



# ELEVATING STUDENT VOICES PROJECT OVERVIEW

## APRIL – JULY 2020



### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Elevating Student Voices project launched as a way to engage students across Oregon in a conversation about the COVID-19 pandemic during the emergency school closure. The project invited educators to facilitate conversations with students and then post a shared statement that captures what their students would like Oregon leadership to know. The project received nearly 100 responses from youth across the state.

### HOW WE COLLECTED INPUT

The Elevating Student Voices project elicited responses through a webform and via email. Most responses were text format but also included multiple creative mixed media responses in the form of a slide deck, an ebook, and video responses.

### WHAT WE LEARNED FROM OREGON STUDENTS

- Oregon leaders should be prepared for a future crisis or pandemic
- Importance of empathy, acts of service & helping others, unity, community
- Continue to emphasize social-emotional learning
- Desire for a sense of normalcy or return to normalcy
- Concerns regarding the environment and climate change
- Importance of in-person learning
- Importance of hygiene and healthcare
- New social norms (distancing, masks) and tension between the need to adopt and fear/refusal to adopt
- The need to address economic concerns, technology access and racial inequities

“Now, more than ever, is the time for Oregon to work on helping people that don’t have the necessities to survive this pandemic. It is crucial right now that Oregon steps up to ensure that all of us are able to stay safe and healthy.”



**-WESTVIEW HS**

### PROJECT TIMELINE & PARTICIPANTS

The project was optional and open for responses from educators of any school-age youth in Oregon between April 24 through June 30, 2020. Responses were received from 31 unique school districts, charter schools, or private schools (all referred to as “districts” in this section). Districts provided between one to four responses, with two exceptions of districts that provided a total of 10 and 18 of the responses.

### ELEVATING STUDENT VOICES RESPONSES HAVE BEEN SHARED BROADLY

- State Board of Education meetings
- Governor’s Healthy Schools Reopening Council
- Student Success Act Rules Advisory
- Superintendents meetings

All responses are available on the Oregon Department of Education website: <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/healthsafety/Pages/Elevating-Voices.aspx>

“We like being more independent and getting to make our own schedule and work at our own pace. Even when we go back to school we could still have all of our assignments listed in Google Classroom to help us see the schedule. We could also use Google classroom for homework rather than having to keep track of papers.”

**-OREGON CITY SD**

“Be better prepared. Keep hospitals stocked with supplies. Keep everyone safe. Focus on what caused the virus and focus on finding a cure.”

**-GRANTS PASS SD**

“We have to ask ourselves, if this experience will help us grow, or if the fear will suffocate our joy and take away the empathy we have for others.”

**-CORVALLIS SD**

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

The following themes emerged from the data collected.

### STUDENTS NAMED POSITIVE ASPECTS OF DISTANCE LEARNING

- Flexibility: learning pace, due dates, asynchronous, individual curiosities, etc.
- Enjoyment of synchronous video meetings

### STUDENTS EXPRESSED CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH DISTANCE LEARNING

- Individual: procrastination, motivation, etc.
- Home environment: distractions, familial circumstances, etc.

### STUDENTS EXPERIENCED PERSONAL IMPACTS AS A RESULT OF COVID-19

- Missed outings and socialization, including seeing non-household family, vacations, going to restaurants
- Missed aspects of in-person learning and the school environment, including socializing with peers and teachers, engaging in extracurricular activities, recess, and sports, and interacting with peers during class and receiving in-person help from teachers
- Mental health impacts, including stress, fear, and worry
- Economic hardship, both personally and in the community
- **STUDENTS EXPERIENCED INCREASE IN LEISURE/ FREE TIME AND FAMILY TIME**
  - Positives: more time for hobbies/activities, and personal reflection
  - Negatives: boredom, excessive screen-time, loneliness, loss of routine/structure
  - Positives: closeness and bonding with family
  - Negatives: tension within household

## DATA LIMITATIONS

Due to self-selection participation bias, the responses may not be a reliable representation of students across the state. Other factors influencing the data could be how educators framed the question to their classes as well as how they interpreted and compiled the collaborative responses.

Technology limitations could also have an impact on students' ability to participate in collaborative discussions. Another possible influence on student responses is media coverage. The team noticed some responses that seemed to coincide with widely reported current events. While these factors do not invalidate the student responses, it should be noted that a longer collection window might have changed the overall pattern of responses.

"I personally am very unsuccessful with the distance learning and am missing 28 assignments because I can not find the motivation to do anything."

**-BETHEL SD**

"One positive that I could not express enough is that, through all of this, schools have opened to feed not just the students but the people of our community as well. This is such an amazing feat because 12.3% (1/8) families (according to the USDA) don't know where their next meal is coming from, but because schools provide breakfast and lunch, they are given the opportunity to feed the less fortunate."

**-TALMADGE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

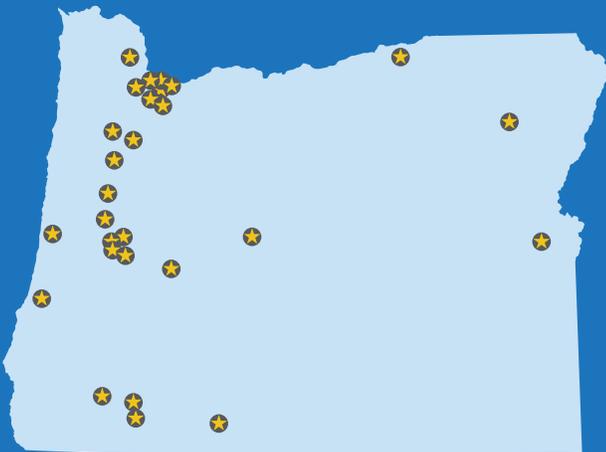
## RESPONSES RECEIVED FROM THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:

Amity School District  
Baker Web Academy  
Beaverton School District  
Bend International School  
Bend La Pine Schools  
Bethel School District  
Central Point School District 6

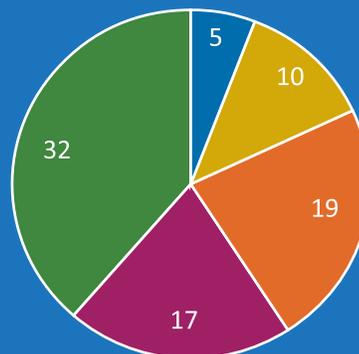
Central School District 13J  
Corvallis School District  
Creswell School District  
Eugene School District 4J  
Grants Pass School District 7  
Gresham-Barlow School District  
Hermiston School District 8R

Klamath County School District  
Lake Oswego School District  
Logos Public Charter School  
Heartwise Network  
Charter School  
North Bend School District 13  
Oakridge School District  
Oregon City School District  
Parkrose School District

Phoenix-Talent School District 4  
Portland Adventist Academy  
Portland Public Schools  
Salem-Keizer Public Schools  
Santiam Christian  
Scappoose School District  
Siuslaw School District 97J  
The Cottonwood School  
Vale School District



## RESPONSES BY GRADE LEVEL DATA:



Grade Level	Number of Responses
Mixed grade levels or grade level unidentified	5
K-2	10
3-5	19
6-8	17
9-12	32