NWP region encompasses among the largest urban regions and school districts of the state, as well as some of the smallest and most rural, stretching from Beaverton to the Nestucca Valley, and from Astoria to Sherwood. Despite recent economic challenges, our districts have responded to their demographic diversification, embracing the need to evolve and better serve all students. Our districts have emerged as leaders in formal equity work, in dual language education, in services to students with disabilities, and in district wide programs such as Effective Behavior and Instructional Support Systems. The PLC approach is nearly universal in our schools. Our school districts and their leaders, along with our higher education partners, also bring significant experience in a variety of K-12/Higher Education endeavors. Examples include PSU's Challenge and Link programs in Hillsboro and Beaverton; the Oregon Metro Connect program, and the Creating College Going Culture Workgroup. Many of our schools are utilizing approaches such as AVID and ASPIRE, to create a college going culture. Our region has demonstrated innovative leadership in Pre-K, K-12 and higher education. Finally, as a leader in the Cascade Technology Alliance, the NWRESD brings resources and linkages valuable to meet the considerable technology requirements of this project.

Community Demographics and Needs Analysis. Anticipated Barriers. The planners of the NWP are fortunate to have the experience of those who have worked on the other Promise programs to fall back on. As such, we have been able to address a significant barrier, the mechanisms for the award of college credit, the classes to be offered and the Achievement Credit as an additional credit pathway.

Remoteness and size have been an issue in ensuring that students have access to CTE courses that meet key industry requirements and award the kind of credit students need. Part of the work of the NWP will be to work with the current regional CTE projects to conduct a gap analysis and build CTE partnerships development into our strategic plan.

Finally, we have had a challenge in creating an accurate student database of college going, and college credits attempted and earned, by economic disadvantage, race, ethnicity and disability. We will

track actual college going for graduated students by these groups. While we will use grant dollars to develop our own tracking mechanisms, we will also work with Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to access these and other data that will be key to our evaluation plan.

Student and economic data. Representative data are presented in Appendix A. Our demographic data show a trend of our bigger suburban and urban districts having large percentages of students of color, and varying but significant levels of economic hardship. Our rural districts are typically more economically disadvantaged and have fewer students of color. The data also demonstrate that region-wide, while 67.73% of all graduates enroll in higher education, there are significant graduation deficits for our students of color, who will not be in the group of graduates. In Appendix A we use the “Latino” group to demonstrate this. We also have evidence of progress toward decreasing the academic opportunity gap, with some of our schools achieving graduation rates for Latino students that are similar to their white counterparts. In most of our districts, however, the persistent and predictable achievement gap remains. A final important factor to note is that districts whose college going rate is significantly below that of their “like districts” are remotely located 20 miles or more away from a publicly funded Oregon institution. We need the NWP to create opportunity for all students regardless of their race, disability, economics or their enrollment in a remote and rural school district.

Supporting Regional Educational Improvement and Collaboration. The NWRESD will act as a driving force for its region to achieve the 40-40-20 goal. NWP has been conceived as a partner initiative along with the NWRESD’s *Regional Achievement Collaborative* grant and in conjunction with our STEM and CTE revitalization efforts. The purposes of these projects overlap, intentionally, with the NWP. The NWP will be the key mechanism for strengthening the relationships between K-12 and higher education in our area, while STEM and CTE revitalization will reach into both post-secondary education and industry, and the Regional Achievement Collaborative will act as a unifying initiative. As an Early Childhood Hub for the Columbia and coastal region, and participant for Washington County, the ESD will be able to

leverage opportunities within the Child Development CTE offerings and PCC's child development curriculum. In other efforts to close opportunity gaps, the ESD is supporting districts with large populations of English Learners to obtain funds to improve their dual language instruction programs. The coordination of all of these efforts will be part of the strategic plan of the NWRESD as a whole, which will ensure sustainability of the NWP, leading to the achievement of 40-40-20.

The NWP will serve a region of 120,000 students. In the 2015-2017 biennium the NWP will directly impact approximately 60,000 middle and high school students by creating a college going culture and preparing students for college. College credit access will be provided to approximately 36,000 students in high school.

The Northwest Promise Pillars. 1. Closing Opportunity Gaps and Funding Services to Historically Underrepresented Students.

The NWP Board of Directors, which will include at least two representatives of first generation college going families, will develop an "Equity Protocol" that will be used to assess decisions made throughout the project. This will guide the development of the Board's Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan will include differentiated goals for increasing college credit attainment and going by student group. The development of a usable and comprehensive student data base will be essential to tracking progress on these goals. We will assign 1.75 FTE as K-12 College Equity Coordinators (one in-kind from the NWRESD) and 1.0 Higher Education College Equity Specialist to work with teachers, counselors, advisors, administrators, families and students to ensure the NWP is reaching historically underserved students. The K-12 job descriptions will include working with local districts to reach out to families and students and include them in an advisory capacity. A key factor to reaching all students is our aggressive schedule of development of Achievement Credit classes to immediately impact all students.

2. Fostering a College-Going Culture. Because our 20 school districts are already engaged in some degree in these endeavors, we expect their programs to differ. However, all 20 districts have committed

to programs that: (a) are universal in nature; (b) begin in late elementary school or in middle school; and (c) are specifically tailored to reach historically underserved populations. Efforts to create a college going culture may include:

- a. Early (elementary and middle school) and on-going, culturally appropriate outreach to families to educate them about the benefits and feasibility of higher education;
- b. Training for teachers of English Learners and students with disabilities and support for them to integrate concepts regarding college going into their work with students and families;
- c. Curriculum components to be infused in other content areas regarding future planning and college preparation;
- d. Classes and events designed to support the attainment of future planning, college level study skills, college search and application procedures; FAFSA completion, etc.
- e. School wide marketing with a clear focus on *all* students such as college nights, easy to access and navigate web materials, virtual college planners and advisors.

Efforts to reach target populations and individuals within them may include:

- a. Involving the school's counselors, advocates, and special education case managers to identify and advise targeted students;
- b. Outreach and educational opportunities in locations and languages likely to directly reach families of targeted groups; and
- c. Mentors or peer advisors who assist students in taking steps toward college enrollment.

The NWP will provide a demographically based award to districts to offset the cost of adopting new college going culture practices. Funds can be used for retraining of advisement staff, designing college visit programs, initiating local culturally specific advisory groups, and initial development and purchase of materials. In order to receive funds districts will need to demonstrate that a diverse and representative group was involved in this development. To promote sustainability, funds may not be used for on-going expenditures or positions. This component will be monitored as part of the overall evaluation of the NWP. Indicators of progress will include participation in trainings and activities, survey results, demographics of students attempting and achieving credits, and continuing to higher education.

3. Providing a Variety of Accelerated College Credit Opportunities. Credits obtained in NWP schools will either contribute to the attainment of the AAOT and/or credits that meet industry standard in Career and Technical Education. *The models and types of accelerated credits* will continue to include CTE, AP/IB, dual enrollment (including online enrollment), and the NWP Achievement Credit. The Achievement

Credit will be embedded in traditional high school classes in order to reach all students. We will conduct a needs assessment in coordination with our CTE revitalization to assess CTE offerings and usage within schools and across the region.

Supports for students will be provided from classroom teachers and high school advisors who have been involved with the NWP PLCs and training opportunities. Our College Equity Coordinators will help schools infuse “college going competence” components into new or existing classes. We will continue to develop components of the project related to effective supports for students as we complete our strategic plan and evaluate our outcome data, but expect that options such as tutors and mentors will be adopted. *Advisement and guidance* will be developed through a discipline specific PLC devoted to counselors and advocates. Best practice in developing short term and long term educational plans will be incorporated into the work of this group. *Specific strategies to address historic opportunity gaps* are similar to those discussed in the previous section. We will include equity concepts in the PLCs and training for classroom teachers, counselors, special education case managers, and advocates, to ensure they are encouraging and supporting students from underrepresented groups to engage in college level planning and work.

The NWP will engage an external evaluator to assist us to track the *number and demographics of students participating in accelerated college credit, the courses being offered, and teachers who are eligible to teach Achievement Credit* courses. Our partners are already committed to this work and we expect to build even more support for the sustainability of early college credit due to three factors: *increased full student enrollment in high school through senior year and enrollment in college, accompanied by increased state revenue, parental support, and community support based on strong outcomes for all students.* 4. Cross-sector Collaboration. The NWP consists of 20 school districts, 3 community colleges, and one university. The unifying partner is the Northwest Regional ESD. The key leadership structure will be the governing Board of Directors consisting of the presidents of each higher

education institution, or their designees; one superintendent each from Columbia, Clatsop, and Tillamook Counties; two superintendents from Washington County; the NWRESD superintendent; and one parent and one student advisor from traditionally underrepresented groups. The NWRESD will include the NWP as a core service, and continue to provide substantial in-kind support. In addition, evidence of our region's commitment can be found in our component districts' \$430,000 contract with the Willamette Promise.

4. Creating and Expanding Cross-Sector Professional Learning Communities. The NWRESD will act as the organizer and convener for PLCs. We expect the PLCs to be discipline specific (high school teachers and college instructors; counselors, advocates, and special education case managers; curriculum coordinators and administrators). They will be conducted by highly qualified, experienced facilitators who are knowledgeable about PLCs and equity work. Their work will be directly related to the goals and actions identified in the NWP Strategic Plan, and will be based on data. The work in PLCs will be focused on the development of course outlines and content that include negotiated assessment methods (course exams, portfolios, proficiency demonstrations, etc.) and standards of performance. This work will be done in the context of any current or developing requirements of the HECC. The power of the PLCs will be realized to the extent that they (a) are a part of the feedback loop that informs curriculum and instructional practices in their high schools and colleges as well as the NWP Strategic Plan; (b) share information across their discipline specific PLCs; (c) share and support each other in improving delivery of content and support to students; and (d) participate in larger professional learning communities on a regional or statewide basis.

Outcomes, Activities and Timeline, and Evaluation. The following table includes both Section C (Outcomes) and Section D (Evaluation)

Outcome I: Students will be academically ready for higher education and will leave high school with a practical plan for college and career success.		
Activity	Rationale	Timeline
I.i Conduct cross sector PLCs to ensure students are exposed to instruction and expected to achieve college level work.	The credits students earn must be authentically at a college level if they are to be realistically prepared for college work.	By January 4, 2016 and ongoing during summer break and quarterly throughout the life of the NWP grant
I.ii Conduct counselor, advisor, case manager, advocate PLCs to increase appropriate advising skills and activities when working with historically underserved students.	Non-discriminatory advising is a key to success in recruiting and supporting students of color, economically disadvantaged, and those with disabilities.	By January 4, 2016 and ongoing during summer break and quarterly throughout the life of the NWP grant
I.iii Develop planning and financing component in "College Going Culture" programs' curriculum.	Students and families need to begin this college going planning early.	By March 15, 2016
I.iv Create accessible print and web based materials to assist consumers in the planning process.	This will make it easier for districts to offer high quality and personalized assistance to the most underserved students.	By March 15, 2016
EVALUATION OF OUTCOME I: (1) Academic achievement levels in Math, Language Arts, and Writing; (2) grades in Achievement Credit classes (3) Decreases in percentages of college enrollees who require remedial courses; and (4) data regarding the number and demographics of graduating students with post-secondary plans and enrolling in college		
Outcome II: Students in the NWP region will earn credits toward the AAOT through a variety of options including AP/IB, current dual enrollment offerings, CTE, and the new "Achievement Credit."		
Activity	Rationale	Timeline
II.i Convene PLCs to develop course agreements for the Achievement Credit classes and to involve counselors, advisors and case managers in the project.	Students are currently taking classes that can provide them with this opportunity and we will make these credits available to them as soon as possible.	For Spring term 2016: Writing 121/122; Math 95, 105 and 111; Spanish 101-103 and 201-203. PLCs to be convened for at least two days in January 2016. For Fall term 2016: College Success, Senior Inquiry, and US History PLCs will convene in the summer and at least quarterly.
II.ii Create learning management program (software).	We will need to be able to transmit data between teachers and instructors, and communicate between high	By February 1, 2016

	schools and higher ed.	
II.iii Develop Policy Handbook to provide decision making parameters for class development.	We need to anticipate and plan for complexity in decision making to ensure classes maintain integrity of standards, content, and quality.	By January 4, 2016 Review Annually
II.iv Develop Procedural Handbook to operationalize decisions regarding enrollment and transcription procedures, fees, timelines, etc.	Anticipating and overcoming institutional barriers will increase access for all students.	By January 4, 2016 Review each term.
II.v Convene "summit" of representatives of school districts and higher ed partners to conduct a gap analysis of other accelerated college credit programs and make recommendations for change.	Offerings across school districts vary widely. Creating equity of opportunity requires having a clear picture of what exists and examining ways to cross traditional boundaries to improve opportunities for students.	By March 4, 2016 Conduct summit once per semester
EVALUATION OF OUTCOME II: We will (1) create a database of offerings by district; and (2) track the number of credits attained overall and by student demographics		
Outcome III: As the result of efforts to create a "College Going Culture" in each district and community, there will be substantial increases in the numbers of students attaining college credit and continuing with higher education upon graduation, overall, and by traditionally underrepresented groups.		
Activity	Rationale	Timeline
III.i Convene a working group to identify practices to create college going culture, with focus on and adaptations for historically underserved students.	Districts need assistance in ensuring adopted programs are evidence based or best practice to close gaps.	By December 15, 2015 to be reconvened and reviewed in fall term 2017
III.ii Present College Going Culture work to NWRES D superintendents and NWP Board of Directors. Local districts will commit in writing to their adopted program.	Local districts and communities will need to commit to a set of College Going Culture program components in time for budget development and training.	By March 15, 2016
III.iii Develop a NWP marketing plan to provide information and access throughout the NWP Region.	Supporting districts with materials through a common website will reduce cost and complexity of implementation. This will allow us to reach the widest audience possible.	By February 15, 2016
III.iv Create and implement with each district, an outreach plan tailored to local demographics.	We must be intentional in involving and educating students and families who are not traditionally "college-goers."	By March 15, 2016

<p>EVALUATION OF OUTCOME III: This outcome will be assessed by compiling data by student group and total population of: (1) students earning credits; and (2) students continuing to higher education within 16 months of graduation. There will also be a descriptive element for this outcome that includes the number and demographics of students and parents who are reached directly by outreach personnel, students who completed classes or seminars focused on college success, and the frequency of use of the NWP website.</p>		
<p>Outcome IV: Create an entity identified as the Northwest Promise (NWP) with the mission to increase student success in higher education throughout the Northwest region of Oregon.</p>		
Activity	Rationale	Timeline
IV.i Create a Board of Directors	High level commitment is required for on-going institutional support and to facilitate barrier removal.	By December 1, 2015
IV.ii Develop and adopt an “Equity Protocol” to guide the project’s work.	Equity and access cannot be a separate program component.	By December 15, 2015, revisit annually
IV.iii Convene a data management working team.	This team will need to work with our evaluator. All of our work must be data based.	By January 4, 2016
IV.iv Develop a Strategic Plan	This is a complicated project crossing many sectors. It requires a detailed, data driven plan.	By December 7, 2015, review work plan monthly and revise strategic plan annually
IV.v Create and execute MOUs	Formalizing commitments will assure sustainability and clarity of purpose in a with potential personnel change.	By January 15, 2016, review annually
IV.vi Include operation of the NWP as a core service of the NWRES D service plan	This ensures a mechanism for sustaining the project and creating local ownership.	By March 1, 2016, renewed annually
<p>EVALUATION OF OUTCOME IV: The institutionalization of this entity and its accomplishments will be recorded in NWP Strategic Plan minutes, in the minutes of the Board of Directors meetings, and in the agreement of the NWRES D representatives and Board to include the NWP in the core service plan for the ESD.</p>		