

# OREGON GOVERNOR'S EMERGENCY EDUCATION RELIEF (GEER) FUNDS OVERVIEW

Updated: January 2024

The Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund was initially created in March 2020 as part of the first federal pandemic relief bill.

**All the Oregon GEER investments are dedicated to education programs that remove systemic barriers to equitable education and prioritize supporting historically excluded communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.** ODE projects utilizing the funds for initiatives are designed for all students. They are specifically centered on equitably serving Oregon's Black, Latino, Latina, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Tribal students; students with disabilities, students who identify as LGBTQ2SIA+; emerging bilingual students; and those navigating foster care, homelessness, and poverty, and those with limited access to resources due to rural location.

This packet is intended to provide an overview of these initiatives.

## GEER Funding Timeline

The Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, passed in March 2020, provided governors with emergency resources to address the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on early learning, K-12 education, higher education, and the workforce. Another round of GEER funding (GEER II) came from the second federal pandemic relief bill, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA), in December 2021. In Oregon, former Governor Kate Brown directed that GEER funds support a number of key actions to immediately respond to the pandemic, such as expanding broadband access in remote and rural areas, launching computer science initiatives at all 13 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Hubs, and providing emergency funding for early learning, including Early Intervention/Early Childhood Education regional services.

Oregon received \$32.5 million of direct GEER funding through the CARES Act (GEER I) and \$14.2 million through the CRRSA Act (GEER II). In addition to the funds going directly to the Governor's office in each state, unobligated funds from the Emergency Assistance to Non-public Schools (EANS) program under CRRSA and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) moved into the GEER fund, totaling an additional \$22.9 million. CRRSA EANS obligated was \$24.8 million and the ARP EANS obligated \$8.2 million. **In all, Oregon received \$102.6 million to use for GEER allowable expenditures.**

- » **GEER I ended on 9/30/22**
- » **EANS I reverted to GEER uses ended on 9/30/23**
- » **GEER II ended on 9/30/23**
- » **EANS II reverted to GEER uses ends on 9/30/24**
- » **All grants will completely end on 9/30/24**

## State Agency Coordination

Following the passage of each federal relief act and upon the reversion of EANS dollars to GEER uses, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) and Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) staff worked together with the ODE team to support the Governor's staff in identifying opportunities to support education. Between ODE, DELIC, and the HECC, there were five initiatives supported by GEER I, and a dozen current initiatives under GEER II and EANS funds reverted to GEER uses. In the early stages of the pandemic, these funds were used to assist students in transitioning to remote/distance learning by supporting access to technology; funding was also used to cover healthcare needs such as providing PPE and expanding childcare services through Relief Nurseries.

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For more information, go to [oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/grants/Pages/GEER.aspx](https://oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/grants/Pages/GEER.aspx)



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# COMPREHENSIVE DISTANCE LEARNING

\$19.4 million

## What was this initiative?

In June 2020, in response to COVID-19, ODE and OHA launched the first phase of providing statewide guidance for schools planning for the 2020-21 school year, including guidance for schools to provide Comprehensive Distance Learning (CDL). To support the implementation of this guidance, ODE established the CDL Grant Program, combining three funding sources provided by the CARES Act for a total investment of \$27.5 million:

- » \$20 million of Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER I) Fund funding
- » \$6.4 million of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund funding
- » \$1.6 million of Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) funding

The following five expense categories were established as priorities for the CDL Grant Program; each expense category supported the implementation of the 2020-21 CDL Guidance:

- » Access and Connectivity
- » Student and Teacher Devices
- » Digital Content and Curriculum
- » Learning Management Systems
- » Professional Learning for Educators

Eligible recipients included LEAs (i.e., school districts), a consortium of school districts, or an Education Service District (ESD) working on behalf of one or more school districts. Funding for this initiative ended on 6/30/2021.

## Accomplishments

As a result of this initiative, 193 grant recipients claimed over 98% of the funds to support the continuity of learning and well-being for students during the 2020-21 school year. This included ensuring adequate infrastructure and services that enabled internet access and connectivity for

student learning; appropriate and user-friendly devices for students and teachers to navigate through distance learning curriculums and programs of study; high quality, adaptable, culturally responsive, and effective digital learning curriculums and content that fostered student learning and engagement; online technology that allowed educators to deliver their teaching content and lessons successfully; and various supports and training for teachers to support the use of digital tools and resources.

## Benefits

In addition to the above description, a letter to ODE illustrates the impact on students and the community. It is from Long Creek School, a district recipient of the grants:

*“I cannot tell you enough how much we appreciate the funding for CDL. Our school was in CDL until the first of April. As a rural community with poor internet and cell service, access was a big hurdle to making CDL work for our district. Each family was given a cell booster and each one of our students had an iPad with cell service. This worked great! Faculty, students and parents loved the iPads and being able to Facetime to do class. Parents were also able to participate in parent-teacher conferences via Facetime. The funding enabled [our school district] to continue classes, check on kids’ well-being – their emotional and mental health, and maintain a feeling of community, all while finding some new ways to make education fun. It also allowed us to continue CDL for those students who remained home after school was open again. The benefits are many and will be ongoing, and our entire school community is very thankful.”*

**Jennifer Garinger,**  
Business Manager, Registrar

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# DEPARTMENT OF EARLY LEARNING AND CARE, SUPPORT FOR HEALTHY AND SAFE SANITATION PRACTICES OF EARLY LEARNING FACILITIES

\$610 thousand

## What was this initiative?

Early Childhood Programs (ECPs), which include licensed childcare centers, homes, and state and federally-funded early learning programming, including Head Start and Preschool Promise, provided essential emergency childcare and development services during the pandemic. ECPs ensure children learn in the most critical years for brain development, the birth-through-five period. Many in Oregon's essential workforce and others who must go to work to support their families need ECPs to ensure children are healthy, safe, and learning while they are at work.

However, many programs rely on families to pay tuition and operate with tight budgets in non-pandemic times.

The additional expenses of keeping children safe during COVID-19, including enhanced sanitation protocols and safety measures like face coverings, are difficult for ECPs to bear. Most of Oregon's families cannot pay more to cover these costs. Therefore, Oregon utilized GEER funding to support programs to obtain the supplies to ensure children are safe within their learning environment during the initial COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

## Accomplishments

Oregon distributed GEER funds to Early Childcare Providers (ECP) through Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) care packages, including approved cleaners, gloves, bleach, face masks, face shields, and other necessities. Oregon distributed this based on the size of the ECP to all interested facilities through 2020.



## Benefits

Due to this support, 4,339 Early Childhood Programs received the PPE care packages necessary to implement ECC guidance and keep their facilities open for approximately 55,000 children.

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GEER I

# DEPARTMENT OF EARLY LEARNING AND CARE, ENSURING SAFE LEARNING AND CARE ENVIRONMENTS FOR OREGON'S FAMILIES INVOLVED WITH CHILD WELFARE

\$186 thousand

## What was this initiative?

Relief Nurseries provide critical services to families with young children who are experiencing a variety of stressors. Families with young or school-aged children who may not be physically at school benefit from safe and healthy respite care to reduce family stress and increase protective factors.

GEER funds were allocated to Relief Nurseries to provide a new service for families, specifically planned or emergency care for children recently returned from out-of-home/foster placements to their parents/caregivers, as referred by DHS Child Welfare. The initiative was created in recognition that families may need additional respite because of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on families. Grantees provided respite care for a minimum of 3 hours per day, twice per week at each Relief Nursery site to:

- » Provide families a needed break from the stressors of parenting that can lead to increased neglect and abuse; and
- » Provide developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed care for children

## Accomplishments

Four Relief Nurseries accepted GEER funding to provide emergency respite: Family Building Blocks, Family Tree Relief Nursery, Family Nurturing Center, and Treasure Valley Children's Relief Nursery.

## Benefits

The initiative served 11 children over a total of 52 sessions of care across the four counties served.



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# BROADBAND INITIATIVE GRANTS

\$6.3 million

## What is this initiative?

The Broadband Initiative Grants were created to fund school districts ready to start internet infrastructure projects. This additional funding covers the remaining costs of the project not already covered by the existing federal E-Rate funding, so all project costs are covered. The districts that are using GEER funds to improve their internet are Adrian School District, Annex School District, Crane Union High School District, Helix School District, Huntington School District, Luckimute Valley Charter School, and Mitchell School District, Region 18 ESD (on behalf of Imnaha School), Ukiah School District, and Vale School District.

## Accomplishments

Six rural school districts and Oregon schools (Adrian School District, Crane Union High School District, Helix School District, Region 18 Education Service District, Ukiah School District, and Vale School District) have drastically improved their internet access with the completion of their projects in 2023. They have gone from spotty, slow, and disrupted internet access to cable internet that meets or exceeds the nationally recommended bandwidth for schools.

Four school districts and schools (Luckiamute Valley Charter, Mitchell School District, Huntington School District, and Annex School District) have completed the GEER-funded portion of their projects. They will be fully upgraded by June 2024. Helping ensure that our rural students have the same level of access to the internet and its tools as our urban students.

Large, costly projects such as broadband access are often out of reach for small, extremely rural districts. The GEER Broadband Initiative Grant Recipients have repeatedly echoed the sentiments provided in written testimony from Sara Sarensen. Sara, the Business Manager at Lake County ESD, in advocating for a state match fund for E-Rate Funding projects, stated, "Please understand that these match funds did not make our project easier, and they did not make it happen a year or two sooner. These funds made it possible to happen at all."

## Benefits

The impact is best shared through the first-hand experience of Shari Warnock, the educator at Imnaha Bridge School, a Broadband Initiative GEER Grant Recipient.

*"Prior to the funding and installing the new internet at the Imnaha School, technology was very limited in the classroom. The new, high-speed internet has completely changed how I teach and how the students use technology as a learning tool.*

*The largest impact on me as a teacher:*

- » *Access to the most up-to-date resources and curriculum*
- » *Helps me to streamline my lesson planning, ensuring that I am meeting the state standards and needs of all my students.*
- » *Provides access to multiple types of assessments, helping me track student progress.*
- » *Ability to use a SMART TV as an additional way to engage and instruct my students.*
- » *Capability to connect our entire system to the server, allowing our IT team to provide technology assistance immediately, maintain our security camera system, and connect me to schoolwide systems.*
- » *Ability to collaborate with teachers outside of our small community. I now use ZOOM weekly to collaborate with other one-room teachers throughout Oregon.*

*The biggest advantage for the students is the ability to maintain a level of technological knowledge equivalent to their peer groups. Because we are a one-room, multilevel classroom, the students can be self-directed learners when I am working with the other grades. It also provides supplemental curriculum and support for both high-needs and TAG students. It provides tools such as text-to-speech and speech-to-text for students who need that extra support, along with instruction and materials in a different format, such as video and read-aloud.*

*This creates a learning opportunity that will help students succeed right now, along with skills they will use for the rest of their lives. The combination of teacher-led, peer collaboration, and technology-assisted instruction sets my students up for optimal learning."*

As this quote illustrates, these dedicated GEER dollars have enabled students and their educators at these locations to access reliable internet connectivity. These projects further reduce the digital divide in the state, thus supporting ODE's mission to foster equity and excellence for every learner.

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EANS I reverted to GEER uses

GEER II

EANS II reverted to GEER uses

# COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION AND ENRICHMENT GRANTS AND PROGRAM SUPPORT

\$7.3 million

## What is this initiative?

In May of 2022, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) was directed by former Governor Brown to lead two initiatives pertaining to computer science education:

1. Distribute \$6 Million in GEER Funds through grants to increase computer science opportunities for students during the 2022-2023 school year, particularly for girls/women and students of color. ODE distributed these funds to Oregon's 13 STEM Hubs through newly created STEM Hub Computer Science Grants to amplify and support regional projects between October 2022 and September 2023.
2. Develop a statewide Computer Science Education Implementation Plan, in collaboration with the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, to provide computer science accessibility to all of Oregon's public school students by the 2027-28 school year. The implementation plan was officially released in November 2023.

The remaining funds are being used for programmatic support of the two initiatives above, including limited-duration staff at ODE.

## Accomplishments

- » Increase Access: Increase the number of computer science education opportunities and increase the capacity for existing opportunities.
- » Support Equity-Based Systemic Change: Align projects with other current and future computer science opportunities grounded in equity at the building or district level, including work with Career and Technical Education (CTE) Regional Coordinators and CTE programs to support strong, inclusive CTE programs in computer science.

- » Strengthen Engagement and Sense of Belonging in Computer Science: Retain historically and systemically underrepresented students in computer science opportunities using equity-based strategies and integration of career-connected learning.
- » Engage Community-Based Organizations: Connect communities to the planning and implementation of computer science education to build culturally relevant instruction and sustainable programs.
- » Diversify Participation through Equity and Inclusion: Increase the diversity of students participating in computer science opportunities with a focus on students historically and systemically underrepresented in computer science.

## Computer Science Education Statewide Implementation Plan

The Computer Science Education Statewide Implementation Plan, through a robust community engagement process and with the support of a Consult Group including students, educators, administrators, industry professionals, and higher education representatives, identified seven key Outcomes for Oregon:

- » Outcome #1: Every Public School Offers Opportunities to Learn Computer Science
- » Outcome #2: Systems are Established to Recruit, Prepare, Support and Retain Computer Science Teachers
- » Outcome #3: Computer Science Education has Stable, Long-Term Funding
- » Outcome #4: Computer Science is Recognized as a Content Area in Rule and Statute
- » Outcome #5: High School Computer Science Education Aligns with Postsecondary Requirements
- » Outcome #6: Computer Science Learning is Current, Relevant, and Connected to Career Opportunities

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[oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/grants/Pages/Computer-Science-Implementation-Plan.aspx](https://oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/grants/Pages/Computer-Science-Implementation-Plan.aspx)



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- » Outcome #7: Progress on Expanding Participation in and Access to Computer Science Education is Monitored and Reported

These Outcomes are supported by strategies, considerations, measures of progress, a potential timeline, and funding estimates in the full version of the plan available on the [CS Initiative website](#).

## Benefits

Oregon's Regional STEM Hub Network, consisting of 13 Hubs across the state, has been implementing Computer Science projects throughout the year. More than 54,000 of Oregon's PreK-12 students have been engaged in and impacted through a variety of projects, both in and out of school. Approximately 120 school districts have been involved and affected by Computer Science professional development resulting from the grants. All activities target at least one of the grant goals, such as increased access and diversified participation.

A few of the many student-facing activities and competitions are listed below:

### PreK – Grade 5

- » After-school Lego Robotics classes and clubs
- » Sphero, Bee-Bot, Vex GO, and Ozobots Coding Robots
- » Makey-Makey invention events
- » Drumming & Coding events in collaboration with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (K-8)
- » CS Unplugged Kits for engaging K-8 students
- » Hello Ruby activities
- » Amazon Future Engineer program
- » Code Can Dance events

### Middle School

- » Robotics and Drones clubs and competitions
- » Video Game Design
- » Vex Robotics competitions
- » Other support for current/ongoing CS courses
- » CS Unplugged Kits for engaging K-8 students
- » Amazon Future Engineer program
- » Code Can Dance events

### High School

- » E-sports competitions
- » Industry tours
- » 3-D printing
- » Other support for current/ongoing CS courses
- » Women in Science Panel to build a network of mentors and youth
- » Amazon Future Engineer program
- » Hackers, Hipsters, and Hustlers CS/Tech Summer Camp

Out-of-School, Family and Community Events include:

- » Family STEM Nights
- » Computer Science Unplugged Community Events
- » Robotics through a variety of products and challenges
- » Migrant Education Program engagement with CS
- » Wide variety of summer camps and out-of-school offerings similar to the school offerings above
- » Mobile Maker Spaces and Lending Libraries in rural areas to provide access
- » Coder-in-Residence programs
- » Partnerships with Community-Based and Cultural Organizations to implement culturally relevant computer science activities and camps outside of the school day

Professional Development for educators has been an essential and impactful target for attaining the goals of the CS GEER Grant programs. A few highlights from the many professional development activities that have been held during the first year of the grants include:

- » PK-2 Bee-Bot trainings that integrate coding with science, math, and social science activities have been offered with great success throughout most regions in Oregon
- » Code Fellows training for K-12 educators
- » Exploring Computer Science training to diversify recruitment and demographics
- » Computer Science Professional Learning
- » Computational Thinking and Modeling
- » Elementary School CS Professional Learning Community (PLC)
- » Middle School CS PLC
- » Mentoring trainings and events
- » Oregon Computer Science Teachers Association (OCSTA) trainings

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[oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/grants/Pages/Computer-Science-Implementation-Plan.aspx](http://oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/grants/Pages/Computer-Science-Implementation-Plan.aspx)



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GEER I

EANS II reverted to GEER uses

# EDUCATION SERVICE DISTRICT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS SUPPORTING SMALL AND RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

\$4.5 million

## What is this initiative?

These funds are provided to all 19 Education Service Districts (ESDs) to provide responsive and intensive administrative support for small and rural school districts. ESDs can use the funds, following allowable use guidelines, to provide support, coordination, and alignment related to any of the 141 state or federal programs ODE administers and which districts in the region need to manage or report around.

Oregon is home to many small school districts with limited personnel capacity providing support to move through the administrative and reporting requirements for various federal programs and initiatives from which the districts are eligible to receive funds. In addition to the funding being disbursed to the ESD regions, a portion of funding also supports a 1.0 full-time limited-duration position at ODE. This initiative also contributed to a part-time position at the Oregon Association of Education Service Districts (OAESD) to provide coordination for these efforts.

## How can ESDs use the funding?

The small and rural school support funds are Federal monies at this time but can be used to support any state and federal programs districts may participate in or be eligible for. They are subject to all spending, accounting, and reporting requirements. These funds can be used to:

1. Identify and coordinate ESD staff, adding as much as 1.0 FTE, to maintain continuity of instruction and access to resources for small school districts during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Coordinate with districts and agencies to support districts in completing planning, engagement, application, implementation, or reporting processes across state or federal programs.

3. Arrange Grantee staffing to enhance focal support for districts most needing additional assistance.
4. Coordinate regional conversation and knowledge exchange on improving processes or systems that reduce administrative burden and increase program alignment and effectiveness.

## Benefits

This additional support from ODE to ESDs focusing on assistance to smaller and more rural schools in Oregon will streamline the processes necessary to ensure grant money and state and federal relief funds are reported and expended appropriately. The staff can then focus their attention on running the schools and supporting students. This program will also develop district plans and technical expertise by providing coaching. More strategic district plans which can utilize existing best practices and resources mean that students and staff will benefit by not having to re-create processes and can affect more meaningful and sustainable policies and procedures that align with what is best for learning and safety in the school environments.

## Proposed Plan for Sustainability of Support

ODE submitted a proposal to Governor Kotek to sustain the small and rural support funding with state funding. In the 2023 session, the Legislature approved legislation that sustains funding for the ODE staff member, OAESD staff coordination role, and funding distributed to all 19 regions. The state funding comes from the Statewide Education Initiatives Account and begins in the 2023-25 biennium, with ESDs able to use the funds as early as July 1, 2023.

## Contact information

[Section 7 of Integrated Guidance](#) provides the most external documentation about our partnership with ESDs.

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EANS II reverted to GEER uses

# OREGON EARLY CHILDHOOD INCLUSION INITIATIVE

\$4 million (This includes \$1.9 million in GEER and \$2.1 million in PDG Funds)

## What is this initiative?

Oregon Early Childhood Inclusion Initiative efforts join the existing promotion, prevention, and intervention efforts to empower professionals, parents, and community members. With \$1.9 million in GEER funds, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) supports inclusion in local communities, preschool classrooms, community child care, and other learning environments where young children learn and grow. The Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) leverages these resources alongside \$2.1 million in federal Preschool Development Grant (PDG) funds to promote inclusive, high-quality preschool settings.

At the request of the ODE and DELIC, the Oregon Early Childhood Inclusion (OECI) State Leadership Team (SLT) generated a list of recommendations for using these GEER and PDG funds that are known to address persistent barriers to inclusion. This team continues to be involved in monitoring the expenditure of these funds alongside ODE and DELIC staff.

## Accomplishments

This initiative increases inclusivity by analyzing preschool environments and modifying curriculum, classrooms, playgrounds, and other material essentials as needed. It has provided districts and community partners with opportunities for shared professional development, training, and technical support necessary to ensure early education environments are inclusive, culturally responsive, and identity-affirming. These funds support district staff, early care and education providers, families, and community members who care for young children by centering equity and inclusion through collaborative teaming and high-quality support.



## Benefits

More than 50% of the roughly 12,000 identified infants, toddlers, and children experiencing disabilities are not served in inclusive early learning settings in Oregon. That means more than 6,000 infants, toddlers, and children experiencing disability throughout Oregon are underserved by the education system, with a more significant impact on those with higher needs who are more likely to experience lifelong segregation.

The goals of this program are to ensure that:

1. Across Oregon, every child's individual learning and development is nurtured through intentionally inclusive systems, policies, and environments.
2. Families enter into relationships with early care and education providers, trusting their child will be welcomed, loved, and seen in all their human dignity, including their culture, race, or disability.



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Statistic reference can be found in this [report](#).



# PROOF OF CONCEPT LITERACY GRANT

\$500 thousand

## What was this initiative?

The purpose of the Grant was to provide relief funds to the grantee (Portland Public Schools) to study and learn from different implementation models of teacher training/ professional learning and support across five districts in Multnomah County to better understand the conditions and supports required to ensure that increased teacher training results in the consistent, quality implementation of research-based reading instructional practices and improved student reading outcomes.

## Accomplishments

Oregon is interested in whether professional learning programs like *LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling)* can make a large-scale difference in how children learn to read in our state. To that end, the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) fund contributed to a proof of concept and an evaluation of a multi-district implementation of LETRS training led by Portland Public Schools and including Centennial, David Douglas, Reynolds, and Parkrose School Districts, and Multnomah Educational Service District. This Research Study was being designed to 1) support collaboration and data-based project planning within and across the participating districts and 2) inform the Agency as to whether and how greater statewide investment in LETRS training could lead to improved student outcomes in reading across our state as a strategy to mitigate learning loss related to COVID-19. The study funded by this grant has provided educational leaders and policymakers with an in-depth understanding of the benefits and challenges related to the implementation of large-scale training initiatives in a variety of contexts. Full results from the study and a comprehensive final report were submitted in November 2023.

## Benefits

In 2019, 34 percent of Oregon 4th graders scored proficient or advanced on the National Assessment of Educational Performance (NAEP) Reading assessment. That same year, 46.5 percent of Oregon 3rd graders performed at



the proficient or advanced level on our state summative English Language Arts (ELA) assessment. Disaggregated data revealed disproportionate outcomes for many student groups, including students experiencing disabilities, English learners, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Hispanic/Latino groups. Ensuring equitable access to high-quality foundational reading instruction and instructional support is essential to address systemic barriers in education. However, while research demonstrates that almost all children can learn to read if taught using an explicit and systematic approach, large gaps in teacher knowledge remain a major challenge to delivering effective and evidence-based reading instruction. LETRS training aims to increase teacher knowledge of evidence-based reading instruction as one strategy for improving reading outcomes for all students. Participants in this project reported that the training they received increased their knowledge in regard to literacy instruction, which led to enhanced skills and application in the classroom. Participants indicated that they were able to put their newly acquired knowledge and skills to use right away in their instructional practices. Administrators observed that LETRS-trained teachers were able to identify the specific needs of individual students to determine instructional supports and next steps, while participants noted that the training had positively impacted their ability to serve students from historically underserved groups.

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Proof of Literacy Concept



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# SCHOOL SAFETY AND PREVENTION SYSTEMS

\$3.3 million

## What is this initiative?

The School Safety and Prevention System (SSPS) was created as part of the Student Success Act in 2019. The SSPS provides a comprehensive school safety and prevention model that addresses suicide prevention, intervention, and post-event support; bullying, harassment, intimidation, and cyberbullying prevention; behavioral safety assessment supports and promotion of the SafeOregon tip line. The SSPS model provides school safety supports that center equity, racial equity, and access to culturally responsive mental health services within behavioral safety and prevention models that foster learning environments where all students thrive because they belong.

GEER funds allow for a 1.0 FTE School Safety and Prevention Specialist at each Education Service District (ESD) for a total of 19 SSPS Specialists across Oregon who are attentive to the region that their ESD serves. Before the addition of GEER funds, there were 11 School Safety and Prevention Specialist positions ranging from 0.5 to 1.0 FTE across various Education Service Districts in the state.

## Accomplishments

The statewide team of School Safety and Prevention Specialists, supported by the Safe and Inclusive Schools team at ODE, will provide all school districts throughout Oregon with ongoing support, resources, and technical assistance in the following areas:

- » Behavioral safety assessment
- » Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, and sexual violence
- » Suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention
- » SafeOregon Tip Line

## Benefits

The SSPS Specialists work with the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and through their designated ESD to provide equity-based training and technical assistance to school districts to develop, implement, and maintain the statewide SSPS. This staffing and training will provide more equitable outcomes for historically and currently underserved students and youth in our schools by supporting the ongoing development of safe and inclusive learning environments statewide.



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# HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING COMMISSION (HECC) INITIATIVES (ODE ACTING AS A PASS-THROUGH ENTITY)

\$11.4 million GEER I

\$7.5 million GEER II

\$9.8 million Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools Funds (EANS) reverted to GEER uses

*Last Updated: February 2023*

*Synopsis of HECC initiatives:*

## GEER I

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission focused GEER I funding on three areas:

### Higher Education Assistance Grants \$6 million

These grants to Oregon's community colleges and public universities 1) promote student resiliency during an extended period of remote learning, 2) help students persist in their education, and 3) help students complete their post-secondary degree or credential.

### Higher Education Distance Learning Initiative \$4 million

Subawards were granted to support distance learning during the pandemic. Specifically, funds were directed towards: 1) helping students overcome systemic barriers exacerbated by COVID-19 impacts, 2) developing equitable and innovative approaches to distance learning, 3) pilot an online platform that enables students to enroll in online courses offered by other institutions; and 4) supporting the professional development of instructors for more effective online learning.



## Start Strong \$1.4 million

COVID-19 caused high school and community college instruction disruptions, with long-term impacts on academic and developmental growth affecting incoming university students. In 2021, the Oregon Legislature appropriated federal and state funds for a Start Strong program at public universities to reduce this preparation gap. Each university tailored its Start Strong program to meet the unique needs of its students and its current capacity to offer a new program, with common elements including:

- » focusing on serving BIPOC students and students from underserved communities,
- » summer bridge kickoff and continuing wrap-around services throughout the school year,
- » academic skill-building focus,
- » provision of other student success skills, and
- » creation of a community of support for the students.

The Start Strong program showed early success, with participants being retained at higher rates than students who did not participate.

## GEER II

For the second wave of GEER funding, spending focused on ensuring the continuity of services and investments to increase equity and access as part of the recovery process.

### Oregon Youth Corps Summer Programs \$500,000

The Oregon Youth Corps engages youth—particularly those who are underserved or disconnected—in paid, community-based stewardship experiences that build and improve social, emotional, and workplace skills. Historically, the program has been unable to serve all interested youth. Program participants primarily include youth of color, youth from rural

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communities, tribal youth, and youth who have dropped out of high school. Falling Lottery Amusement Tax Device revenues related to the COVID-19 pandemic jeopardized the program. These funds enabled Summer Youth programs in 2021.

### **Open Educational Resources (OER) Support \$1.2 million**

HECC is partnering with public universities and community colleges to develop Open Educational Resources (OER), including digital resources that expand access. Activities funded include 1) translating OER student resources (Blueprint for Success in College & Career) into languages other than English; 2) developing licensed courses that are accessible and address various learning styles; 3) expanding Statewide Equity and Open Education Faculty Cohorts (professional development/training); and 4) developing Criminal Justice and Human Development/Family Studies pathway materials.

### **Reengagement and Retention Initiative \$2.1 million**

The Reengagement and Retention Initiative provides grants to support student re-engagement and postsecondary completion. Grants also focus on identifying promising strategies to remove barriers to re-engagement and targeted strategies to serve and reengage under-represented students.

### **Talent Innovation Equity (TIE) Grant Expansion \$200,000**

HECC shall expend up to \$200,000 to expand the funding for the Lumina TIE Initiative. This Initiative supports partnerships of educational institutions and community-based organizations that work on eliminating growing disparities in completion rates between the overall population and African American, Latino, and American Indian students.

## **EANS II Reverted to GEER Uses**

### **Moonshot for Equity Initiative Eastern Oregon College Students \$1.6 million**

Eastern Oregon University (EOU), Treasure Valley Community College (TVCC), and Blue Mountain Community College (BMCC) have partnered on a five-year, student-centered, comprehensive strategic plan launched in 2022 to identify and remove systemic barriers that are preventing access and attainment to a post-secondary education degree. This partnership aims to close equity gaps for Eastern Oregon students at two- and four-year colleges and universities by 2030.

### **Additional Student Child Care Grant \$750,000**

The Oregon Student Child Care Grant Program helps parents enrolled in postsecondary education to obtain safe, dependable care that supports their children's development while allowing completion of the parent's academic programs.

### **Oregon Youth Conservation Program \$2.5 million**

Oregon Youth Corps will use the \$2.5 million of EANS reverted to GEER uses funds to engage youth, particularly disadvantaged or at-risk, in community-based stewardship experiences. The Oregon Youth Corps Community Stewardship Corps does not have funding to maintain grant services in 2023. GEER funds were identified as a path to efficiently get grant funding into community programs that serve youth and students.

### **Facility for Agricultural Resource Management (FARM II) Blue Mountain CC \$3.5 million**

The FARM II project is a community partnership between Blue Mountain Community College, the City of Pendleton, Pendleton Round-Up, Umatilla County, InterMountain Education Service District, and the Port of Umatilla that will construct an educational facility and indoor arena in Pendleton to support regional workforce and agricultural training needs. Examples include training as a veterinary technician or with unmanned aerial systems and other agriculture education.

### **Supplement Oregon Opportunity Grant to Promote Degree Completion \$1.5 million**

Oregon Opportunity Grants are awarded first to students with the greatest financial need based on their Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The purpose of funding is to ensure that students are fully informed of options and resources to assist them in returning to school and completing their studies. HECC will provide grants to colleges and university financial aid to hire work-study students to conduct student outreach or otherwise defray costs related to enrollment trend analysis. Outreach would be focused on determining root causes and offering both existing financial aid resources and emergency financial aid to students depending on their needs.

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