

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# Oregon's Equitable Access to Educator Plan

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A Plan to Recruit and Retain Excellent Educators

Submitted by the Oregon Department of Education

11/12/2015

## Section 1: Introduction

### Background to a Focus on Educational Equity

Our state has a vision of educational equity and excellence for each and every child and learner in Oregon. We understand 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 us all. It is through educational equity that Oregon will continue to be a wonderful place to live, and make progress towards becoming a place of economic, technologic and cultural innovation.

The Oregon Education Investment Board and the Chief Education Officer (Now the Chief Education Office) was initiated with a charge to advise and support the building, implementation and investment in a unified public education system in Oregon that meets the diverse learning needs of every pre-K through postsecondary student and provides boundless opportunities that support success; ensuring a 100 percent high school graduation rate by 2025 and reaching the 40-40-20 goal.

A growing realization of the disparities that exist for students in Oregon led to further identification of two growing opportunity gaps:

- The first is a persistent gap between Oregon’s growing populations of communities of color, immigrants, migrants, and low-income rural students with the state’s more affluent white students.
- The second gap is one of growing disparity 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.

To guide the necessary policy and practices that can help Oregon achieve equity for every student, an Oregon Equity Lens was developed as a tool and vetted by over 60 organizations and individuals

Sample of the Equity Lens	Core Beliefs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Every student has the ability to learn.</li><li>• Speaking a language other than English is an asset.</li><li>• Supporting great teachers is important.</li><li>• Resource allocation demonstrates priorities and values.</li><li>• Shared decision making with communities improves outcomes.</li><li>• Rich history and culture are assets to celebrate.</li></ul>

throughout the state, including high school students. Feedback from the organizations added clarity and guided the development of core beliefs, a sample of which is provided in the text box.

The Equity Lens also has eight accompanying facilitation questions to assist groups in determining priorities, examining unintended consequences and planning strategically through an equity lens. One of the objectives of the Equity Lens is to provide a common set of values to guide educational entities and partners in decision making related to policy making, investments and systems building.

The Equity Lens was developed and adopted by the Oregon Education Investment Board, the State Board of Education, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, the Youth Development Council, the Early Learning Council and many other professional associations to guide state policy recommendations and community engagement as we build a system that supports each and every student.

The primary focus of the equity lens is on race and ethnicity. While there continues to be a deep commitment to many other areas of the opportunity gap, we know that a focus on race by everyone connected to the educational milieu allows direct improvements in the other areas. We also know that race and ethnicity continue to compound disparity. We are committed to explicitly identifying disparities in education outcomes for the purpose of targeting areas for action, intervention and investment.

The OEIB Equity Lens clearly demonstrates the persistent achievement gap between affluent white students and Oregon's growing populations of communities of color, immigrants, migrants, and low-income rural students. This gap in public schools leaves generations of students disenfranchised and creates obstacles that limit their contributions toward Oregon's economic growth. Closing the gap takes will power, in four components: social will, cultural will, organizational will, and political will.

As such, the Oregon Equity Lens is now being applied to explicitly identify disparities in education outcomes for the purpose of targeting areas for action, intervention and investment. For the purposes of this report, the Equity Lens helps us further analyze the racial and ethnic diversity among our education workforce serving Oregon students in the K-12 system.

*“We believe the language we use as leaders, as communicators, and as adults in a community creates a lens for how students view themselves, creates perceptions among adults about students’ abilities and culture, and plays a fundamental role in exacerbating the systemic gaps between students. We are in a double bind because our intent is to help improve the educational outcomes for students, yet we simultaneously reinforce a deficit-based paradigm in the process.”*

OEIB Communication Lens (2015)

The OEIB now seeks to operationalize the values of the Equity Lens with the tenets of an asset-based paradigm instead of a deficit based one. An asset based paradigm means recognizing and amplifying the strengths each student brings to the community and not associating system barriers to the students and families.

### **Oregon’s Equitable Access to Educators Plan**

“Inequalities in educational opportunities have always bedeviled public education” (Peske & Haycock, 2006). As a result, Oregon is responding to the federally mandated task requiring all states to submit Equitable Access to Excellent Educator Plans. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) is pleased to submit to the U.S. Department of Education Oregon’s Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators that has been developed to address the long-term needs for improving equitable access to excellent educators in Oregon. This plan responds to Education Secretary Arne Duncan’s July 7, 2014, letter to SEAs, as augmented with additional guidance published on November 10, 2014. State A’s plan complies with (1) the requirement in Section 1111(b)(8)(C) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that each state’s Title I, Part A plan include information on the specific steps that the SEA will take to ensure that students from low-income families, students of color, and students with special needs are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers, and the measures that the agency

will use to evaluate and publicly report the progress of the agency with respect to such steps; and (2) the requirement in ESEA Section 1111(e)(2) that a state's plan be revised by the SEA if necessary. Given researched, documented importance of strong leadership, our plan also includes the specific steps that we will take to ensure that students from low-income families, students of color, English Learners, and students with special needs are not disproportionately attending schools led by inexperienced or unqualified administrators.

This plan responds to Education Secretary Arne Duncan's July 7, 2014, letter to SEAs, as augmented with additional guidance published on November 10, 2014. State A's plan complies with:

- (1) The requirement in Section 1111(b)(8)(C) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that each state's Title I, Part A plan include information on the specific steps that the SEA will take to ensure that students from low-income families, students of color, and students with special needs are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers, and the measures that the agency will use to evaluate and publicly report the progress of the agency with respect to such steps; and
- (2) The requirement in ESEA Section 1111(e) (2) that a state's plan be revised by the SEA if necessary. Given research-based evidence of the importance of strong leadership, our plan also includes the specific steps that we will take to ensure that students from low-income families, students of color, English Learners, and students with special needs are not disproportionately attending schools led by inexperienced or unqualified administrators.

This plan details our approach to achieving our objective of improving access to excellent educators for our state's most marginalized youth. However, Oregon is committed to improving student outcomes across the state by expanding access to excellent teaching and leading for *all* students. As such, the plan is not about a narrow and impractical redistribution of high-quality educators from low-need to high-need districts, schools, and classrooms, but rather a comprehensive approach to strengthening and maintaining teacher and principal effectiveness across the state, with an emphasis on our schools and classrooms with the greatest need.

To create this plan, a team of leaders at ODE, led by the Director of Education Equity, took the following steps:

1. Met internally to understand the work and how coordination of efforts across units and departments would inform the work.

