



# Fall and Winter 2021-22: Remote Learning Engagement Summary

## Purpose and Overview

A core aspect of the remote learning work includes engaging with external partners to understand their experiences within a remote learning setting. Provided here is a summary of the aggregate feedback gathered during the engagement/listening sessions that occurred during the fall and winter of 2021-22. ODE facilitated nine engagement sessions with partners across the state. Individuals in attendance represented the following groups: school and district leaders, ESD staff, teachers, education partners<sup>1</sup>, and representation and voices from Statewide Student Advisory groups<sup>2</sup>.

In the sections below, key findings from across the engagement sessions are highlighted. ***These findings do not represent the views, recommendations, or opinions of ODE, rather they represent the stories, lived experiences, and perspectives of educators who attended the engagement sessions during the fall of 2021.***

## Reflections on Remote Learning During COVID-19

Throughout the various engagement sessions, the experiences that educators and community members had during the 2020-2021 school year with Comprehensive Distance Learning (CDL) as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic had a strong impact on the feedback received. While the experiences during CDL do not necessarily represent the experiences of educators, students, and families who have engaged with remote learning outside of the pandemic response, ODE would be remiss if they did not consider these experiences as an integral part of the work moving forward. Across conversations, engagement partners shared consistent appreciation and high regard for the teachers as well as the need for districts and schools to commit to providing resources that center the voices and experiences of teachers.

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<sup>1</sup> The education partners in attendance included the following groups: COSA (Coalition of Oregon School Administrators), OASC (Oregon Association of Student Councils), OEA (Oregon Education Association), Oregon PTA (Oregon Parent Teacher Association), and OSBA (Oregon School Boards Association).

<sup>2</sup> Statewide Student Advisory Group representation included the following groups: African American Black Student Success Advisory Group, the English Learner/Emergent Bilingual Advisory Group, the Latino/a/x & Indigenous Student Success Advisory Group, Native American/Alaska Native Advisory Committee, and the State Advisory Council for Special Education (SACSE).

Engagement partners also brought forth opportunities and concerns regarding the instructional practices that occurred during CDL. Opportunities included: 1) the benefit of additional communication and connection with families given the shift in learning location and 2) a deeper focus on teaching and learning as there was less of a focus on classroom management and exclusionary discipline practices. Concerns included: 1) heightened screen time, 2) the difficulty of navigating new technology platforms, for both students and families, 3) inconsistent expectations regarding work requirements coupled with inconsistent grading practices, and 4) additional workloads placed on instructional assistants, and in particular, bilingual instructional assistants.

## Fall 2021 Engagement Efforts and Key Findings

Engagement efforts that occurred between the months of October 2021 and February 2022 included virtual listening sessions with the following:

1. **Educators** representing districts and ESDs, Virtual Charter Schools, and Non-Virtual Remote Charter Schools;
2. **Statewide education partners** including COSA (Coalition of Oregon School Administrators), OSBA (Oregon School Boards Association), OEA (Oregon Education Association), OASC (Oregon Association of Student Councils), and Oregon PTA (Oregon Parent Teacher Association);
3. **Several statewide advisory groups** including the African American Black Student Success Advisory Group, Latino/a/x & Indigenous Student Success Advisory Group, and the EL Advisory Group, with plans to engage with additional groups such as the State Advisory Council for Special Education (SACSE).

### Engagement: Online and Remote Learning Educators

This summary includes the aggregate feedback and input from four engagement sessions with a total of 95 teachers, instructional coaches and leaders, school and district administrators, and other school district and ESD staff connected to online and remote learning during the fall of 2021. During each session, participants shared promising practices as well as challenges or barriers related to remote learning. Additionally, participants named top priorities to help ensure the quality of teaching and learning in online and remote programs and named actions focused on policy or systems-level change/improvement.

### Feedback Collected from Educators: Promising Practices

1. **Flexibility:** Participants shared the benefits of individualized learning opportunities present within online and remote learning that allow for flexible scheduling and learning pathways.
2. **Student Belonging:** Participants shared the sense of belonging fostered for students in online/remote spaces, particularly for students who struggle with anxiety.
3. **Additional Course Access:** Participants shared the benefits of accessing additional courses not always offered within traditional brick and mortar schools.

4. **Access to Network and Devices:** Participants shared the benefits of the practice of providing the technology needed to learn in order to support equity of access.

## Feedback Collected from Educators: Challenges

1. **Access to Staffing:** Participants shared concerns regarding having enough licensed and trained staff to support students.
2. **Access to Network and Devices:** Participants shared concerns regarding a lack of equitable access to reliable, high-speed internet access, robust technological devices, and technology support (for students and families).
3. **High-Quality Instructional Materials:** Participants shared concerns regarding the availability of quality and inclusive curriculum and materials that serve the needs of their student body.
4. **Accountability Requirements:** Participants shared concerns regarding a misalignment between current accountability requirements and program models with attendance being central to this concern.
5. **External Perceptions:** Participants shared concerns regarding the negative perceptions of online and remote learning and the impact of these perceptions. Impacts discussed during engagement sessions included being excluded from funding drawn from the Student Investment Act (SIA), continued messaging from ODE about the importance of ensuring that students return to in-person learning, and caps on enrollment.

## Feedback Collected from Educators: Priorities<sup>3</sup>

- Create consistent and meaningful accountability structures, specific to remote schools and programs.
- Ensure equitable access to interventions and supports and well-rounded educational opportunities.
- Revisit enrollment limitations.
- Provide professional learning for online instructional strategies.
- Ensure access to, and implementation of high-quality instructional materials
- Provide equity of funding for remote programs
- Hold space for innovation and creativity that meet the needs of the local context
- Develop infrastructure for statewide connectivity and access to technology
- Work toward normalizing remote learning
- Revisit teacher licensure requirements

## Engagement: Statewide Education Partners

This summary includes the aggregate feedback and input from engagement sessions held with statewide education partners during the fall of 2021. Participants were asked to identify priorities for ensuring that remote learning is equitable and high quality on the basis of the experiences and perspectives of their

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A for additional Action Steps identified by educators.

constituencies. The priorities named include those learned during CDL as well as those specific to remote schools that operate outside of a pandemic response.

### **Feedback Collected from Statewide Education Partners: Priorities**

- Establish clear standards and definitions for online programs; eliminate any “gray” areas or questions about what is or is not an “online program.”
- Create a clear and consistent structure of accountability for schools/districts that do not follow the rules.
- Ensure equitable access for all students who wish to participate in online learning programs or schools including access to technology (laptops, wifi hotspots) and wraparound services including but not limited to special education services.
- Center student voice and ownership in remote learning.
- Develop relationships with culturally and ethnically specific community-based organizations to inform best practices around equity-based learning experiences.
- Set policy that eliminates any profit motive for districts or third-party providers.
- Find out what is working in remote or virtual schools with high graduation rates.
- Revisit attendance requirements.
- Ensure access to high quality and accessible instructional materials/culturally diverse curriculum.
- Create opportunities for engagement/family engagement and support.

### **Engagement: Statewide Advisory Groups**

This summary includes the aggregate feedback and input from engagement sessions held with statewide education partners during the fall and winter of 2021-22. ODE will continue to work with statewide advisory groups in order to develop further engagement opportunities and to engage others not listed above.

Participants in these sessions shared experiences, stories, and perspectives of online and remote learning on the basis of the communities in which they belong and/or work. These stories included benefits, concerns, suggestions, and questions related to online and remote learning both learned during CDL as well as specific to remote schools that operate outside of a pandemic response.<sup>4</sup>

### **Feedback Collected from Statewide Advisory Groups: Benefits**

- Some students feel safer within a remote setting due to social anxiety. Further, within the remote setting, students can experience fewer macroaggressions.
- Remote learning can offer additional ways for students to demonstrate their learning including engaging in hands-on projects to apply learning.

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix B for additional questions and suggestions raised during listening sessions with Statewide Advisory Groups.

- Flexible learning spaces can allow for increased access and support as well as the ability for students to engage in schoolwork at flexible times.
- Remote learning options offer increased access to teacher and mentor support as well as peer collaboration through video conferencing. Video conferencing can also support family engagement.
- There is increased potential for multilingual audio and visual scaffolds to support students who are emergent bilingual as well as increased opportunities for multilingual students to strengthen their native language and literacy at home with their families.
- The opportunity for teachers to loop with students provides additional opportunities for relationship building.
- There are additional opportunities for students to be challenged based on their individual academic needs.
- Within online learning, relationships between families and teachers are stronger as families are in the room learning with students and there are more natural opportunities to create home-school connections.
- Hybrid models can be valuable options for students experiencing disabilities.

### **Feedback Collected from Statewide Advisory Groups: Challenges**

- Limited technology and lack of reliable and robust internet connectivity negatively impact student learning. Linked here were disparities concerning equitable access for families to afford up-to-date, quality technology and access to connectivity.
- Asynchronous instruction can create a barrier for students, particularly when living in multi-generational families and tasked with supporting the learning for younger siblings. Further, asynchronous instruction is often designed to be supported by a learning coach (parent or guardian) which is not always possible for families.
- Linguistic supports for students who are emergent bilingual are not always embedded in remote learning which greatly affects the academic achievement of students as well as sense of belonging within school. This concern is further compounded if a student's home support system does not speak English.
- The cap on enrollment has impacted students and families as they do not always have the choice to move to online and remote programs.
- There are limits to social interactions with the majority of social interaction occurring in small groups and not in natural settings e.g. recess, passing time, or lunch. For students on IEPs, this often means only interacting with other students who navigate disabilities, which is limiting and makes it difficult to form friendships.
- Students do not have the variety of teachers that they have in a brick and mortar setting, so if the relationship between the teacher and student is not strong this can affect academics.
- Lack of synchronous instruction can be difficult for students navigating disabilities, particularly if students are not independent learners or have anxiety about asking questions as asynchronous instruction relies on the student to reach out rather than being an embedded part of the instruction.

- Online learning is only available to those who have access to consistent Wi-Fi as well as families who can be present to supervise their child(ren).

## Ongoing Engagement Efforts

As engagement is core to the work of remote learning, learning with and from individuals who are in remote schools and classrooms every day is an ongoing part of this work. Engagement efforts include the development of The Remote Learning Advisory Committee, Remote School Visits, and Student and Family Engagement.

### Remote Learning Advisory Committee

During the fall of 2021, educators from across the state were invited to apply to serve on a Remote Learning Advisory Committee to support ongoing work and to update and revisit policies for remote learning models statewide. The committee is made up of a total of 31 members representing 15 district leaders and teachers, 6 public charter school leaders, 4 education partner organizations or advocacy groups, 3 Education Service Districts (ESDs), and 3 parents. The goal with recruitment was for the members to reflect the diversity of the students, families, educators, and communities across Oregon.

While the committee does not have decision-making authority, members advise ODE staff by providing input and feedback on remote learning policies while helping to shape engagement and policy recommendations covering a wide array of topics. Thus far, the work of the committee has focused largely on providing feedback to ODE on draft Remote Learning Program Standards - a set of policies to ensure the development and implementation of remote schools and programs that support equitable outcomes and opportunities for students.

### Remote Learning School Visits

In an effort to have a deeper understanding of the remote schools and programs in operation across the state, ODE invited remote schools to volunteer to engage in virtual school visits. The goal of these non-evaluative virtual school visits was to give the staff at ODE a more in-depth understanding of each school/program as well as learn about the experiences from teachers, students, and families. Virtual school visits will likely continue throughout the remainder of the project timeline based on district and school interest.

### Student and Family Engagement

As students and families are most impacted by the schooling model in which they are enrolled, gaining a deeper understanding of the experiences of students and families is essential to developing recommendations for this work moving forward. In this, ODE will develop and distribute surveys asking about the experiences of students and families who have experienced remote learning outside of the

2020-2021 school year<sup>5</sup>. Surveys will be translated and distributed to all remote schools and programs as well as sent through the Remote Learning Advisory Committee and other engagement partners.

Further, as a response to feedback received from the State Board of Education during the January presentation, ODE will work to develop youth focus groups in order to get more in-depth insights from the youth most impacted by remote learning across Oregon.

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<sup>5</sup> The hope of ODE is that the feedback we receive from these surveys is from students and families that either attended remote schools prior to, or beyond the shuttering of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Appendix A: Feedback Collected from Educators: Priorities and Action Steps

The below table summarizes the priorities named by participants during engagement sessions as well as the action steps they named in connection with the priorities identified. *The information presented in the table does not represent the views, recommendations or opinions of ODE, rather they represent the stories, lived experiences, and perspectives of educators who attended the engagement sessions during the fall of 2021.*

| Priorities   | Action Steps   |
|--|--|
| Create consistent and meaningful accountability structures, specific to remote schools and programs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop a committee made up of remote programs and schools to talk about accountability systems and build success measures together.</li> <li>● Create an accountability model that centers growth rather than outcomes.</li> <li>● Revisit attendance requirements to consider proficiency-based models as opposed to seat time.</li> <li>● Broaden reporting systems.</li> </ul>  |
| Ensure equitable access to interventions and supports, well-rounded education opportunities.         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Administer surveys to students and families in remote schools and programs to better understand depth of experiences.</li> <li>● Establish workload expectations in remote schools e.g. student to teacher ratio.</li> <li>● Create more robust structures for district support and collaboration between remote schools and their sponsoring districts in order to ensure equitable access to academic supports for students.</li> <li>● Develop regional CTE hubs to support in-person access to well-rounded learning for students.</li> </ul> |
| Revisit enrollment limitations.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Revisit the enrollment cap.</li> </ul>  |
| Provide professional learning for online instructional strategies.                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create structures for ongoing, differentiated, and hands-on professional development that allows for statewide networking, and training specific to online instructional strategies, providing interventions in an online environment, and social-emotional learning including, but not limited to, tutorial videos and an online resource bank.</li> <li>● Funding to support professional learning focused on family engagement within an online environment as well as opportunities for family and learning coach training.</li> </ul>        |



| Priorities  | Action Steps  |
|---|---|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with educator preparation programs to ensure that all pre-service teachers have the skills needed for online and remote instructional models.</li> </ul>  |
| Ensure access to, and implementation of high-quality instructional materials      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Revise the current curriculum adoption policy AND create a statewide curriculum adoption process with an approved list of curriculum and instructional materials with established minimum requirements for curricular materials, including but not limited to cultural responsiveness.</li> <li>● Require curriculum mapping for all curricula used in remote schools and programs to ensure that all curriculum is aligned to state standards.</li> <li>● Address student data security concerns by making curricular efforts more public.</li> <li>● Ensure that there is a virtual curriculum that is free to all Oregon students.</li> </ul> |
| Provide equity of funding for remote programs                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assess the funding structure in Oregon with online and remote schools as a key component in order to ensure that there is collaboration, rather than competition amongst remote schools and programs and brick and mortar schools.</li> <li>● Provide Funding for Wrap-Around Services.</li> <li>● Create a state standard for a clear pay scale for teachers in virtual charter schools.</li> </ul>   |
| Hold space for innovation and creativity that meet the needs of the local context | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop clear parameters, definitions, guidelines that establish autonomy and name where creativity can happen.</li> <li>● Ensure that there are spaces, definitions, and policies that are unique to each type of school.</li> </ul>  |
| Develop infrastructure for statewide connectivity and access to technology        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure that students have access to devices and learning platforms.</li> <li>● Ensure that there is equity of access to internet connectivity including developing state-established contracts to ensure that all students have access to hotspots and satellite internet</li> <li>● Collectively advocate for increased funding for both technology devices and robust broadband infrastructure enabling equitable statewide connectivity.</li> </ul>   |
| Work toward normalizing remote learning   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop a statewide vision for online learning with support for how schools can work towards that vision.</li> <li>● Ensure that there is a values-mind shift in what virtual teaching looks like and accomplishes, starting with ODE.</li> <li>● Promote the benefits of online instruction by highlighting success stories and promising practices.</li> <li>● Require all students to take one remote course before graduating.</li> </ul>  |

| Priorities                             | Action Steps   |
|--|--|
| Revisit teacher licensure requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Ensure that there is flexibility in teacher licensure and endorsements, particularly at the secondary level to address staffing issues.</li><li>● Create additional pathways for online learning endorsements with opportunities for licensure pathways or endorsements for online teaching and create requirements for license renewal.</li></ul> |

## Appendix B: Feedback Collected from Statewide Advisory Groups

The below table includes aggregate data regarding the themes that arose during the engagement sessions with Statewide Advisory Groups separated into categories on the basis of the feedback provided. ***The information presented in the table does not represent the views, recommendations or opinions of ODE; rather they represent the stories, lived experiences, and perspectives of members of Statewide Advisory Groups who attended engagement sessions during the fall and winter of 2021-22.***

| Theme Data Type    | Aggregate Data Organized into Themes  |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Suggestions</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Training for families of students engaging with remote learning is important in ensuring that they have the technical skills to support their students as well as a handbook for families to support remote learning.</li> <li>● As teaching in an online or virtual setting requires additional technical and pedagogical skills on part of the teacher, robust professional development and time to participate needs to be provided.</li> <li>● It is important to partner with culturally specific service providers who have relationships with families to provide initial and/or follow-up assistance in securing internet access and understanding use of technology.</li> <li>● There is a need for schools and districts to hire more multilingual instructors to support students and their caring adults.</li> <li>● It is not always possible to structure a program that meets a student’s IEP within the online school. There needs to be guidance for schools and families on how to navigate this challenge.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Questions</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What does remote learning look like for students with IEPs and students who can be served until they are 21?</li> <li>● What does remote learning look like for transitioning students to post-secondary?</li> <li>● What tools and supports should be in place for students who are LGBTQ+ when they are at home and might not be safe with people at home?</li> <li>● How can remote learning be accessible when the program is designed for learning coaches?</li> <li>● How can Tribal History Shared History (SB13 legislation) be incorporated into the curriculum within remote settings?</li> </ul>  |