Community-Informed Recommendations for Equitable Graduation Outcomes

Senate Bill 744 Report

September 1, 2022

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) appreciates those who contributed to the statewide engagement and who took time to participate in a conversation about what they value in education and what a diploma means to them, their family, and their community. ODE reached out to and heard from wonderfully diverse and representative groups of students, caregivers, educators, families, and community members from across Oregon. Participants reflected the voices that Senate Bill 744 positioned as central, including representatives and students who experience disability, are from immigrant and refugee populations, are from racial or ethnic groups that have historically experienced academic disparities, are identified as English learners, or are members of federally recognized Indian Tribes in Oregon. The diversity of ODE's outreach and the focus on an equitable, transparent, and accessible process provided a foundation for recommendations made in alignment with those voices. ODE appreciates people's willingness to share specific, poignant examples of their educational experiences, from connections and learning experiences to barriers and hardships. Repeatedly, stories of people's hopes for the future of our educational system brought out a sense of radiance and possibility that is reflected in the recommendations in this report.

Though a person who participated likely will not see their exact comments reflected, ODE hopes that they see that this report tells the story of what we have learned from thoughtful engagement, from reviewing Oregon's graduation pathway and outcome data, and from reviewing our own and other state diploma practices in order to develop recommendations that align with the needs of the people of Oregon.

ODE contracted with Oregon's Kitchen Table from Portland State University to manage many elements of the statewide engagement due to their expertise in statewide engagement. Their practice of using culturally specific and targeted outreach to support hearing from Oregonians who have traditionally been left out of engagement processes was central to the effort. Oregon's Kitchen Table has been used at the state, local, and regional levels to gather feedback from a wide variety of people living in Oregon on a range of topics, including state budgeting priorities, kindergarten readiness, school boundaries, affordable and accessible housing, and equitable education.

Partners at the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) supported the Senate Bill 744 effort in many ways, including participating on the review team, and analyzing data available to speak to important questions; specifically, the question looking at past trends in student success after high school used longitudinal data and was prepared by HECC's *Office of Research and Data*, including staff in both the *Postsecondary Research and Data* program and

the interagency *Oregon Longitudinal Data Collaborative* program, supporting the engagement process directly, and coordinating a survey of higher education partners.

ODE partnered with many state and local organizations and groups to conduct and complete this process. These determinations and recommendations were based on a synthesis of the data review and the national comparisons. They were also directly influenced by and consonant with what we heard from the many community members who engaged in the process. The final iterations were formed by policy experts at ODE.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2021, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 744 (See *Appendix A*) requiring review and engagement investigating potential inequitable impacts of current diploma policy. SB 744 presented the Oregon Department of Education with a historic opportunity to connect with community and education partners whose voices have not been meaningfully involved in prior diploma policy development. The transparent process implemented was designed to be equitable, accessible, and inclusive. SB 744 called for ODE to develop two specific determinations and generate recommendations for the Legislature and State Board of Education to consider in making Oregon's graduation requirements mirror this same commitment to equity, access, and inclusion.

The most recent period of substantial changes to high school diploma regulations in Oregon was completed in 2008 and phased in through 2013. These changes made the pathway to a diploma one of the most challenging and demanding in the nation, and unintentionally exasperated and revealed inequities in our education system. Graduation rates have steadily increased year-after-year since that time, yet lag behind other states partly due to differences in systemic investments and, in some cases, due to differences in how the rates are calculated.

Although graduation rate trends are moving in a positive direction, substantial inequities remain, such as experiences of systemic bias, limited access to adequate educational resources and educational guidance, and support from practitioners, such as school counselors and teachers. This is especially the case for students who identify as tribal citizens, Black/African American, Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, Latino/a/x, people who have disabilities and/or are served through an Individualized Education Program (IEP), people who are identified as English learners/Emerging bilinguals while in high school, and/or people navigating poverty, houselessness, foster care and high mobility.

Current diploma requirements were developed through engagement by the State Board of Education, but did not provide families and communities who have historically faced systemic barriers to academic achievement deep opportunity for meaningful input. To synthesize the determinations and recommendations, ODE conducted extensive statewide engagement, involving more than 3,500 diverse students, community members, families, educators, and representatives of higher education and workforce and industry. ODE also conducted an in-depth review of Oregon graduation data by investigating inequities and disparities, exploring diploma policies in other states, and comparing Oregon diploma policies with national trends. The engagement process revealed that barriers to graduation arise across the entire K–12 education system, graduation requirements included.

Families and educators shared that their children and students experience inequitable outcomes because they have inequitable *access* to high quality instructional programming across their entire public education experience.

During this review process, the majority of Oregon's graduation requirements have been maintained, the legislation paused the Assessment of Essential Skills diploma graduation

requirements while the review and engagement processes were conducted. The Assessment of Essential Skills graduation requirements were popular at the time that Oregon adopted them. Since then, most states have moved away from these types of redundant, and sometimes biased, requirements. The review of statewide data shows the Assessment of Essential Skills requirement was implemented inequitably and did not ensure anticipated benefits for students in their preparation for postsecondary transition.

In Oregon, to allow all students the opportunity to learn, grow, and achieve, we must remove all systemic barriers to lifelong success—including updating graduation requirements to reflect the varied and diverse backgrounds, heritages, and life experiences of Oregonians.

ODE developed these recommendations to guide future work around graduation requirements and the Oregon Diploma. It is important to note that while the recommendations are described as discrete steps, there will be a need for a coordinated implementation:

- Research, develop, and implement specific graduation requirements across multiple pathways toward a single Oregon Diploma.
- Build capacity so that students have access to all courses of instruction required to meet graduation requirements.
- Generate deep understanding in students, families, and communities about the meaning and value of an Oregon Diploma, options for achieving an Oregon Diploma, and factors to consider in diploma pathway decision-making.
- Design and deliver education that supports students on their journey to earning an Oregon Diploma and successfully transitioning to their next steps after graduation.

This legislative report starts with a review of Oregon's current diploma requirements. Next, there is a national scan of diploma policies, followed by a summary of ODE's statewide engagement approach and findings. Finally, an analysis of graduation data provides the lead-in to the recommendations for proposed changes to diploma requirements. Representative quotations from participants in the engagement process are provided in blue text boxes throughout. Through synthesis of the information gathered during this process, ODE made two determinations and developed eight recommendations for the Legislature and Oregon State Board of Education to consider.

INTRODUCTION

The 2021 Oregon Legislature adopted Senate Bill 744, which presents Oregonians with a unique opportunity to pause, review, and discuss the inequitable impacts of current high school diploma policy and make recommendations that incorporate equity, accessibility, and inclusion for all of Oregon's students. Specifically, Senate Bill 744 directs ODE to do the following:

> ***SECTION 1.***
>
> *(1) As used in this section, "high school diploma" means the high school diploma options offered in this state under ORS 329.451, including a high school diploma, a modified diploma, an extended diploma and an alternative certificate.*
>
> *(2)* ***The Department of Education shall:***
>
> > *(a) Review state requirements for high school diploma options offered in this state, as those requirements are prescribed by ORS 329.451 and by rules adopted by the State Board of Education.*
> >
> > *(b) Review state requirements related to demonstrations of proficiency in skills or academic content areas that are not related to career and technical education, with an emphasis on demonstrations of proficiency in Essential Learning Skills.*
> >
> > *(c) Make recommendations for state requirements for high school diplomas in this state to reduce disparities and to ensure that every student will be on track to earn one of the high school diplomas.*
>
> *(3)* ***The review conducted under this section must include:***
>
> > *(a) An evaluation of the use of alternative certificates and how the requirements for alternative certificates compare to the requirements for other high school diplomas;*
> >
> > *(b) An evaluation of the role of a school district or a public charter school when a student who has the documented history described in ORS 329.451 (7)(b) or (8)(b) seeks to pursue a high school diploma with more stringent requirements than a modified diploma or an extended diploma, as provided by ORS 329.451 (1)(c);*
> >
> > *(c) A comparison of high school diploma requirements in this state with high school diploma requirements in other states;*

(d) The identification of the expectations of employers and postsecondary institutions of education related to the skills and knowledge of persons who earn high school diplomas in this state;

(e) The determination of whether the skills and knowledge expected to be attained by persons who earn high school diplomas in this state, as identified in paragraph (d) of this subsection, align with the requirements for high school diplomas in this state;

(f) The identification of the causes of disparities that have resulted from the requirements for high school diplomas in this state; and

(g) The determination of whether the requirements for high school diplomas in this state have been applied inequitably to different student populations.

(4) ***When conducting the review and developing recommendations under this section, the department shall:***

(a) Use a transparent process that is equitable, accessible and inclusive;

(b) Enable and encourage meaningful engagement with:

(A) Representatives from historically underserved students, including students who:

(i) Have a disability;

(ii) Are from an immigrant or refugee population;

(iii) Are from racial or ethnic groups that have historically experienced academic disparities;

(iv) Are English language learners; or

(v) Are from a federally recognized Indian tribe of this state;

(B) Youth-led organizations that engage and empower youth; and

(C) Communities from across this state; and

(c) Develop recommendations for changes to the requirements for high school diplomas:

(A) Based on data and the engagement process described in paragraph (b) of this subsection; and

(B) With the goal of ensuring that the processes and outcomes related to the requirements for high school diplomas are equitable, accessible and inclusive.

(5)(a) Not later than September 1, 2022, the department shall provide a report to:

(A) The interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to education; and

(B) The State Board of Education.

(b) The report required under paragraph (a) of this subsection shall:

(A) Include a summary of the components of the review conducted as described in subsection (3) of this section, including information on the comments gathered during the engagement process described in subsection (4)(b) of this section.

(B) Recommend changes in legislation or administrative rules that will reduce disparities and ensure that every student will be on track to earn one of the high school diplomas offered in this state.

(C) Include an analysis of the effectiveness of requiring students to demonstrate proficiency in Essential Learning Skills and an explanation of the reasons the department concludes that requirements related to demonstrations of proficiency in Essential Learning Skills should be retained, modified or eliminated. If the department concludes that demonstrations of proficiency of Essential Learning Skills should be retained, the department shall provide recommendations for alternative methods for students to demonstrate proficiency in skills or academic content areas that are not related to career and technical education.

SECTION 2.

Section 1 of this 2021 Act is repealed on June 30, 2023.

SECTION 3.

Notwithstanding any rules adopted by the State Board of Education, a student may not be required to show proficiency in Essential Learning Skills as a condition of receiving a high school diploma during the 2021-2022, 2022-2023 or 2023-2024 school year.

SECTION 4.

This 2021 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2021 Act takes effect on its passage.

This report summarizes the process followed by ODE in reviewing diploma data and information, including comparisons with other states, as well as the design, methodology, and findings of the engagement process and ODE's resulting determinations and recommendations.

BACKGROUND

Oregon's diploma requirements have remained relatively unchanged since 2013 (see *Appendix B* for additional information). Figure 1 below provides a timeline for the primary events in Oregon's diploma policy history since 1991, followed by elaboration of those major policy benchmarks.

Figure 1

Recent Diploma Policy History Highlights

Note: Abbreviations mean the following: CIM = Certificate of Initial Mastery; CAM = Certificate of Advanced Mastery; CRLS = Career Related Learning Standards; CRLE = Career Related Learning Experiences; HS = High School.

Between academic years 2008–09 and 2019–20, 4-year cohort graduation rates[1] increased incrementally and substantially. With modified Oregon Diplomas factored in, which were counted as graduates beginning in 2013–14, the overall graduation rate for 2019–20 was 83%. This slow and steady increase in graduation rates also corresponded with a substantial reduction in differences in on-time graduation rates by race/ethnicity, driven primarily by increases in Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino/a/x graduation rates. In 2008–09, the overall graduation rate was 14.5 percentage points higher than the graduation rate for students of historically underserved race/ethnicity groups; by 2019–20, this gap had been reduced to 4.1 percentage points.[2]

Although graduation rate trends are moving in a positive direction, substantial inequities remain, such as experiences of systemic bias, limited access to adequate educational resources and educational guidance support from practitioners, such as school counselors and teachers. This is especially the case for students who identify as:

- American Indian/Alaska Native tribal citizens;
- Black/African American;
- Latino/a/x;
- People who experience disabilities and/or are served through an Individualized Education Program (IEP); and/or
- People who are identified as English learners/Emerging bilinguals while in high school.

As will be shown in the graduation data section, additional disparities are present in the methods students use to demonstrate proficiency in reading, writing, and math in relation to the Assessment of Essential Skills requirements, with students from disadvantaged groups more likely to use time-intensive methods that may result in reduced course and classroom learning opportunities. Finally, disparities are present both in the award rates of Oregon modified diplomas and in the postsecondary enrollment and employment rates for students who are awarded these diplomas[3]. There are also concerns about the process used to generate Oregon's graduation requirements, which centered in white dominant cultural values.

In addition to requiring a review and recommendations regarding diploma requirements, Senate Bill 744 established an immediate pause on the diploma requirement that students

[1] The percentage of students who earned an Oregon diploma within four years of beginning high school, adjusted for transfers into and out of Oregon public K-12 education.
[2] Oregon Department of Education. (Accessed August 2, 2022). *Cohort graduation rate*. (https://www.oregon.gov/ode/reports-and-data/students/Pages/Cohort-Graduation-Rate.aspx)
[3]Oregon Department of Education. (Accessed August 2, 2022). *Cohort graduation rate*. (https://www.oregon.gov/ode/reports-and-data/students/Pages/Cohort-Graduation-Rate.aspx)

demonstrate proficiency in reading, writing, and math in relation to the Assessment of Essential Skills requirements during the 2021–2022, 2022–2023 or 2023–2024 school years.

CURRENT OREGON DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS

This section is written in response to the following text from Senate Bill 744:

> *(1) As used in this section, "high school diploma" means the high school diploma options offered in this state under ORS 329.451, including a high school diploma, a modified diploma, an extended diploma and an alternative certificate*
>
> *(2) The Department of Education shall:*
>
> > *(a) Review state requirements for high school diploma options offered in this state, as those requirements are prescribed by ORS 329.451 and by rules adopted by the State Board of Education*

> *"Being able to read, listen, speak in order to communicate and everyday needs—being able to understand math. Learning how to cope and handle failure along with success. Students need to be able to use reason and logic as well as develop care, kindness, and empathy for others. The common factor is being educated well and creating a caring community environment where students can share their lived experiences. Being trauma informed is important—but it is just as critical that students know how to cope with the hard stuff life throws at them."*
>
> *—Oregon Workforce Representative*

High school diploma options

Currently, Oregon has three state-defined K-12 diplomas: 1) Oregon Diploma; 2) Modified Oregon Diploma; and 3) Extended Oregon Diploma. The state also issues an Alternative Certificate. Both the Oregon Diploma and the Modified Oregon Diploma count towards the official graduation rate calculations.[4]

According to ORS 329.451, the Modified and Extended Oregon Diplomas[5] are only offered to students who have, "demonstrated the inability to meet the full set of academic content standards for a high school diploma with reasonable modifications and accommodations." To

[4] Oregon Department of Education. (Accessed August 2, 2022). *Cohort graduation rate*. (https://www.oregon.gov/ode/reports-and-data/students/Pages/Cohort-Graduation-Rate.aspx)

[5] Decisions about whether to pursue a modified Oregon Diploma must be made between grade 6 and 2 years before the student's anticipated exit from high school (OAR 581-022-2010(4)(c)), unless their documented history has changed. The decision to pursue an extended Oregon Diploma may be made at any time, so long as it can be achieved within the timeframe for which a student is entitled to a public education and parent consent is received (OAR 581-022-2015).

be eligible to pursue a Modified Oregon Diploma, a student must, "have a documented history of an inability to maintain grade level achievement due to significant learning and instructional barriers or have a documented history of a medical condition that creates a barrier to achievement" (ORS 329.451(7)(b)). To be eligible to pursue an Extended Oregon Diploma, a student must, "have a documented history of: (A) an inability to maintain grade level achievement due to significant learning and instructional barriers; (B) a medical condition that creates a barrier to achievement; or (C) a change in the student's ability to participate in grade level activities as a result of a serious illness or injury that occurred after grade eight" (ORS 329.451(8)(b)).

The Alternative Certificate is not a diploma but rather a high school completion document. It may be earned by a student who does not satisfy the requirements for the Oregon Diploma, Modified Oregon Diploma or Extended Oregon Diploma. To be eligible for an Alternative Certificate, a student must have met the criteria requirements as specified in school district board policies. Students who earn an Alternative Certificate or a Graduation Equivalency Diploma (GED) are not counted as graduates in Oregon's cohort graduation rates but are instead considered completers.

"I believe that all students can reach the graduation requirements. The question should be do these requirements seem meaningful to all students."

- Oregon Administrator

Oregon Diploma and the Modified Oregon Diploma requirements

Districts are responsible for recording a student's progress towards graduation and keeping detailed records of a student's credit attainment and progress towards graduation requirements in accordance with OAR 166-400-0060 (32), OAR 581-021-0220, OAR 581-022-2260, OAR 581-022-2270, and OAR 581-022-0103. Districts and charter schools maintain these records in greater detail than is contained in ODE reports. Districts and charter schools report to ODE each year on which students have been awarded each type of credential, the date the credential was awarded, and the method and date used to demonstrate proficiency in any assessed Essential Skills.

ODE only collects one indicator about a student's progress towards graduation--district reporting whether the student's credit attainment placed them on-track to graduate at the end of 9th grade. All other information about a student's progress towards graduation, including which credits have been attained, status of completing Career-Related Learning Experiences, and other elements are maintained by the district and not collected at the state level.

Credit requirements

Students can graduate from Oregon schools through multiple diploma pathways. If students do not meet minimum diploma standards, but do meet local requirements, they can receive an Alternative Certificate (OAR 581-022-2020). Students who do not meet any established requirements leave high school without earning a diploma or certificate. Table 1 compares the requirements for each of these exit options.

Table 1

Summary of Diploma Requirements

Credential	Credit Requirement	Assessment of Essential Skills	Personalized Learning
Oregon Diploma	24	Yes	Yes
Modified Oregon Diploma	24	Yes*	Yes
Extended Oregon Diploma	12	No	No
Alternative Certificate	Per local policy	Per local policy	Per local policy

Note: *Modified methods of demonstrating proficiency are permitted for the Modified Oregon Diploma, but not for the Oregon Diploma.

Table 2 shows the credit requirements that apply to each of Oregon's diplomas.

Table 2

Credit Requirements across Diploma Types **Subject Area**	**Oregon Diploma**	**Modified Oregon Diploma**	**Extended Oregon Diploma**
Language Arts	4	3	2
Mathematics	3*	2	2
Science	3†	2	2
Second Language The Arts Career and Technical Education	3	1	1
Health	1	1	1
Physical Education	1	1	1
Electives	6	12 May include additional core credits, career technical education, electives, career development	—
Social Sciences	3 ‡ May earn credit for demonstrating proficiency	2 May earn credit for demonstrating proficiency	3§ —
	—	May earn credit through regular education with or without accommodations or modifications	—
Total Credits	**24**	**24**	**12**

Note: *Algebra 1 or higher; †Scientific inquiry and lab experience; ‡2.5 credits in U.S. history, world history, geography, economics, and financial literacy, and .5 credit in civics beginning with the class of 2026; and § history, geography, economics, or civics.

These minimum credit requirements are set by the state to ensure that every Oregon student has the opportunity to engage with high quality curriculum across content areas and has the room to explore areas of personal strength and interest during their high school career. The credit requirements of an Oregon Diploma signal to colleges, universities, and employers that the student has mastered a body of academic content that has prepared them for their next step, whether that step is entering the workforce, pursuing an industry credential, joining the military, or continuing academic study at a college or university.

Essential Skills

The Essential Skills (OAR 581-022-2115) are process skills that cross academic disciplines; the skills are not content specific and can be applied in a variety of courses, subjects, and settings. Demonstrating proficiency in the Essential Skills were intended to indicate that the student has achieved mastery of these important cross-content skills and is ready for their next step after graduation. Students are required to demonstrate proficiency for three of the nine essential skills as one of the non-credit graduation requirements; however, that requirement was suspended by the legislature as part of Senate Bill 744 through at least the 2023-24 school year.

Instruction in the Essential Skills is intended to be embedded across content areas, as these skills represent processes and behaviors that transfer across content areas and are skills that students will need to pursue their postsecondary goals. The nine Essential Skills follow:

- Read and comprehend a variety of text*
- Write clearly and accurately*
- Apply mathematics in a variety of settings*
- Listen actively and speak clearly and coherently
- Think critically and analytically
- Use technology to learn, live, and work
- Demonstrate civic and community engagement
- Demonstrate global literacy
- Demonstrate personal management and teamwork skills

Note that between 2013–14 and 2018–19, students were required to pass an assessment to demonstrate proficiency in three of the nine Essential Skills (marked with an * above) as a requirement for earning an Oregon Diploma and a Modified Oregon Diploma.

Taken together, the nine Essential Skills were considered essential to success, whether that included entering the workforce, pursuing an industry credential, joining the military, or continuing academic study at a college or university. Demonstrating proficiency in these skills

through a state-approved assessment option was intended to demonstrate student readiness for their next step after high school.

Oregon provided four ways for students to demonstrate proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics. Students could show their proficiency in each area using one of the following:

1. A proficient score on the state summative assessments;
2. A work sample scored against an official state scoring rubric;
3. Another state-approved standardized assessment; or,
4. A district-developed assessment.

The third option in this list, using another state-approved standardized assessment, included common assessments provided by third-party vendors (e.g., SAT, ACT, WorkKeys) that were reviewed by ODE and the Assessment of Essential Skills Review Panel for comparability to the other forms of assessment being used. The Assessment of Essential Skills Review Panel made recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding assessments that met comparability, accessibility, and general technical adequacy requirements, which the board officially approved or rejected. All proficiency scores for those assessments that are selected were established by equating studies, which maintained the original Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS)[6] proficiency requirements in the areas of reading, writing, and math.

> *"I do not feel that there needs to be an additional form of validation for students to earn their standard diploma. If students can show that they can put in the work and successfully complete the credit requirements set forth by the state and/or their district that should be enough. The completion of essential skills only reaffirms what we already know with students in our buildings."*
>
> *—Oregon Counselor*

As a part of Senate Bill 744, the requirement to demonstrate proficiency via a separate assessment in the reading, writing, and math Essentials Skills was suspended as a graduation requirement for students earning a standard or modified Oregon Diploma during the 2021–2022, 2022–2023 or 2023–2024 school years.

[6] OAKS was Oregon's official statewide summative assessment when the Assessment of Essential Skills requirements were first introduced. It was later replaced by Smarter Balanced, but proficiency in the Essential Skills remains tied to the original scores on OAKS at the time the policy was phased in.

Education Plan and Profile

The Education Plan and Profile (OAR 581-022-2000) is a non-credit graduation requirement and is a document that serves as a road map to guide student learning throughout school, to help ensure that they are prepared for next steps after high school.

> *"When I graduated I didn't feel that teachers were involved with my graduation, but only with my grades. It was hard for me to find the right classes and opportunities."*
>
> *—Oregon Resident*

Schools use the Education Plan and Profile as a formal process for documenting a student's academic achievement and progress toward their diploma requirements, post-high school goals, and other personal accomplishments identified. The plan should be used by the school to design, monitor, and adjust a course of study that meets the interest and goals of the student.

Implementation of the Education Plan and Profile varies greatly across districts, but each district is required to provide each student the opportunity, with adult guidance, to develop an education plan and build an education profile in grades seven through 12. The plan and profile must be reviewed and updated periodically (at least annually) and must do the following:

- Identify student's personal and career interests;
- Identify student's tentative educational and career goals, and post-high school next steps;
- Plan steps to prepare for those goals;
- Design, monitor, and adjust a course of study that meets those interests and goals, including coursework and learning experiences, career-related learning experiences, and extended application opportunities;
- Document other student achievements as defined by the district or the student.

> *"One of my children received a standard diploma a year early by taking advantage of district opportunities to add graduation credits to his transcript beyond the regular school day…he was able to enter college a year ahead of schedule and was prepared to work hard. The school counselor helped him map out a plan to meet his own goal that he could execute over the course of two years. It was an exceptional example of a public school helping a student realize their self-described educational path."*
>
> *—Oregon Resident*

Career-Related Learning Experiences

Career-Related Learning Experiences are a non-credit graduation requirement and are structured educational experiences that connect learning to the world beyond the classroom (OAR 581-022-2000 outlines this requirement, which is defined in OAR 581-022-0102).

> *"The problem is that ultimately the job skills that are most important can't really be taught—work ethic, honesty, integrity, being professional, reliability, dependability."*
>
> *—Oregon Workforce Representative*

The Career-Related Learning Experiences are planned in the student's Education Plan and Profile in relation to their career interests and post-high school goals. These experiences provide opportunities for students to apply academic, career-related, and technical knowledge and skills, and may also help students to clarify career goals. These experiences include, but are not limited to, work-based learning opportunities and span a continuum of career awareness, career exploration, career preparation, and career training activities in what is now called career connected learning. Career-Related Learning Experiences were initially tied to career-related learning standards. The career-related learning standards were replaced with the Essential Skills for students graduating in 2012, and the Career-Related Learning Experiences are no longer tied to specific learning standards.[7]

Extended Application

The Extended Application experience is a non-credit graduation requirement that is designed to be a bridge between a student's high school learning experience and their personal interests, goals, and future career plans (OAR 581-022-0102).

The Extended Application is defined as the application and extension of knowledge and skills in the new and complex situations related to the student's personal career interests and post-high school goals. Each student is expected to build a collection of evidence regarding their work. The way this requirement has been implemented and offered to students varies widely across districts. Some examples of excellent Extended Application projects include a student interested in sound design upgrading the gymnasium sound system after raising the funds for the project themselves and a student interested in woodworking spending more than 350 hours building a table from a juniper tree and raffling it off as a fundraiser.

[7] Oregon Department of Education. (2010). *Career related learning standards become part of essential skills*. (https://www.crisoregon.org/cms/lib/OR01928264/Centricity/Domain/45/Documents/cl.pdf)

Review of Alternative Certificate

This section is written in response to the following text from Senate Bill 744:

> *3) The review conducted under this section must include:*
>
> > *(a) An evaluation of the use of alternative certificates and how the requirements for alternative certificates compare to the requirements for other high school diplomas*

> *"[My district] currently requires a senior project that implements the essential skills, which is presented to their peers and an evaluation committee. I think this is a great validation of skill level."*
>
> *—Oregon Superintendent*

Alternative Certificate use varies widely, as state rule leaves discretion for awarding Alternative Certificates to local board policy. Alternative Certificate award rates have remained steady statewide for the last decade, with an average of 0.6% of the four-year adjusted cohort earning an Alternative Certificate in each of the last 10 years.

Regarding Alternative Certificates, OAR 581-022-2020(2)(e) requires the following:

> *(A) A School district or public charter school shall award an alternative certificate to a student who does not satisfy the requirements for a high school diploma, a modified diploma or an extended diploma.*
>
> *(B) Each district school board or public charter school governing board with jurisdiction over high school programs shall define criteria for an alternative certificate and shall award an alternative certificate to those students who have met the criteria requirements as described in district school board policies.*

Many school districts in Oregon adopt local policy based on the Oregon School Boards Association sample policies. Regarding Alternative Certificates, Oregon School Boards Association sample policy notes the following about Alternative Certificates:

> Alternative certificates will be awarded to students who do not satisfy the requirements for a diploma, a modified Oregon Diploma or an extended Oregon diploma if the students meet minimum credit requirements established by the district. Alternative certificates will be awarded based on individual student needs and achievement. A student who receives a modified Oregon Diploma, an extended Oregon Diploma or an

> alternative certificate will have the option of participating in a high school graduation ceremony with the student's class.[8]

Districts may revise this policy as appropriate for their local context. Eugene School District 4J's policy adds more specificity to their requirements for an Alternative Certificate; for example, they include a requirement that the student complete the Work Keys Assessment in both reading and math, along with other requirements.[9]

Regardless of the specifics of the policy adopted by local school boards, Oregon Administrative Rule requires that school districts provide, "on-site access to the appropriate resources to achieve an Alternative Certificate at each high school in the school district or at the public charter school" (OAR 581-022-2020(5)(a)).

Award rates for Alternative Certificates vary widely, with some districts awarding them to an average of more than 2% of their cohort, while other districts have not awarded any Alternative Certificates in the last five years.

Evaluation of Modified and Extended Oregon Diploma use

This section is written in response to the following text from Senate Bill 744:

> *3) The review conducted under this section must include:*
>
> > *(b) An evaluation of the role of a school district or a public charter school when a student who has the documented history described in ORS 329.451 (7)(b) or (8)(b) seeks to pursue a high school diploma with more stringent requirements than a modified diploma or an extended diploma, as provided by ORS 329.451 (1)(c)*

[8] Oregon School Boards Association. (Accessed August 2, 2022). *Selected sample policy - IKF*. (http://www.osba.org/~/media/Files/Resources/Board%20Operations/Sample%20policies/IKF%20G1-pdf.pdf)

[9] Eugene School District 4J. (Accessed August 2, 2022). *Modified diplomas & alternate certificates*. (https://www.4j.lane.edu/instruction/secondary/graduation/requirements/modifieddiploma/)

ODE began reviewing this topic by analyzing the rates of usage of Modified Oregon Diplomas and Extended Oregon Diplomas across school districts and public charter schools. From that analysis, ODE identified a group of districts and public charter schools that had a relatively high percentage of students pursuing a Modified Oregon Diploma. ODE sought input from those districts and used that input to inform the discussion that follows.

School districts generally use existing guidance and policy to identify the potential need for a Modified Oregon Diploma or Extended Oregon Diploma. Except in the case of students who are being served by an Individualized Education Program (IEP), districts generally flag students who are falling behind in classes, showing signs of struggling to access course curriculum, or are credit deficient to begin having a conversation about whether there is a need for one of the diplomas. Initial conversations typically begin in student assistance teams, during parent conference nights, or within student advisory meetings.

"I had one student that received a modified diploma, and for him that is exactly what he needed and what he could achieve. I appreciated that the staff at his high school made him feel like everyone else."

—Oregon Resident

"They want to give my son a modified diploma but they haven't given me enough information about what it means and that my son will have barriers if he receives the certificate or what will he be allowed to study"

—Oregon Parent (translated from Spanish)

For students experiencing disabilities who are served through an IEP or who have a plan written under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (i.e., a 504 Plan), districts often address the students' progress toward graduation at required meetings that can occur as early as fifth grade or during the high school years. Discussions cover student and family preferences as well as the school system's assessment of the student's academic readiness, individual capacity, and credits needed for an Oregon diploma.

Diploma options process analysis

Input from ODE's public engagement efforts suggests that, after a student begins to pursue a Modified Oregon Diploma or Extended Oregon Diploma, it is unlikely that their path will change, unless a family, student, or student advocate requests a meeting to discuss options for achieving an Oregon diploma. One school district noted that, while they inform parents and students of the option to return to the Oregon Diploma, "It's been a one-way path."

Modified Oregon Diplomas and Extended Oregon Diplomas represent a small percentage of the overall number of diplomas awarded across Oregon. Public input suggests that if districts do not sufficiently consider the individual needs, interests, and abilities of the student and provide appropriate accommodations for the student to fulfill the Oregon Diploma requirements, students may never be afforded full access to the most rigorous diploma they have the potential to earn. Input suggested that, often, conversations about diploma options begin too late, after a student has already completed most of their high school credits with modified courses. When this is the case, students are left needing to choose between graduating on time with their four-year cohort with a Modified Oregon Diploma or delaying graduation to work towards an Oregon Diploma. Adhering to consistent processes and understanding how to use accommodations to provide equitable access to an Oregon Diploma can serve to mitigate many of the barriers that follow.

Diploma path barriers

Districts, parents, and students have shared a variety of barriers to altering the diploma path. Some of these barriers include the time it takes to recover credits given the standard four-year graduation timeline, the inability to pass specific courses (primarily advanced math), and the lack of courses, accommodations, or proficiency assessments based on a student's strengths and assets.

Districts also reported a lack of capacity to operationalize alternative pathways to meeting the Oregon Diploma graduation requirements (e.g., alternate classes to meet advanced math

"The extended application and career requirement (at least how it's implemented at our school) often feels like it creates a barrier for poorer and less well-resource[d] students who struggle to figure out what they're going to do for their project as they have less access to people and organizations within our community to work with."

- Oregon Counselor

"The 'system' can sometimes be seen as inflexible, impersonal and a barrier to many students, especially those not interested in pursuing the college pathway. The country needs skilled workers, creators and entrepreneurs. Lots of students think outside the box but that creative energy doesn't always translate or fit in the current graduation requirements."

- Oregon Superintendent

credits, proficiency-based credits). Without alternative pathways to meeting the regular Oregon Diploma graduation requirements, Modified and Extended Oregon Diplomas may be treated as the default option.

COMPARISON WITH OTHER STATES

This section is written in response to the following text from Senate Bill 744:

> *(3) The review conducted under this section must include…*
>
> > *(c) A comparison of high school diploma requirements in this state with high school diploma requirements in other states*

The comparison of Oregon's Diploma to other states began with a 50-state survey to determine how Oregon compares to common practices across the United States. While this comparison does help show how Oregon's diploma policies and practices are situated in the national landscape, policy differences across the states make direct comparisons challenging. For example, a credit-to-credit comparison is complicated by the fact that the definition of credit, the authority for granting credits, and the unit of learning contained in a credit can vary across states. However, the comparison does allow for a general understanding of how Oregon's diploma requirements are situated in relation to other states.

Of the 50 states, 21 have state-wide high school diploma requirements. In 28 states, including Oregon, the state sets minimum diploma requirements, but local school boards can define some of those requirements and adopt additional requirements. For example, in Alaska, where local control is a significant factor, only 13 of the overall required 21 credits are set by the state and the rest are determined locally. On the other end of the spectrum of shared control are states like North Dakota and New Hampshire, which dictate 20-plus credits but allow districts to define additional diploma requirements.

The next section, titled "Fifty-State Comparison," discusses the results of the 50-state survey. During this analysis, the review team noted several themes across the United States embedded in recent efforts to improve equitable diploma granting. These themes are identified and annotated in the second part of this section titled, "Notable Trends in Diploma Requirements."

Fifty-State Comparison

The 50-state comparison showed that a number of states are currently somewhere in the process of reviewing and adapting their diploma requirements. While reviewing these efforts, several notable trends emerged across states in the types of requirements being explored and implemented. The following is a review and brief summary of these themes, some of which will also be addressed in the recommendations section.

Comparison of credit requirements for diploma

The most recent update to the *Education Commission of the States*' High School Graduation Requirements 50-State Comparison was completed in 2019. The comparison provides information on course requirements, non-course requirements, total course units and diploma types. It notably does not include information on exit exams or naturalization exams, also known as the citizenship test, required for immigrants applying for US citizenship, as requirements for high school graduation. The comparison found:

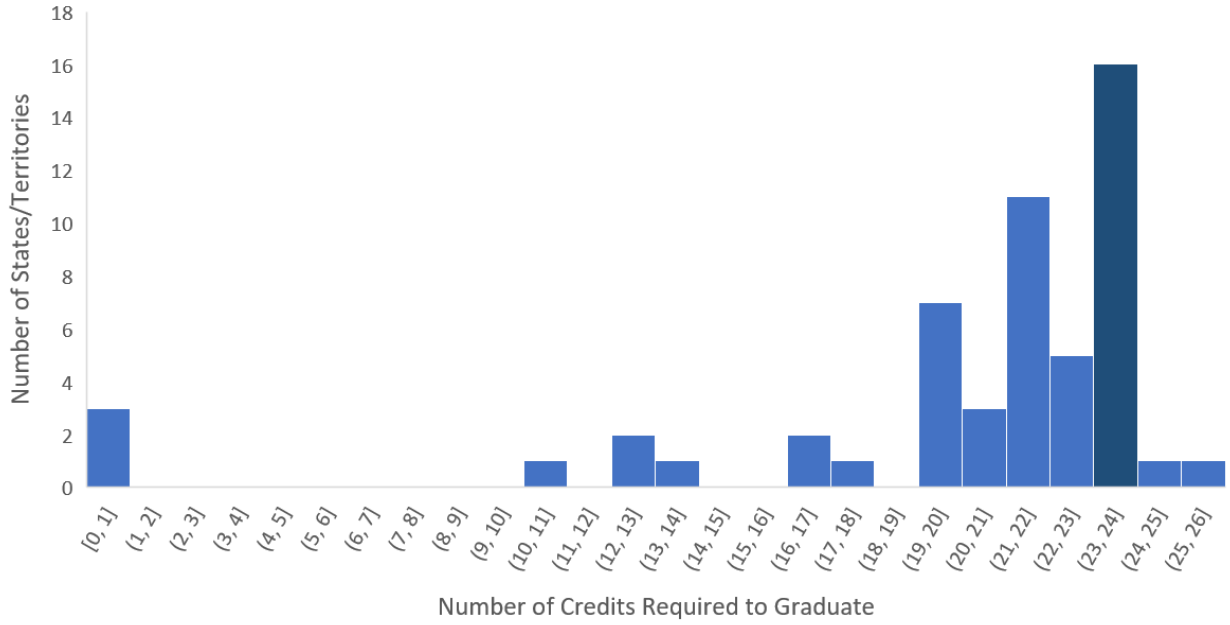
- 47 states, including Oregon and the District of Columbia have minimum statewide high school diploma requirements.
- Three states allow local districts to decide diploma requirements: Colorado, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, but all three have a statewide assessment or recommended diploma requirements.
- 16 states offer diploma options other than the standard diploma type, and six states offer multiple standard diploma options.
- 17 states, including Oregon, specify non-course requirements as a condition of graduation in state policy[10].

Oregon currently requires 24 credits for a diploma, along with 13 other states. Twenty-four is the highest number of credits required for a diploma by any state for the class of 2022. Of the 37 states requiring fewer credits than Oregon for a diploma, 28 states require between 20 and 23.5 credits, six require less than 20, and three have no statewide credit requirement. See Figure 2 for specific details; note that some states also allow or require districts to identify their own graduation requirements. Figure 2 below shows how Oregon compares to other states in required credits per subject area.

[10] Mcdonald, et al., "*50-State Comparison*." (https://www.ecs.org/high-school-graduation-requirements/)

Figure 2

Number of States with Different Number of Credits Required to Graduate



Note: Connecticut will require 25 credits beginning with graduates in 2023; Department of Defense requires 26 credits; three states allow districts to determine credit requirements with no statewide minimum. The darker bar shows the group including Oregon, 23-24 credits required.

When credit requirements for earning a diploma are compared across subject areas, there are many areas where Oregon's requirements are very much in line with most other states, such as in language arts. In other credit areas, such as physical education/health, Oregon's requirements are more extensive when compared to many other states (see Figures 3 and 4 below).

Figure 3

Number of States with Credit Requirements by Subject Area

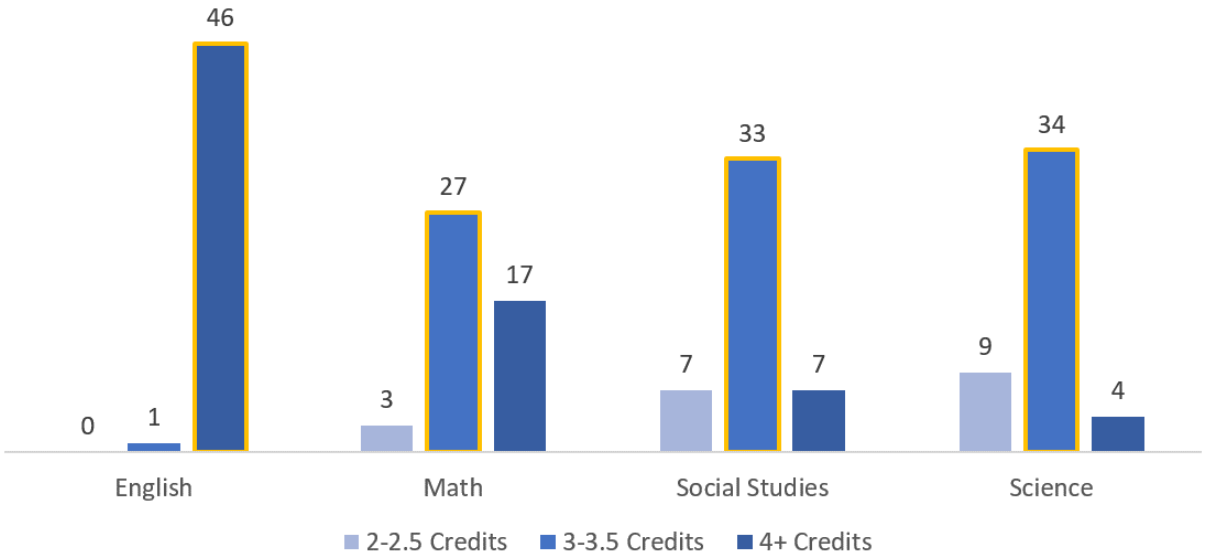
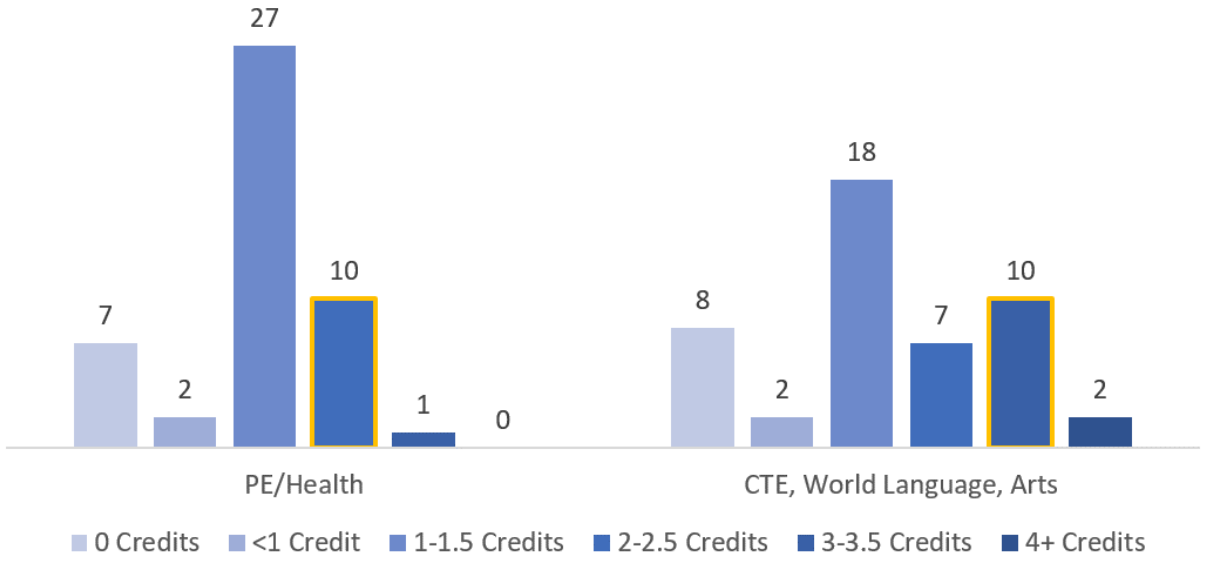


Figure 4

Number of States with Additional Credit Requirements by Subject Area.



Note: A yellow border indicates the group including Oregon's current requirements, based on the 50-State Comparison from Mcdonald, et al.

Comparison of non-credit requirements

Currently, Oregon also requires students to work with school staff to meet several additional requirements, beyond earning credits, to earn a diploma. These include the Education Plan and

Profile, Career-Related Learning Experiences, and the Extended Application and showing proficiency in the first three of the nine Essential Skills (reading, writing, and math). The requirement that students test proficient in the Essential Skills in reading, writing, and math was suspended during the pandemic, and remains suspended to allow for this review.

In other states, non-credit requirements for graduation include community service requirements, the creation of education plans, and demonstrating critical thinking skills through application projects or performance-based assessments. Assessments, such as end-of-course exams and passing scores on high school exit exams, are all non-credit requirements.

Oregon is not alone in having non-credit requirements as part of their diploma. According to a 2019 report the majority of states included 'personalized learning' in their planning for the federal Every Student Succeeds Act [11]

Notable non-credit trends included growth in requirements that districts support students and families in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), developing resumes, and demonstrating financial literacy or media/technology literacy. Exit examination use is trending down, with several states working with districts to issue diplomas retroactively to students who did not graduate exclusively because they could not pass the state's high school exit examination.

> *"Our graduates need to be able to show up to work consistently, be reliable, and be computer and technology literate. They are proficient on their phones for recreational purposes, but often have no clue on how to use technology to accomplish professional tasks."*
>
> *- Oregon Educator*

Diploma-Related Considerations

According to the 2022 report *Condition of Career Readiness in the United States* from the Coalition for Career Development, many states are currently working on ways to create more robust career-related offerings for their public school students.[12] The Coalition for Career Development also released, in 2022, an interactive map highlighting the current state of Personalized Education Plan requirements across the country.[13]

[11] Data Quality Campaign. (2019, November). *Making data work for personalized learning: Lessons learned*. (https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED607216.pdf)

[12] Solberg, V. S. H., Donnelly, H. K., Kroyer-Kubicek, R., Basha, R., Curtis, G., Jaques, E., Schreiber, K. (2022). Condition of Career Readiness in the United States. Alexandria, VA: Coalition for Career Development Center and the BU Center for Future Readiness.

[13] Coalition for Career Development Center. (2022). *Condition of career readiness in the United States*. (https://www.ccd-center.org/condition-of-career-readiness-report)

Perkins V, a federal source of funding for state college-and-career readiness programs, also now supports work-based learning through the new secondary program quality indicator. Thirty-four states chose work-based learning as their quality performance metric for career technical education, including Oregon.[14]

Many states' high school diplomas also include opportunities for students to do meaningful capstone projects similar to Oregon's Extended Application. For some states, this is a stand-alone requirement, such as Ohio's capstone requirement.[15] In other states, this requirement is woven into the Personalized Learning plan alongside a detailed Learner Profile, ensuring that work is aligned with each student's interests, talents, and postsecondary goals.[16]

Assessment Requirements

Assessment requirements for graduation most often come in the form of end-of-course assessments, or a requirement to pass an "exit" exam that measures students' level of proficiency in certain areas, sometimes including a naturalization exam. In Oregon, these assessment requirements are based on showing proficiency in three of the nine Essential Skills: reading, writing, and mathematics.

In the 2017–18 school year, according to the Education Commission of the States:

- 25 states were administering end-of-course assessments in one or more subject areas.
- 11 states were using one or more end-of-course assessments as exit exams. One example is Ohio, which allowed students to use end-of-course assessments as one of three options to complete an exit exam requirement.
- Six states required that end-of-course exam scores be factored into a student's final course grade, with two more states adding this requirement in the 2018-19 school year.
- Three states were scheduled to discontinue using end-of-course exams as exit exams after the Class of 2019, while two states were scheduled to begin using end-of-course exams as exit exams with the Class of 2019.[17]

[14] Education Commission of the States. (2021, January 27). *The state of CTE: Work-based learning in Perkins V state plans*. Ed Note. (https://ednote.ecs.org/the-state-of-cte-work-based-learning-in-perkins-v-state-plans/)
[15] Ohio Department of Education. (2019, May). *Is a senior capstone project right for you?* (https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Ohio-s-Graduation-Requirements/Earning-an-Ohio-High-School-Diploma-for-the-Cl-1/Work-and-Community-Service-Experience-and-Capstone/CapstoneToolkit.pdf)
[16] National Forum on Education Statistics. (2019, August). *Forum guide to personalized learning data*. (https://nces.ed.gov/forum/pdf/Personalized_Learning_Data.pdf)
[17] Education Commission of the States. (2017, December 20). *Response to information request*. (https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/State-Information-Request_End-of-Course-Exams.pdf)

For the class of 2017, 15 states—Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Virginia, and Washington—required students to pass exit exams, primarily in English language arts and math, but sometimes in science or social sciences, to graduate from high school.[18] The number of states employing high school exit exams has been trending downward over the past decade. A general overview of exit examination requirements for the class of 2020 is provided below:

- Only 11 states had graduation exit examinations in place for English Language Arts and math in 2020 (FL, LA, MA, MD, MI, NJ, NM, NY, OH, TX, and VA)
- 12 states recently ended graduation exit examinations (AR, AZ, CA, GA, ID, IN, MN, NV, OK, RI, SC, and WA)
- 1 state placed an exit examination moratorium (PA)
- 7 states delivered retroactive diplomas (AK, AZ, CA, GA, NV, SC, and TX)
- 1 state was planning a new series of graduation examinations (CO)[19]

In 2015 there was a push to include testing of citizenship and civics in diploma requirements.[20] Several states have various requirements around citizenship and civics; most recently, Oklahoma passed a bill in March 2021, mandating that high school students take and pass a naturalization test before graduation.

The following examples show how two states have adapted, adopted, or changed their exit exam policies in recent years:

- California postponed its exit exam program for the Classes of 2016 through 2018 and convened an advisory panel to determine the continuation of the exam beyond these dates. The test is no longer required but is still offered: if a student passed both sections of the California High School Proficiency Examination, the California State Board of Education will award them a Certificate of Proficiency, which by state law is equivalent to a high school diploma. As noted above, California also made retroactive diplomas available for students who did not graduate exclusively because of the exit examination requirement, while it was in place.[21]

[18]Education Commission of the States. (2016, July 26). *Response to information request*. (https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Exit-Exam-Requirements-for-Class-of-2017_07.26.16.pdf)
[19] FairTest. (2019, May). *Graduation test update: States that recently eliminated or scaled back high school exit exams (updated May 2019)*. (https://www.fairtest.org/graduation-test-update-states-recently-eliminated)
[20] Education Commission of the States. (2015, June). *The civics education initiative of 2015*. (https://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/19/46/11946.pdf)
[21] Sacramento County Office of Education. (n.d.). *About the CHSPE*. California High School Proficiency Examination. (https://www.chspe.org/about)

- Alaska had an exit exam from 2004–2014. During the 2014 legislative session ending in April, the Alaska State Legislature passed HB278, which allows school districts to retroactively award diplomas to students who passed all required coursework and earned the needed credits but had not yet passed all three portions of the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam.
- Nevada has a long history of requiring various high school proficiency exams, beginning in 1977. Students were recently required to participate in an end-of-course examination in order to support standard setting. During this period where the exit examination was suspended, graduation rates increased dramatically, particularly for students with disabilities, students who are identified as English learners, students who are migrant, students who identify as Black/African American, Native American/Indigenous, and Latino/a/x.[22]

Many states have recently suspended or changed exit exam requirements as a result of COVID-19, so it is difficult to provide an accurate accounting of the current landscape of assessments required for a diploma.

Notable National Trends in Diploma Requirements

Diploma requirements and postsecondary preparation

Aligning graduation requirements with college admission requirements appears to produce both benefits and barriers. In the San Diego Unified School district, a comparison of classes before and after the graduation requirements were changed to match college admissions requirements revealed, "roughly 10 percent more … may become eligible to apply to the California State University and University of California systems, but 16 percent more may fail to graduate."[23]

Though the increase in graduation rates overall[24] is a positive change, a 2016 study of efforts to align high school graduation requirements to postsecondary admissions criteria found that, "Among recent graduates, fewer than 1 in 10 have taken a foundational set of courses they'd need to be both college-and career-ready. And almost half completed neither a college-prep

[22] Retzl, K. J. (2018, August). *Nevada graduation rates and the high school proficiency exam*. Guinn Center. (https://guinncenter.org/nevada-graduation-rates-and-the-high-school-proficiency-exam/)

[23] Betts, J. et al. (2016, April). *College prep for all: Will San Diego students meet challenging new graduation requirements?* Public Policy Institute of California. Page 3. (https://www.ppic.org/publication/college-prep-for-all-will-san-diego-students-meet-challenging-new-graduation-requirements/)

[24] National Center for Education Statistics. (n.d.). *High school graduation rates*. Retrieved June 30, 2022, from (https://nces.ed.gov/FastFacts/display.asp?id=805)

nor a career-prep course sequence."[25] There was remarkably little change in the immediate enrollment rate over the past decade,[26] [2006-2016] and, more recently, sharp declines in college enrollment occurred during the pandemic, since 2020.[27]

Currently, the major trend in these ongoing alignment efforts is an attempt to treat, "college and career" as a both/and,[28] ensuring that all students are on a permeable, rather than rigid, pathway that leads to positive postsecondary outcomes.[29]

For the last two decades policymakers have attempted to align high school requirements with the requirements of postsecondary entry, whether for a technical certification, an associate's degree, or a 4-year degree.[30] A 2007 report from the Pathways to College Network claimed the, "critical first step toward academic alignment is to ground high school standards in college requirements and workplace expectations."[31] The reasoning from this report is remarkably similar to what we see in today's discussion of aligning graduation requirements with postsecondary

> "We should stop producing 'college bound' graduates or 'employment bound' graduates. A high school graduate should have the foundation to choose a path and change their mind. All students should leave high school with the skills and experience to obtain a living wage job and go to college. They are best served if they can choose to work or go to college immediately and then change their mind as they discover their path."
>
> - Oregon Postsecondary Administrator

[25] The Education Trust. (2016, April). *Meandering toward graduation: Transcript outcomes of high school graduates*. (https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/MeanderingTowardGraduation_EdTrust_April2016.pdf)
[26] National Center for Education Statistics. (n.d.). *High school graduation rates*. Retrieved June 30, 2022, from (https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=51)
[27] Semak, T. (2022, January 13). *Fall 2021 undergraduate enrollment declines 465,300 students compared to Fall 2020*. National Student Clearinghouse. (https://www.studentclearinghouse.org/blog/fall-2021-undergraduate-enrollment-declines-465300-students-compared-to-fall-2020/)
[28] Green, C. (2022, January 13). *College and career preparation: A 'both/and' approach for today's youth*. Jobs for the Future. (https://www.jff.org/what-we-do/impact-stories/policy-leadership-trust/college-and-career-preparation-a-bothand-approach-for-todays-youth/)
[29] Loyd, A. (2022, May 24). *Growing pathways to success for all students*. Homeroom. (https://blog.ed.gov/2022/05/growing-pathways-to-success-for-all-students/)
[30] Dounay, J. (2006, April). *Alignment of high school graduation requirements and state-set college admissions requirements*. Education Commission of the States. (https://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/68/60/6860.pdf)
[31] Pathways to College Network. (2007). *Aligning P-12 and Postsecondary Education: Toward a seamless P-16 education system*. (https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED509542.pdf)

goals, with one major difference: at that time, less than 70% of high school students graduated from high school.

Graduation pathways

Reviewing graduation requirements such that they generate more equitable outcomes is an emerging trend across the country, including here in Oregon. Relatedly, several states have been exploring how to create more equitable and inclusive graduation pathways.

> *"After graduating just this past June, although I feel prepared for my life in college, if I had chosen to go straight into the workforce. I do not think I would feel prepared, and I do not feel ready for my life after college. I do not know much of anything about many very important tasks in our adult lives, such as filing taxes, paying bills, building up credit in order to buy a car or house, how to properly construct a resume, etc."*
>
> *- Oregon Resident*

Twenty-nine states, including Oregon, currently offer multiple options for earning a high school diploma. Students in thirteen states choose between a college-preparatory diploma and a career diploma. The intent of the multiple pathways is to provide students with options regarding the high school experiences they will have and, often, the postsecondary experiences for which they will be prepared. The pathways approach has enough interest across the states that the U.S. Department of Education recently launched an effort to "grow pathways to success" for all high school students.[32]

The positive outcomes of participation in a high-quality pathway are well-documented in a recent study of California's Linked Learning pathways program. It showed that students who had low achievement scores in earlier grades made significantly better academic progress when they participated in pathways in high school. They were better prepared to succeed in college, career, and life, earned more credits in high school, were less likely to drop out and more likely to graduate on time, had greater confidence in their life and career skills, and reported experiencing more rigorous, integrated, and relevant instruction. [33] One example of more equitable implementation comes from a report on Louisiana's pathways system which has recommended that schools put additional resources into counseling and clear communication

[32] Loyd, A. (2022, May 24). *Growing pathways to success for all students*. Homeroom. (https://blog.ed.gov/2022/05/growing-pathways-to-success-for-all-students/)

[33] Almond, et al. (2017, July). *Paper Thin? Why All High School Diplomas Are Not Created Equal.* Alliance for Excellent Education. (https://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Diploma_Paper-UPDATE-10-17.pdf)

about pathways for students and parents, in particular communication about how difficult it would be for a student to change pathways.[34]

A recent Learning Policy Institute reviewed New Mexico's graduation policies, specifically "high school pathways that integrate college and career preparation and combine classroom and work-based learning to make high school more engaging and relevant, while also advancing opportunities to develop high-level cognitive skills in the core academic disciplines." This work involves creating a state framework and defining quality standards for career and college pathways that are used by districts and their industry partners to develop local graduation pathways that are responsive to and respectful of local needs and contexts. [35] This review of New Mexico's system of college and career pathways recommended making career and technical education an integral part of secondary and postsecondary education by creating a system of integrating career technical education (CTE) with core academic curriculum, combine classroom and work-based learning, and align secondary and postsecondary programs to prepare all students for postsecondary education and career success, rather than choosing one or the other. This alignment is, in part, achieved through the use of an individualized student plan, comparable to Oregon's Education Plan and Profile that connects students' coursework with their interests and plans beyond high school. This report documented that students in high-quality career and college pathways experienced a range of positive outcomes compared to peers in traditional high school programs; however, the report also concluded that these positive outcomes occur only when many specific conditions have been planned for and achieved.[36]

Research on graduation pathways emphasizes the importance of using an equity lens during implementation of such a program. One report cautions that, "In many states, multiple graduation pathways have created a bifurcated system of diploma requirements, forcing students into decisions that may limit their choices for life after high school—sometimes without students even realizing these decisions would have such a long-lasting impact."[37] The report echoes this concern for the 2014 graduating cohort for the nine states that 1) offer pathways to a diploma, 2) separate CTE and college-readiness, and 3) keep records on which

[34] Culbertson, et al. (2019). *Raising the Bar for Graduation Pathways to College and Work*. Rand Corporation. (https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2303z4.html)
[35] Hoachlander, G. (2021, February 19). *Building a system of college and career pathways in New Mexico*. Learning Policy Institute. Page V. (https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/new-mexico-college-career-pathways-report)
[36] Hoachlander, G. (2021, February 19). *Building a system of college and career pathways in New Mexico*. Learning Policy Institute. Page 9. (https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/new-mexico-college-career-pathways-report)
[37] Sattem and Hyslop, *Ready for What?*

students receive which type of diploma. The report found that these kinds of pathways maintained or increased inequitable access.[38]

State/District Profile of a Successful Graduate

Another practice that the review team saw across multiple states' current efforts to improve graduation was the use of a profile of a successful graduate. According to the Aurora Institute, "Graduate profiles articulate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions students should have upon graduating from K-12 education to be prepared for college, careers, and civic life."[39]

South Carolina adopted their Profile of a South Carolina Graduate in 2015. The Profile of the South Carolina Graduate was a cross-agency effort that identified the knowledge, skills, and characteristics a high school graduate should possess to be prepared for success as they enter college or pursue a career.[40] The profile was extended in 2021 with the identification of "Competencies."[41] These competencies are similar to Oregon's Essential Skills, including items such as "read critically," "express ideas," and "maintain wellness."

Indiana is in the process of reviewing high school diploma requirements, and the department of education wants to add qualities such as communication and collaboration, grit and resilience, and civic, financial, and digital literacy to a student success dashboard currently under development.[42]

While some experts see graduate profiles as a way to create an education system that better considers the whole child and encourages a well-rounded education, others wonder if the profiles accurately portray the needs of the community.[43] While profiles of a graduate are becoming more common, little research about their effectiveness is available given their recent implementation. In 2016, the State of Kansas adopted the following definition of a successful graduate, **"**[a] successful Kansas high school graduate has the academic preparation, cognitive

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[38] Almond, et al. (2017, July). *Paper Thin? Why All High School Diplomas Are Not Created Equal.* Alliance for Excellent Education. Page 1. (https://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Diploma_Paper-UPDATE-10-17.pdf)

[39] Chambers, A., & Truong, N. (2020, May 4). *Profile of a graduate to redefine student success for the future*. Aurora Institute. (https://aurora-institute.org/blog/profile-of-a-graduate-to-redefine-student-success-for-the-future/)

[40] SC Education Oversight Committee. (2015). *Profile of the SC Graduate: Building the foundation for student success, birth to 5*. (https://www.scstatehouse.gov/reports/EducationOversightComm/March12015ReportToGeneralAssembly.pdf)

[41] South Carolina Department of Education. (2021, August). *Profile of a South Carolina graduate competency framework*. (https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/17bTvodxwodNhpLiIZqjY7su_jU9PHssSCtbMndahnRM/edit#slide=id.ged35865c9e_0_773)

[42] Indiana Department of Education. (2021). *Indiana graduates prepared to succeed (Indiana GPS)*. (https://www.in.gov/doe/home/indiana-graduates-prepared-to-succeed-indiana-gps/)

[43] Duffy, A. (2019, July 4). *Portrait of a graduate: 5 things to keep in mind*. Getting Smart. (https://www.gettingsmart.com/2019/07/04/portrait-of-a-graduate-5-things-to-keep-in-mind/)

preparation, technical skills, employability skills and civic engagement to be successful in postsecondary education, in the attainment of an industry recognized certification or in the workforce, without the need for remediation."[44] While it is important to be mindful that what "success" means should be determined in a culturally responsive manner that should not afford a hierarchy among the pathways offered, it is also important to acknowledge the importance of having a shared understanding of what graduation should signify. While some Oregon districts have developed graduate profiles locally, there is currently not a statewide graduate profile; Oregon last adopted a definition of college and career readiness in 2014.

Multiple Diplomas

Twenty states, including Oregon, offer at least three diploma options; another 23 states offer two diploma options, and seven states offer one diploma.

These diploma types range from the standard and honors diplomas to vocational and career-based diplomas. Some of these diploma and certificate options are only for students with disabilities and those who are receiving special education services. For example, a number of states offer modified diplomas, IEP-based diplomas and certificates of completion as well as alternate standards diplomas associated with alternate assessments.

As an example of multiple diploma types within one state, Virginia offers at least four types of high school diplomas, including the advanced studies diploma and standard diploma. This is in addition to the applied studies diploma for students with disabilities and the adult high school diploma for those over 18. Some of the more interesting trends in diversified diploma options include multiple pathways to achieve a standard diploma as well as occupational/vocational-based diplomas. Louisiana and North Carolina are two examples. Louisiana offers a standard diploma as well as a "Jump Start TOPS Technical Career" diploma. The Louisiana Department of Education states this diploma helps students 1) attain industry credentials that employers value when deciding who to hire for entry-level positions, 2) master workplace "soft skills" that help them find good jobs and succeed when they report to their first jobs, and 3) at the same time, enable students to continue their education through employer training, technical college courses and, eventually, (if students choose) at a four-year university.

North Carolina is another example of a state with similar diploma options. All public high school students in North Carolina must meet minimum state graduation requirements to earn a "Future Ready" diploma and graduate "prepared for life and whatever pathway they choose

[44] Kansas State Department of Education, "*KESA Board Outcomes*." (https://www.ksde.org/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Teacher-Licensure-TL/KESA/Resources/Board-Outcome)

> *"From the teacher perspective, the alternate diploma meets the needs of students who are not able to meet regular high school requirements. Done with integrity and appropriate rigor, this diploma has academic meaning as well as the acknowledgment that the student has worked just as hard to earn an alternate diploma as a student earning a regular diploma."*
>
> *- Oregon Teacher*

after they graduate, workplace, colleges/university or the military.[45]" Additionally, North Carolina high schools also offer the "Occupational Course of Study" which is available for those students with disabilities who are specifically identified for the program. The program has adapted course requirements and the same credit requirements as a Future Ready diploma. This occupational-related diploma is designed for students to embark on a different route to earning a high school diploma; the program has academically relevant and rigorous courses, but the courses are designed to be immediately applicable to employment and independent living after high school. These are just two examples of states offering different diploma types rather than a singular diploma.

Skill specific credit requirements

Several states have also included specific credit requirements from courses outside of the traditional content areas in their graduation requirements. These credits are intended to ensure that students have proficiency in a particular skill or body of knowledge that will be needed later in life or to assist students in planning for the transition to postsecondary education.

For example, Arkansas requires that students complete a half-credit class in oral communication. They also require that students complete at least one digital/online course for credit and earn credit in a course that includes personal and family finance while in grades 9–12. Beginning with the entering 9th grade class of 2022/23, students will also be required to take one credit of computer science before graduation.[46]

Computer science classes have been added to some states credit requirements, although not always outside of traditional content-area credit requirements. Mississippi and South Carolina

[45] North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, "*High School Graduation Requirements*." (https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/high-school-graduation-requirements)

[46] Arkansas Department of Education. (2021). *Arkansas graduation requirements*. Retrieved June 30, 2022 from (https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/learning-services/curriculum-support/arkansas-graduation-requirements)

also require a computer science class, and ten other states allow computer science to fill a credit requirement in another content area, typically math or science.[47]

Hawaii requires students to earn half a credit in a course called Personal Transition Plan that focuses on helping students plan for their transition out of high school and into the postsecondary world of college and career.[48]

Personal finance or financial literacy is also a topic of interest for many states. Alabama requires students to take at least one semester of a personal finance course before graduation. Iowa is currently implementing the requirement and four states (Florida, Nebraska, Ohio, and Rhode Island) are planning to implement a credit requirement for personal finance. About 25 states mandate at least some financial training, sometimes as part of an existing course. This year, roughly 20 states have considered setting or expanding similar rules.[49]

"My high school did not prepare students for the real world. They didn't even teach students how to write a proper resume. They didn't offer or point students in the direction of internships…The school just wanted to get kids to graduate; they were not focused on what happened after."

- Oregon Resident

"[High School Diplomas should include] foundations to financial literacy, how to access community resources (like housing, food, disability & job support), digital/computer literacy, how to self-advocate and seek out help, time management tools (students are responsible for managing their OWN time after high school, and they don't know how)."

- Oregon Postsecondary Educator

[47] Education Commission of the States. (2020, February 18). *Response to information request*. (https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/State-Info-Request-Computer-Science-Requirements-for-High-School-Graduation.pdf)
[48] Hawai'i State Department of Education. (2007, March). *Personal/transition plan regulations*. (https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/Graduation%20Brochures/PTP.pdf)
[49] Povich, E. S. (2022, April 27). *COVID woes prompt more states to require financial literacy classes*. The Pew Charitable Trusts. (https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2022/04/27/covid-woes-prompt-more-states-to-require-financial-literacy-classes)

Civics

According to the American Bar Association, civics education is a common graduation requirement, but one that takes many different forms across the states, including both credit-bearing requirements and assessment requirements. Thirty-eight states and D.C. require a high school civics course, but only seven states require it for a full year; eight others require civics instruction, but not in the context of a stand-alone course; and seven states have no high school civics requirement. Civics is not officially assessed in 23 states or in D.C., but is assessed in the remaining 27 states, with the U.S. Naturalization Test as the most frequent assessment tool.[50] On the other hand, seals[51] awarded to students for education in civics have surfaced in at least nine states as complementary "carrots" to incentivize civics accountability.[52]

"Both of my sons were academically prepared for college; they did not, however, receive the comprehensive financial literacy or civics education that I think they needed to be successful adults and citizens."

- Oregon Parent

"K-12 education needs to be transformative, preparing children to become cooperative members of their communities."

- Oregon Resident

The landscape around civics education is rapidly changing, consequently, overall summaries are difficult to compile. CivXNow tracked 88 bills in 34 states affecting K–12 civic education in the spring 2021 legislative sessions. During this time, Oregon and Rhode Island became the 37th and 38th states, respectively, to require at least one semester of civics for high school graduation. Indiana joined Colorado and Nevada in strengthening state civics standards and/or requirements. Indiana's law creates a permanent state commission of civic education, and Georgia is seeking to do the same with their State Department of Education.[53]

Non-credit requirements across the states

Some states have implemented non-credit graduation requirements intended to ensure that students are prepared for their postsecondary education, training, and work after high school. These requirements can include passing an exam or completing a specific project or task. The

[50] Healy, S. (2022, January 4). *Momentum grows for stronger civic education across states*. American Bar Association. (https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/the-state-of-civic-education-in-america/momentum-grows-for-stronger-civic-education-across-states/)
[51] Virginia Department of Education. (2022). *Diploma seals of achievement*. (https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/diploma_seals/index.shtml)
[52] California Department of Education. (2022, March 15). *State seal of civic engagement*. (https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ca/hs/hssstateseal.asp)
[53] CivXNow. (2022). *CivXNow Homepage*. (https://civxnow.org/)

requirements under this category include some skills and knowledge that prepare students for college and careers and those that can be grouped under the broad category of life skills.

For example, Arkansas requires that students complete CPR training and pass a civics exam before graduating.[54] Illinois requires that students pass an exam on the Illinois and US Constitutions and complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).[55]

Completing a FAFSA is a requirement that has been added in many states in recent years. According to the National College Attainment Network, eight states have FAFSA mandates: Louisiana, Texas, Illinois, California, Alabama, Colorado, New Hampshire, Maryland.[56] A recent study found that the FAFSA requirement did act as a barrier to graduation for students, even for those who face other barriers.[57]According to a count by the National Conference of State Legislatures, seven states are considering adding one: Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, Kentucky, Nebraska, New York, and South Carolina.[58]

Accelerated learning and graduation

A final trend the review team noted in their 50-state scan is the flexible integration of accelerated learning, also called advanced coursework, including opportunities for students to earn college-credit in high school, through courses such as dual credit, advanced placement, and international baccalaureate. These opportunities may be included in diploma requirements. For example, in Washington State, students who complete the International Baccalaureate diploma are also considered to have met the requirements for a regular diploma.

[54] Arkansas Department of Education. (2021). *Arkansas graduation requirements*. Retrieved June 30, 2022 from (https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/learning-services/curriculum-support/arkansas-graduation-requirements)
[55] Illinois State Board of Education. (2022, January). *Illinois graduation requirements*. (https://www.isbe.net/Documents/grad_require.pdf#search=Graduation%20Requirements)
[56] National College Attainment Network. (2020). *Universal FAFSA completion with supports*. (https://www.ncan.org/page/UniversalFAFSA)
[57] Urban et al. (2015). *State-Mandated Financial Education*. (https://www.montana.edu/urban/FINRA_Issue_Brief.pdf)
[58]Smalley, Andrew. (2019). *States Looking at Ways to Promote FAFSA Completion*. The NCSL Blog. National Conference of State Legislatures. (https://www.ncsl.org/blog/2019/12/10/states-looking-at-ways-to-promote-fafsa-completion.aspx)

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS AND SUMMARY

This section is written in response to the following text from Senate Bill 744:

> *(4) When conducting the review and developing recommendations under this section, the department shall:*
>
> *(a) Use a transparent process that is equitable, accessible and inclusive;*
>
> *(b) Enable and encourage meaningful engagement with:*
>
> *(A) Representatives from historically underserved students, including students who:*
>
> *(i) Have a disability;*
>
> *(ii) Are from an immigrant or refugee population;*
>
> *(iii) Are from racial or ethnic groups that have historically experienced academic disparities;*
>
> *(iv) Are English language learners; or*
>
> *(v) Are from a federally recognized Indian tribe of this state;*
>
> *(B) Youth-led organizations that engage and empower youth; and*
>
> *(C) Communities from across this state.*

Statewide and Targeted Engagement

Overview of engagement

ODE contracted with Oregon's Kitchen Table to conduct community partner engagements with Oregonians from December 2021 through April 2022, specifically with youth and community organizations identified by Senate Bill 744 as central to the effort. ODE and Oregon's Kitchen Table designed and conducted a multi-faceted engagement process that included many ways for Oregonians to share their respective visions for high school diploma requirements, including an online statewide survey that was available to Oregonians in seven languages, regional community conversations that were organized by Education Service District (ESD) regions that were accessible across the state, and events designed to create safe and welcoming spaces for input from long underserved communities. These were targeted engagements with specific youth and community groups called "community connector" conversations. A summary of these engagements is provided below. A complete accounting of Oregon's Kitchen Table's engagement process, including an analysis of survey responses, is linked in *Appendix C*.

- 3,114 statewide survey responses, including approximately 300 paper surveys.
- 19 Zoom community conversations, one in each of the ESD regions. Oregon's Kitchen Table and ODE primarily worked with the ESDs to conduct outreach through their school districts to invite people to join the Zoom conversations.
- 25 community connector interviews with community leaders and connectors (a range of individuals who are respected and trusted within particular communities and have relationships inside and outside their own communities).
- 19 additional community conversations specifically with families, parents, and youth from among the focused community groups the legislature identified. Oregon's Kitchen Table worked directly with community organizers from several communities and with community-based organizations directly serving families to do culturally specific outreach and engagement.

Engagement strategies by population

All populations were invited to the virtual regional community conversations and to participate in the online statewide survey. Additionally, the targeted engagement strategies for each population are summarized below:

Historically underserved students, including students who:

- have a disability
    - Community organizing
    - Specific listening session
    - Individual interviews
    - Present engagement session at a statewide conference
- are from an immigrant or refugee population
    - Community organizing
    - Specific listening session
    - Individual interviews
- are from racial or ethnic groups that have historically experienced academic disparities
    - Community organizing
    - Specific listening session
    - Individual interviews
    - Discussions with standing groups
- are English language learners
    - Community organizing
    - Specific listening session
    - Individual interviews

    - Discussions with standing groups
- are from a federally recognized Indian tribe of this state
    - Government-to-government engagement with Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes
    - Discussions with standing groups
    - Individual interviews
    - Specific listening sessions
- are part of youth-led organizations that engage and empower youth
    - Present engagement session at a statewide conference
    - Discussions with standing groups
    - Community organizing
    - Specific listening sessions

Make-up of respondents

Statewide survey respondents' connection to Oregon high schools can be summarized as follows:

- 33% identified as parents or guardians of Oregon high school graduates;
- 22% identified as working in or having worked in an Oregon school;
- 18% identified as being a parent of a student who will be in high school in the next few years; and
- 11% identified as either current or recent high school graduates.

Other common respondents included retired college teachers, academic tutors, foster parents, grandparents of current students or recent graduates, school volunteers, healthcare providers for youth, mental or behavioral health providers, court appointed special advocates for students, school or ESD board members, people who work for an organization that supports school age youth, youth outreach workers, former or retired employers, and taxpayers.

Just over half (53%) of survey participants said that they are between the ages of 35 and 54 years, and 19% said they are under the age of 35. Overall student population demographics who participated in the survey were:

- 4% American Indian/Alaska Native;
- 4% Asian;
- 4% Black/African American;
- 10% Hispanic or Latino/a/x;
- 7% Multi-racial;
- 1% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander; and

- 70% White, Caucasian

The ODE 2021–22 Fall Student Membership Report[59] shows that Oregon's current student demographics are largely consonant with this make-up, though participants identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a/x were somewhat underrepresented and those identifying as White were overrepresented among survey participants. It is also important to note that students identifying as American Indian/Alaska Native and Black/African American participated at rates beyond what would be predicted by current student race/ethnicity demographics, which are as follows:

- 1% American Indian/Alaska Native
- 4% Asian
- 2% Black/African American
- 25% Hispanic or Latino/a/x
- 7% Multi-racial
- 1% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- 60% White, Caucasian

Over half of the participants in the survey (56%) identified as either belonging themselves or having a student who belongs to at least one of the following communities:

- Tribal members;
- LGBTQ2SIA+ people;
- English learners;
- People with a disability;
- People who have been or are without a house;
- Immigrants or refugees;
- Migrant workers or migrant student;
- Child in foster care; and/or
- Student who has changed high schools.

The vast majority of community connector engagements were with members of the communities identified in SB 744. About half of the community connector engagements were conducted in a language other than English (Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Somali, and

[59] Oregon Department of Education. (Accessed August 2, 2022). *Student Enrollment Reports*. (https://www.oregon.gov/ode/pages/default.aspx)

Russian). Most statewide survey participants (93%) said they prefer to receive information in English with 3% selecting Spanish, about 2% selecting "other" and 1% selecting Russian. All 36 of Oregon's counties were represented to varying degrees across the different forms of engagement. While Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas counties include 44% of Oregon's population, over half (54%) of survey participants came from Clackamas County, Multnomah County, and Washington County. This does not undermine trust in the process, as those counties also include higher relative percentages of families of color whom the engagement process intentionally centered.

Additional engagements

ODE also conducted an additional five community conversations with groups of educators, including high school administrators, high school counselors, special education directors, migrant education coordinators, English language development coordinators, and classroom educators. ODE and the HECC engaged with postsecondary educational institutions and employers, through business and industry groups, and via additional surveys. ODE's Office of Indian Education conducted government-to-government education cluster engagements with Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes.

In sum, over 3,500 people participated in the various Oregon's Kitchen Table and ODE engagement opportunities from December 2021 to April 2022. As noted above, 3,114 participants responded to the statewide survey—either online or on paper. Approximately 350 people participated in 54 different community connector conversations, including culturally-specific and educator-specific conversations, as well as the 19 regional community conversations. Another 50 people participated through individual and small group interviews as part of 19 additional community conversations. The higher education input survey included 148 respondents.

Community Engagement Themes

This section is written in response to the following text from Senate Bill 744:

> *5(b)(A) Include a summary of the components of the review conducted as described in subsection (3) of this section, including information on the comments gathered during the engagement process described in subsection (4)(b) of this section.*

Several consistent themes emerged from the Oregon's Kitchen Table engagement process. They are as follows:

- Flexibility is a shared value among many Oregonians.

- It is important to acknowledge that inequities in educational outcomes are caused by many factors beyond high school diploma requirements themselves.
- People recognize and appreciate students' individual strengths, different learning styles, and the variety of environments that students are in, both in and outside of school. This theme was especially prevalent in discussions with families with students with disabilities, students who are English learners, students who are from immigrant and refugee communities, and students who change schools or are in a variety of systems such as foster care or juvenile justice.
- Culturally appropriate supports throughout school environments are key for helping students meet diploma requirements, particularly for families who identify as Black, Indigenous or Native and for families from immigrant and refugee communities. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, 2 Spirit, Intersex, Asexual, plus other non-heterosexual orientations or genders (LGBTQ2SIA+) students pointed to supports like affinity groups and school social workers as critical to helping them meet requirements.
- While people generally view subjects like math, reading, and writing as core to learning, there is a desire to further explore how Oregon currently considers both the required credits in those subjects as well as how proficiency in those subjects is assessed.
- Many people viewed math requirements in particular as a barrier for students and are interested in seeing math diploma requirements reflect students' interests and have direct, practical applications for careers, education, and other paths in life after graduation.
- There is also interest in further examining whether Oregon's current system of multiple diploma options is serving students well, particularly for students with disabilities. Additionally, clear and early communication in multiple languages about what these options are and their implications beyond high school is very important to families.
- There are particular skills and knowledge that many people would like to see students attain in order to be successful after high school. The ones that came up most frequently are financial literacy, critical thinking, civics, and various types of communication including workplace, social, and interpersonal skills.

Oregon's Kitchen Table also named two areas requiring further engagement and study, as their impact on the community required more engagement, time, and discussion about the need to commit additional resources. These two areas include the following:

- Decisions related to changes that will directly impact specific populations of students, such as changes related to diploma options and students with disabilities.

- Implementing any changes that might be made, with a particular focus on ensuring that schools have the capacity and resources to support students in meeting the new requirements.

"Adequate staff support and commitment to scaffolding support in general education classrooms to meet the needs of diverse learners. Simply not having this staff support is unacceptable. Separate is not equal. My daughter on an IEP deserves equitable access to curriculum and general education content with her peers. The classes for [which] she has had this support have been 1000% better than the classes in which planning and care were not evident."

- Oregon Parent

"Because the location of my school is rural, I think we need to remember not all students and their families have the same access to new technologies or exposure to shifting employability skills. Additionally, many students wish to remain rural as they move beyond high school. I think the knowledge and skills that are the most important are the ones that cross location and socio-economic boundaries: personal responsibility, being on time, maintaining an ethical demeanor, respecting others, and collaborating."

- Oregon School Administrator

Valued skills

During the community engagements summarized above, participants were asked about skills that could help prepare students for their lives after high school, with a particular focus on skills that may be most helpful in supporting students who have not been well served by education systems. Answers to these questions fell into the six broad categories of community-valued skills below:

- **Foundational skills**: Respondents commonly indicated that reading, writing, and math continue to form an essential core of learning. All students need a minimum (or foundational) proficiency in these three core subjects. There was not universal agreement on what constitutes a basic proficiency (for example, some feel that the foundational threshold is satisfied by algebra I or geometry rather than algebra 2). Some respondents feel that foundational means skills that are clearly relevant to students and directly applicable outside the classroom.

- **Financial literacy**: While several different labels were used, this category includes handling one's own money and finances, including skills such as budgeting, understanding and appropriate use of credit, and applying for a mortgage. This was the most frequently cited subject that respondents across groups said students should have, or that respondents wished they themselves had. Respondents indicated this could be a stand-alone requirement or an ingredient of existing coursework.
- **Life skills**: This category includes a range of non-academic skills needed to navigate daily life and fully participate in society (such as getting a job, voting, paying taxes, and cooking meals). A selection of these skills is currently taught in special education courses sometimes called "life skills." Some respondents (including those with special education experience) felt that similar learning would be useful to a broader spectrum of students (with or without disabilities).
- **Languages and language arts**: Feedback falling into this category was wide-ranging. Respondents felt it was valuable that students learn and know multiple languages, yet not face requirements so strict as to place barriers in the way of students with English learner status or students with disabilities. Respondents were also interested in expanding what is considered language arts (for example, counting literacy in Indigenous languages).
- **Careers and trades**: Some respondents indicated that the educational system is overly focused on preparing students for college or university. Some respondents, but not a majority, felt that increased career training during high school would help restore a balanced approach.
- **Employability skills and miscellaneous**: This category includes communication skills (such as how to write a formal letter or email), interpersonal skills (such as collaboration, group dynamics, and how to communicate with others with differing opinions or backgrounds), and other social and emotional skills (such as flexibility, resilience, and empathy). Additionally, respondents mentioned a few skills that don't fit neatly into other categories, such as critical thinking, computer and technology, and knowledge of civics.

> *"Time management, team player, show up on time, willingness to take direction...basic soft skills. We've seen this play out in our employers who are desperate for workers who show up, work hard, persevere and feel good about overcoming a challenge."*
>
> *- Oregon Educator*

> *"A command of mathematics through algebra and geometry and the ability to read and comprehend English has served me and everyone else I know well."*
>
> *- Oregon Resident*
>
> *"All students should receive a good foundation in the basics to the best of their capabilities, but the most important part of attending high school is to discover inspiration to pursue what interests them."*
>
> *- Oregon Resident*

Though the focus of attention during these community engagements was on making Oregon's graduation requirements more equitable, the report from Oregon's Kitchen Table also revealed that Oregon communities have concerns about educational equity that go well beyond graduation requirements. Systemic concerns across K-12 systems were noted, many of which affect students in rural settings inequitably, such as having more limited resources, more difficulty maintaining staff, and a lack of staff who might provide access to instruction in foreign languages or other areas.

Families also emphasized the importance of ambitious expectations for learning on the part of educators, as well as having a welcoming school environment where student identities are reflected in the curriculum and in the staff. These themes were most prevalent from community members who identified as Black/African American, Native American/Alaska Native, and LGBTQ2SIA+.

Community members wanted the flexibility included in new graduation requirements to address time. Families wanted students to be able to pursue learning outside of typical school hours, for example, but also mentioned the limitations of conceiving of high school as a four-year program. Some students need more time to meet graduation requirements due to mobility, language learning, etc. Others almost met requirements in three years and had difficulty maintaining motivation during the fourth year.

Finally, both students and families acknowledged the need for a better understanding of Oregon's graduation requirements and how they can meet them. Respondents suggested that cultural liaisons may support additional engagement with families and help them understand high school graduation requirements early enough in the process that the information is actionable and students and families understand the potential consequences of the choices they are asked to make or support.

Educator Engagement Themes

In addition to the targeted engagement process conducted by Oregon's Kitchen Table described above, three statewide surveys were conducted between November 2021 and May 2022. The following sections highlight the responses to open-ended questions regarding the skills and knowledge that high school graduates should have.

Educators in grades K–12 addressed the question: "As you think about the rate of societal change, new technologies shifting employability skills, and the role of education, what knowledge and skills would you say are the most important for Oregon graduates to have as they leave our K−12 system and transition to their next steps?"

Educator views on important knowledge and skills

Content analysis of the open-ended responses distilled the recommendations into categories of important knowledge and skills. The five categories most often cited by the K–12 educators are listed below. The complete list of the skill and knowledge categories are provided in *Appendix D*, along with a complete description of the content analysis methods used.

Top five most often cited K-12 educator-valued knowledge and skills for Oregon graduates:

- **Life skills:** financial literacy, foundational understanding of government and civics, knowledge of how to self-advocate and seek help, knowledge of how to access community resources.
- **Career-related learning skills:** employability skills, community-based experiential learning, knowledge of career opportunities and how to get there.
- **Communication skills:** listen and speak to others effectively, communicate in a variety of mediums, read critically, write for authentic purposes.
- **Collaboration:** knowledge of how to engage effectively with a team, good interpersonal communication skills, conflict resolution.

> "Critical reading & thinking skills, the ability to collaborate & communicate in writing and orally, scientific literacy, mathematical literacy (which can be attained [without] taking math beyond algebra but must include strong statistics and personal finance coursework), understanding of history, technological skills, and an appreciation for all arts. In addition, they should have executive functioning skills--the ability to effectively plan, manage their time, and organize their work."
>
> - Oregon Administrator (what skills are most important for graduates to have)

- **Critical thinking and information literacy:** analyze problems and explore alternatives, independently access and evaluate the validity of information, articulate and support ideas coherently, focus on thinking, not rote regurgitation of facts.

Educator beliefs on diploma pathways

Across multiple engagement sessions, ODE sought to determine educators' hopes for the future of Oregon's graduation requirements. Three primary themes emerged from this discussion: 1) the potential for harm that results from multiple diploma options; 2) the desire for a single diploma with flexible, personalized pathways guided by student voice and agency; and 3) the need for a thoughtful, careful planning and implementation of a single diploma with multiple pathways.

Potential for harm and stigma of Modified and Extended Oregon Diplomas. Each engagement session yielded responses that showed educators are well aware of a stigma associated with receiving a Modified Oregon Diploma: students are, at times, placed on a Modified Oregon Diploma for questionable reasons and receipt of such a diploma has the effect of limiting a student's postsecondary opportunities.

Educators shared that they "struggle" with the idea of Modified Oregon Diplomas because pursuing a Modified Oregon Diploma sends "bad messages to students, families, and educators working with those students." They described the Modified and Extended Diplomas as "marginalized diplomas." Stories from educators also revealed that students can end up pursuing Modified Oregon Diplomas for questionable reasons, such as students who are emergent bilinguals pursuing the Modified Oregon Diploma to gain space in their schedule for elective courses that—if they were pursuing a standard Oregon Diploma—would be taken up by courses providing support for language development.

The most significant concerns raised by educators were related to the limiting effect a Modified or Extended Oregon Diploma has on a student's postsecondary opportunities. Educators discussed that college and career options may not be available to students who do not earn a standard Oregon Diploma. Oregon has previously worked to address this concern, with the legislature ensuring access to financial aid for students who earn a Modified Oregon Diploma (ORS 348.007); however, educators shared that financial aid can only be provided for credit-bearing college level courses that are not immediately available to students who have not taken the courses required for the Oregon Diploma. Even with that legislative fix, educators felt the unintended effect of this diploma is that it may limit options for education and training after high school. This effect is exacerbated for Extended Diplomas, where postsecondary financial aid is largely unavailable.

It was clear from these engagement sessions and feedback gathered from higher education partners that, although the option to place a student on a Modified Oregon Diploma sometimes "feels like a relief" and "can be a value" when a standard Oregon Diploma seems unattainable, educators believe the potential for harm from this option is significant, because of the courses a student would take on this path. Relatedly, educators expressed a strong desire for a single Oregon Diploma option.

A flexible, attainable, meaningful single Oregon diploma. These sessions revealed that, while it made sense at the time for Oregon to establish a Modified and Extended Oregon Diploma, educators believed that the time for multiple Oregon Diplomas has passed. In discussing the history of these diplomas, educators shared that before these diplomas existed some students with disabilities did not have access to a diploma but were tracked to Alternative Certificates and could spend their entire K−12 career in life skills classes. Development of the Modified and Extended Oregon Diplomas, therefore, provided access to a diploma for more students.

However, overall, educators indicated that a single Oregon Diploma would be preferable if it were accessible to all students through multiple pathways. Discussion of multiple pathways indicated that there continues to be much uncertainty about how that would and could be implemented, how ambitious expectations could be maintained for all students, and when and how pathway decisions would be made and changed. Educators also shared the importance of ensuring that students understand and have a voice in the diploma decision-making process.

Toward this point, one educator shared the following:

> *"Knowing what a student can do with their diploma would be . . . powerful, especially if they are required to do some kind of career pathway. If a student knew what those pathways would allow them to do in their future, [it] would be even more powerful. It would be great to [make diploma requirements] not just be a checklist for graduation. How wonderful it would be if a student knew what their diploma meant and what it could mean for them. [A student could know] 'I can go to an electrical apprenticeship, or I know I am ready for a community college, or I know I am ready for a four-year [college or university].' It would be great if students could have some say in what a diploma was for them."*
>
> *- Oregon Administrator*

Educators were also concerned that any shift to a single diploma through multiple pathways be flexible enough to allow for development of student interests over time. Such a diploma should not be a rigid, fixed, one-time choice that tracks students. Implementation of a single diploma would require careful planning.

Careful planning and implementation of multiple pathways to a single diploma. Given educators' concerns over the potential for harm from alternatives to the Oregon Diploma, participants described Oregon's future graduation requirements as ideally leading to only one Oregon Diploma using multiple, flexible pathways. Graduation requirements would maintain high expectations for all students but would also provide the support students need to meet those expectations.

Educator concerns about a single diploma. Educators were also concerned about having a single Oregon Diploma. They noted, "uncertainty about what [a] single diploma with multiple pathways would look like," fears that a single diploma would exclude some students from having access to any diploma, and questions about how its implementation may impact schools in accountability efforts. They also discussed how implementation of multiple pathways can have undesirable effects, citing one state's implementation as resulting in a, "college-bound track" and, "other track." Educators shared a desire that multiple pathways to a single diploma allow all students to earn a meaningful diploma that provides them, "access to wherever they want to go even if they took different pathways." Finally, educators felt that it is critical that schools not be harmed by diploma decisions made in the best interest of students (e.g., the appearance of lowered graduation rates due to longer pathways to a diploma).

> *"[An] Oregon diploma should mean access to wherever they want to go even if they took different pathways."*
>
> *- Oregon Counselor*

Workforce and Industry Valued Skills

This section is written in response to the following text from Senate Bill 744:

> *(3) The review conducted under this section must include...*
>
> > *(d) The identification of the expectations of employers … related to the skills and knowledge of persons who earn high school diplomas in this state*

In 2020, the Workforce and Talent Development Board published a report for the Oregon Governor's Office and Oregon Legislature with recommendations related to the importance of

essential employability skills for student success.[60] Essential employability skills, sometimes referred to as professional skills or 21st century skills, are personal habits and traits that shape how you work on your own and with others. Examples include integrity, effective communication, open-mindedness, and teamwork. The report recommends additional work to design, delivery, and evaluate statewide essential employability skill models.

In fall 2021, Dialogues in Action, in partnership with the Oregon Workforce Talent Development Board and ODE, developed and administered an employer survey (See *Appendix E* for a link to the report). Respondents to the survey answered the open-ended question: "The Oregon Department of Education is evaluating its graduation policies and requirements pursuant to Senate Bill 744 and will make recommendations to the legislature and the State Board of Education about a possible redesign. What values and skills should be prioritized in the Oregon Diploma?"

Responses of 443 Oregon workforce representatives (including 244 individuals employed in the education and training sector) were classified into one or more of 21 broad categories, and following the data analysis procedures described for K–12 educator feedback. The categories were ordered by the percentage of workforce representatives who valued the knowledge or skill. The five most often cited values and skills are listed below:

- **Work ethic**: ability to initiate and follow through on tasks.
- **Professionalism:** responsible and respectful of people and processes.
- **Communication skills:** listens and speaks to others effectively, communicates in a variety of mediums, writes for authentic purposes, and reads critically.
- **Life skills:** financial literacy, foundational understanding of government and civics, knows how to self-advocate and seek out help, knows how to access educational and community resources.
- **Collaboration**: engages effectively with a team, has good interpersonal communication skills, and has conflict resolution skills.

> *"Time management and follow through. Does it matter if a child can memorize answers when we all have them at our fingertips online? But having a task/plan and being able to execute on it is huge."*
>
> *- Oregon Workforce*

[60] Oregon Workforce and Talent Development Board. (Accessed August 2, 2022). *WTDB Report: Essential Employability Skills*. (https://www.oregon.gov/workforceboard/data-and-reports/Documents/WTDB-Essential-Employability-Skills-Report-FINAL.pdf)

"Critical thinking demonstration; collaboration; work ethic; time management; anti-racist, anti-hate, diverse, multicultural ways to see all people in the world, empathy and self-awareness."

- Oregon Workforce Representative

"The old fashioned basics are still needed - literacy (reading and writing), math, history, civics. Many employers are struggling with the poor writing skills of today's high school graduates. Many employers find today's high school graduates are poor readers, which really limits an employee's ability to follow instructions and do the job well."

- Oregon Workforce Representative

Higher Education Valued Skills

This section is written in response to the following text from Senate Bill 744:

> *(3) The review conducted under this section must include...*
>
> > *(d) The identification of the expectations of … postsecondary institutions of education related to the skills and knowledge of persons who earn high school diplomas in this state;*

A total of 148 educators representing 25 Oregon postsecondary institutions addressed the question: "In your professional experience, what should the high school diploma include (the required teaching, learning and assessment that school districts must provide to all students) to support students' success in education and training beyond high school?"

After all responses were coded following the data analysis procedures described above, the categories were ordered based on the percentage of higher education representatives who valued the knowledge or skill. The five categories most often cited by the postsecondary partners are listed below (See *Appendix F* for an overview and link to the complete report):

- **Critical thinking and information literacy:** analyze problems and explore alternatives; independently access and evaluate the validity of information; articulate and support ideas coherently; focus on thinking, not rote regurgitation of facts.
- **Knowledge and skills in traditional/basic academic subjects:** demonstrate skills in reading, writing, and mathematics.
- **Communication skills:** listen and speak to others effectively; communicate in a variety of media; write for authentic purposes; read critically.

- **Career-related learning skills:** employability skills; community based experiential learning; knowledge of career and educational opportunities and how to get there.
- **Life skills:** financial literacy; foundational understanding of government and civics; how to self-advocate and seek out help; how to access educational and community resources.

"[High School] should involve more diverse writing experience, not just exposition. Math and basic literacy are emphasized to such a degree that much of what inspires students to excellence is being squeezed out of the high school experience. In my opinion we need less emphasis on final assessments and accountability criteria, and more emphasis on creating a climate that motivates exploration and self-development."

- Oregon Postsecondary Professor

"Critical thinking, reading, and writing skills along with core mathematical ideas and scientific thought and knowledge are all necessary for university success. Both algebraic foundations (through Algebra 2) and quantitative literacy (data and ethics) are critical for students."

- Oregon Postsecondary Math Instructor

"I think there are certain life skills that ALL students need, including financial literacy, understanding of career opportunities and how to get there, ability to work with diverse perspectives, communication (oral and written). I believe these skills serve both those who are college-bound or career-bound. College-bound students should also be able to think critically and analytically to meet the expectations of professors."

– Oregon Postsecondary Advisor

Workforce and Industry and Higher Education Determination

This section is written in response to the following text from Senate Bill 744:

(3) The review conducted under this section must include...

(d) The identification of the expectations of employers and postsecondary institutions of education related to the skills and knowledge of persons who earn high school diplomas in this state;

> *(e) The determination of whether the skills and knowledge expected to be attained by persons who earn high school diplomas in this state, as identified in paragraph (d) of this subsection, align with the requirements for high school diplomas in this state*

Input from workforce and higher education representatives suggests that students who earn an Oregon Diploma should be confident that the skills and knowledge they learned while earning that diploma will help them reach their postsecondary goals. They feel that the Oregon Diploma should align with what students' future employers and postsecondary institutions will expect them to know and be able to do. Unfortunately, their input suggests that this expectation is not being sufficiently met.

The skills that Oregon employers and postsecondary partners see as most important include work ethic, professionalism, communication skills, and life skills.

Employer survey recipients were asked about their perception of how prepared current high school graduates are with essential employability skills when entering the workplace. Sixty percent responded, "just a little" or "not at all." Thirty-five percent reported "close to sufficiently." Four percent reported "sufficiently," and none reported "extensively."

Oregon's current diploma requirements do not fully align with the skills that Oregon employers identified as most important. Some of the requirements, such as the Career-Related Learning Experiences and the Extended Application, could be a place where these skills are being taught to some students in some districts, however, the delivery of these requirements varies widely across school districts.

Additionally, there is evidence that the Oregon diploma does not align with the expectations of postsecondary education representatives. The group of respondents was comparably smaller than the group of workforce partners and educator professionals, and not all postsecondary institutions or regions were represented among the respondents. The results of the survey should still be useful, but it is important to recognize that the survey responses are not generalizable to all postsecondary partners in the state. As with the other analysis, they represent a targeted engagement to gauge some themes and perceptions present in 2022. The skills that postsecondary education representatives see as most important include:

> *"Respondents described academic subjects, especially mathematics, reading and writing as essential to preparing high school graduates for postsecondary education and training success. They also identified professional skills, transition strategies, information literacy, financial literacy, and multicultural and intercultural competencies, and awareness as necessary to be not only successful in higher education, but also in careers and adult life." - Oregon Postsecondary Partner*

Aside from basic knowledge of academic subjects, the skills most valued by higher education show substantial overlap with the ones valued by employers, particularly in the area of communication and career-related experiences. These groups also both emphasized work ethic and professionalism as important. Again, input suggests there is a misalignment with Oregon's current graduation requirements regarding mastery of specific subjects, and also life skills around technology, finances, job searching, etc.

Regarding academic skills, there is evidence that Oregon graduates do not fully meet this expectation either. High school graduates in Oregon often require remediation or developmental courses in college. According to a National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance 2015 study for those going to community college that number is nearly 75%; for four-year colleges it drops to 52%. This number alone shows a mismatch between the basic academic skills expected by postsecondary education and those required by Oregon for graduation. [61]

> *"The idea that public school is to serve the needs of employers is a major oversight. That is not the primary purpose of education. These are human beings not robots to be conditioned and reconditioned. High school should have multiple tracks, where students must survey each area and can choose and change areas of emphasis."*
>
> *- Oregon Workforce Representative*

[61] Hodara. (2015, May). *What predicts participation in developmental education among recent high school graduates at community college? Lessons from Oregon* (REL 2015–081). U.S. Department of Education. (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs)

GRADUATION DATA REVIEW

This section is written in response to the following text from Senate Bill 744:

> *(3) The review conducted under this section must include…*
>
> > *(g) The determination of whether the requirements for high school diplomas in this state have been applied inequitably to different student populations.*

This section provides an analysis and determination regarding how graduation requirements have been applied to student populations

Overview of Oregon Graduation Rates Over Time

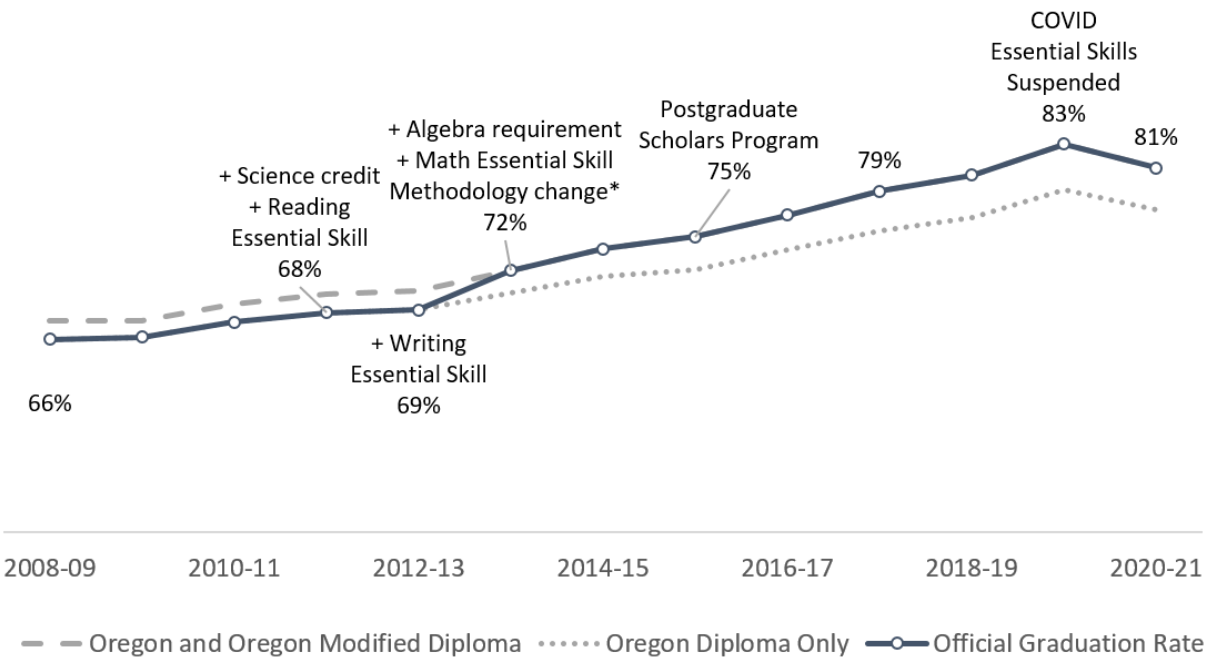
Oregon's official graduation rates have steadily increased since 2009, the first year in which Oregon published official cohort graduation rates,[62] though there are some changes that do not make results prior to 2013–14 perfectly comparable to those after that change in calculation methodology[63] (See Figure 5). 2020 has the highest graduation rate Oregon has experienced (83%). By contrast, in 2009 the four-year graduation rate was 66%. In 2021, there was a slight decline in cohort graduation rates, which is likely attributable to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. While this trend toward higher graduation rates reflects increased opportunities and supports for students, as well as tremendous efforts by school and district staff, and is emblematic of greater student learning, there are concurrent increases in the number of Modified Oregon Diplomas and the rates at which work samples have been used to demonstrate Essential Skills proficiency that are analyzed here. These increases represent inequitable pathways to graduation, as they have been accessed disproportionately by specific student groups (i.e., by race/ethnicity, IEP status, and EL status).

[62] Rates from years before 2008–09 use a substantially different methodology and are not comparable.

[63] Beginning in 2013–14, modified Oregon Diploma recipients were included as graduates. Prior to 2013–14, only Oregon (regular) Diploma recipients had counted as graduates. Also in 2013–14, students who had met the requirements to receive a diploma but had elected to delay receipt of that diploma (for example, in order to participate in early college programs) began to be counted as graduates. Prior to 2013–14 ODE did not collect data on this second group of students.

Figure 5

Oregon's Four-Year Official Graduation Rates



Note: *The methodology change shows when the modified diploma rate was included as part of Oregon's official graduation rate, beginning in 2013–14. Other changes this year, including the new reporting and inclusion of students who met diploma requirements on time but remained enrolled for additional years of high school education, mean that this rate is not perfectly comparable to either previous rate shown.

Rates above, and throughout this section, reflect four-year cohort graduation rates,[64] which are the percentage of students who graduated within four years of their first high school enrollment, adjusted for students transferring into or out of Oregon's K–12 education system. While the four-year rate is used for federal accountability purposes, students who need additional time to complete their diploma may remain in high school for a fifth or more years as needed.[65] In a typical year, 4% to 5% of students in a cohort remain enrolled for a fifth year, and the majority of them complete a diploma or other completion credential during that year.

[64] Oregon Department of Education. (Accessed August 2, 2022). *Cohort graduation rate*. (https://www.oregon.gov/ode/reports-and-data/students/Pages/Cohort-Graduation-Rate.aspx.)
[65] Subject to statutory age limitations.

Oregon, like other states, adopted the cohort graduation rate in 2008–09 in an effort to bring increased uniformity and comparability to graduation rates nationally. Oregon strictly follows the Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) requirements published by the United States Department of Education and has maintained open, transparent, and rigorous expectations in high school graduation rate reporting. This commitment makes comparisons with other states difficult, or even misleading, because other states do not strictly follow these practices. For example, substantial differences between states are more likely to be driven by varied policies regarding reporting requirements, such as practices that count students as transfers out of the cohort (Oregon requires official documentation from the receiving school confirming the student's enrollment in another state); minimum length of enrollment before students are counted in the cohort (Oregon counts students in the cohort after as little as one half-day of enrollment); and the range of students served by a state's education system (some state systems do not serve students in hospitals, long-term care facilities, or rehabilitation centers, or do not serve incarcerated students). On each of these fronts, Oregon's interpretation is among the most inclusive (casting a wider net in building the denominator), thus contributing to a graduation rate that is lower than it would be if Oregon included fewer students in the cohort (used a smaller denominator), as other states have done.

According to Brookings, audits have found that states have removed students from the cohort without documentation that they were enrolled elsewhere, transferred students unlikely to graduate on time out of the system, and awarded diplomas to students who did not meet requirements[66].

Oregon's graduation rates by race and ethnicity

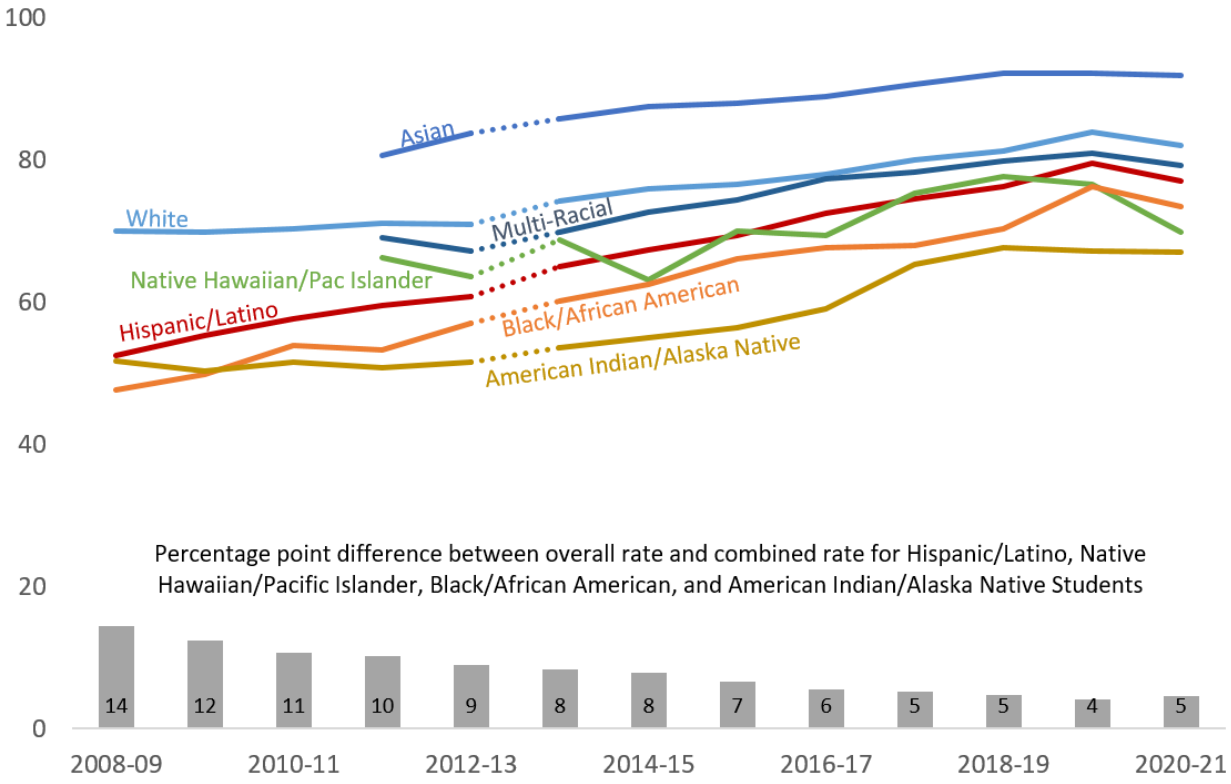
As shown in Figure 6, the gap in four-year graduation rates between Oregon's historically underserved populations (which include Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino/a/x, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students, and students who are American Indian/Alaska Native tribal citizens) and state averages for all students has been shrinking. While this appears to be an encouraging trend, it is worthy of additional scrutiny. One area of concern is that certain Oregon schools have been increasing their use of the Modified Oregon Diploma. There is also an increasing pattern across the state of higher percentages of students who have traditionally been underserved students (including Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino/a/x, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students, and students who are American Indian/Alaska Native tribal

[66] Dynarski, Mark. (2018, May 3). *Is the high school graduation rate really going up?* (https://www.brookings.edu/research/is-the-high-school-graduation-rate-really-going-up/)

citizens) using work samples to meet their Assessment of Essential Skills requirements, compared to white students.

Figure 6

Oregon's Official Four-Year Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity



Note: Dotted lines represent a change in methodology as seen in Figure 5: The methodology change shows when the modified diploma rate was included as part of Oregon's official graduation rate, beginning in 2013–14. Other changes this year, including the new reporting and inclusion of students who met diploma requirements on time but remained enrolled for additional years of high school education, mean that this rate is not perfectly comparable to either previous rate shown. See Figure 5 for details.

This trend is concerning for several reasons. First, there is not a concurrent increase in student scores on the state's summative assessments in reading and writing (English language arts) and mathematics. It is possible that graduation rates are increasing because the system incentivizes graduation, not because students are experiencing high quality learning opportunities. The second concern involves the disproportionate use of work samples. Though it is possible to design and implement work samples in an appropriate way that better honors student identity and agency in comparison to other state assessment options, ODE does not have evidence that

this is occurring. It is also the case that work sample performance, though compared to official state scoring guides, is locally scored and may not be reliable. Because ODE does not have capacity to implement a monitoring system to help ensure that those work samples are being scored reliably, they may be a source of educator biases. Additionally, in many schools students that meet the Essential Skills requirements using work samples do so by enrolling in classes dedicated to this purpose, often at the expense of another elective course. Finally, there have been no related increases noted in statewide performance on Oregon's summative assessments in English language arts and mathematics, which would be a confirming signal of increased student learning in these content areas.

These factors, in addition to the fact that Oregon's graduation rates for students who are American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Hispanic/Latino/a/x are still below the average for other students. This data suggests barriers within Oregon's education systems may be maintaining disparate outcomes for students of color and students who are Indigenous.

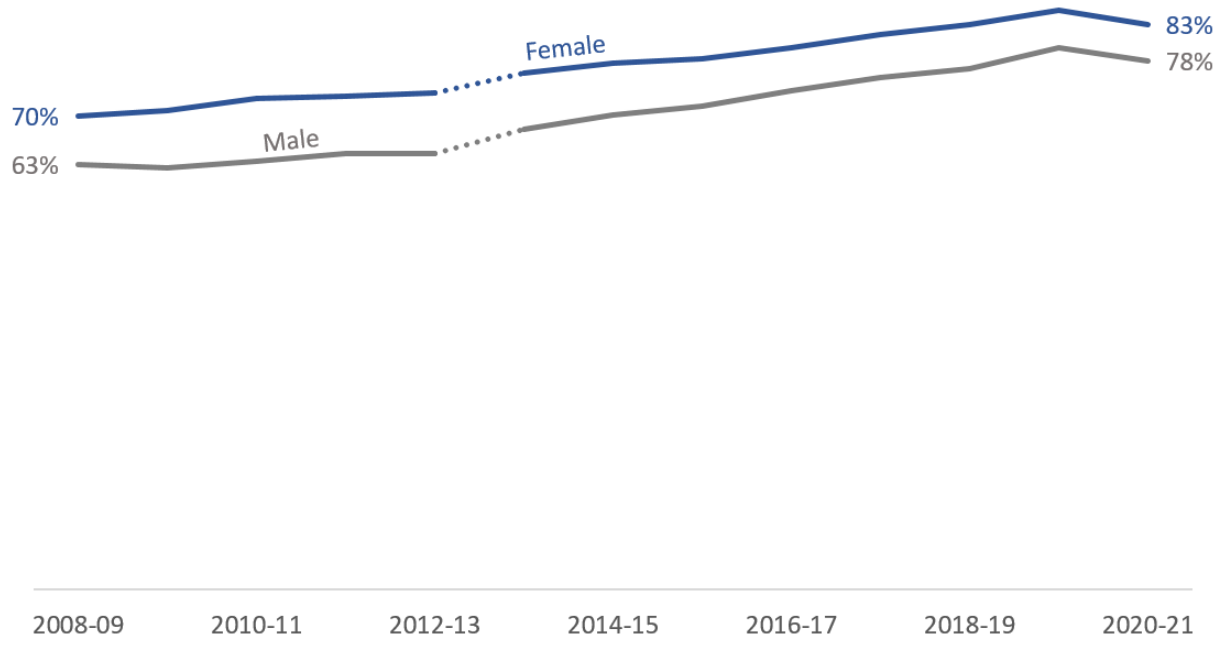
Oregon's graduation rates by gender

Oregon has consistently seen a gap of up to 9 percentage points between graduation rates for male and female students, as shown in Figure 7. The gap has narrowed in recent years, but still remains around 5 percentage points. Some of these differences may be explained in part by disparate treatment within schools (for example, male students are substantially more likely to be served through an IEP or Section 504 plan,[67] and experience substantially higher rates of exclusionary discipline[68]), but even controlling for these factors, male students are significantly less likely than female students to graduate on time,[69] with a greater disparity among male students who are chronically absent, experience school discipline, and fall behind academically, or do not complete a full course load. Gender gaps also exist for all racial and ethnic groups, though their magnitude varies significantly (See *Appendix G* for more details).

[67] Jacoby, *Section 504 Plans*.
[68] Oregon Department of Education. (Accessed August 2, 2022). *Oregon Statewide Annual Report Card 2018-19*. (https://www.oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/reportcards/pages/statewide-annual-report-card.aspx)
[69] Jacoby, *Predictors*.

Figure 7

Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Gender



Note: Dotted lines represent a change in methodology as seen in Figure 5: the methodology change shows when the modified diploma rate was included as part of Oregon's official graduation rate, beginning in 2013–14. Other changes this year, including the new reporting and inclusion of students who met diploma requirements on time but remained enrolled for additional years of high school education, mean that this rate is not perfectly comparable to either previous rate shown. See Figure 5 for details; ODE began allowing students to report non-binary gender identification in 2018–19. Graduation rates for these students will be published beginning with on-time graduates in the year 2021–22, once four years of this indicator have been collected.

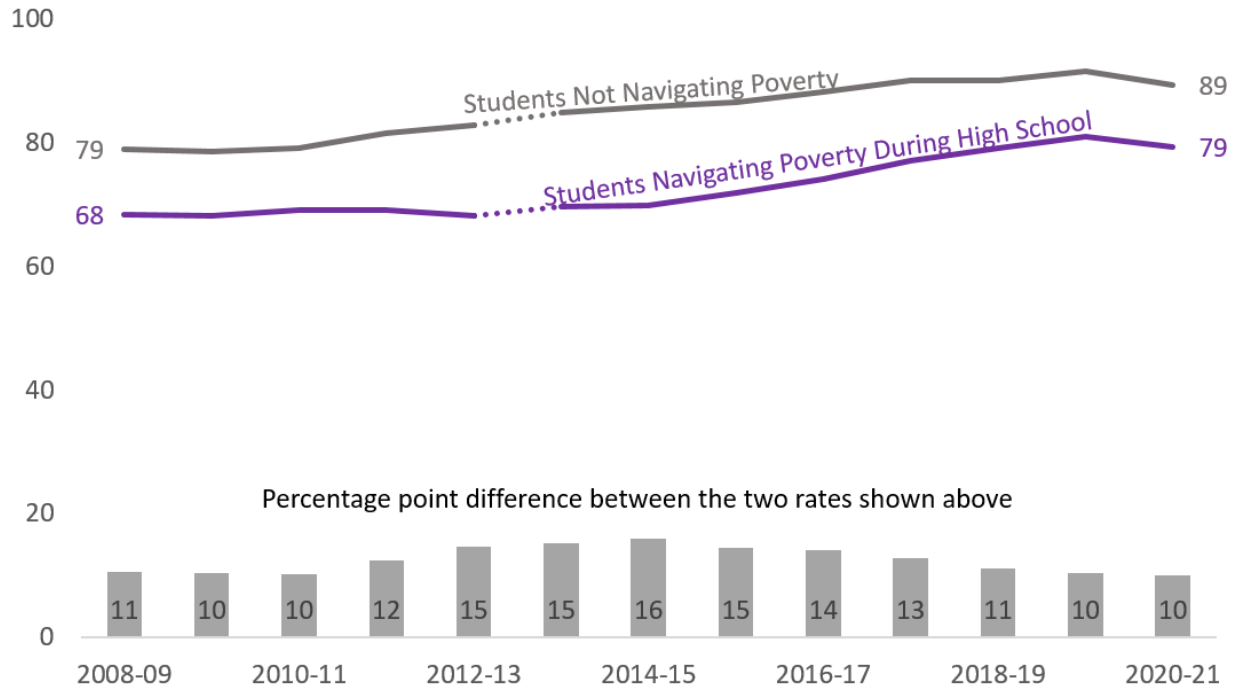
Oregon's graduation rates for students navigating poverty

On-time graduation rates for students navigating poverty remain about 10 percentage points below the rates for those not navigating poverty. Students are identified as navigating poverty if they were eligible for meals at no or reduced charge at any point during high school. Over this time period, the qualifications for participating in these meal programs have shifted in order to provide meals to more students in need, which may be a contributing factor to the rates shown below. In 2008–09, students navigating poverty made up 43% of the cohort—in 2019–20, they

made up 57% of the cohort. Additional meal program expansions due to the COVID-19 pandemic caused this rate to increase to 65% for the 2020–21 graduating cohort.

Figure 8

Oregon's Four-Year Graduation Rate for Students Navigating Poverty



Note: Dotted lines represent a change in methodology as seen in Figure 5: the methodology change shows when the modified diploma rate was included as part of Oregon's official graduation rate, beginning in 2013–14. Other changes this year, including the new reporting and inclusion of students who met diploma requirements on time but remained enrolled for additional years of high school education, mean that this rate is not perfectly comparable to either previous rate shown. See Figure 5 for details.

"Offerings differed drastically among schools in low-income and high-income neighborhoods. The "college information" at [one school] was two books…while [another school] has a fully staffed college prep research room. Also, why, in this day and age, isn't it mandatory to learn to use a keyboard?"

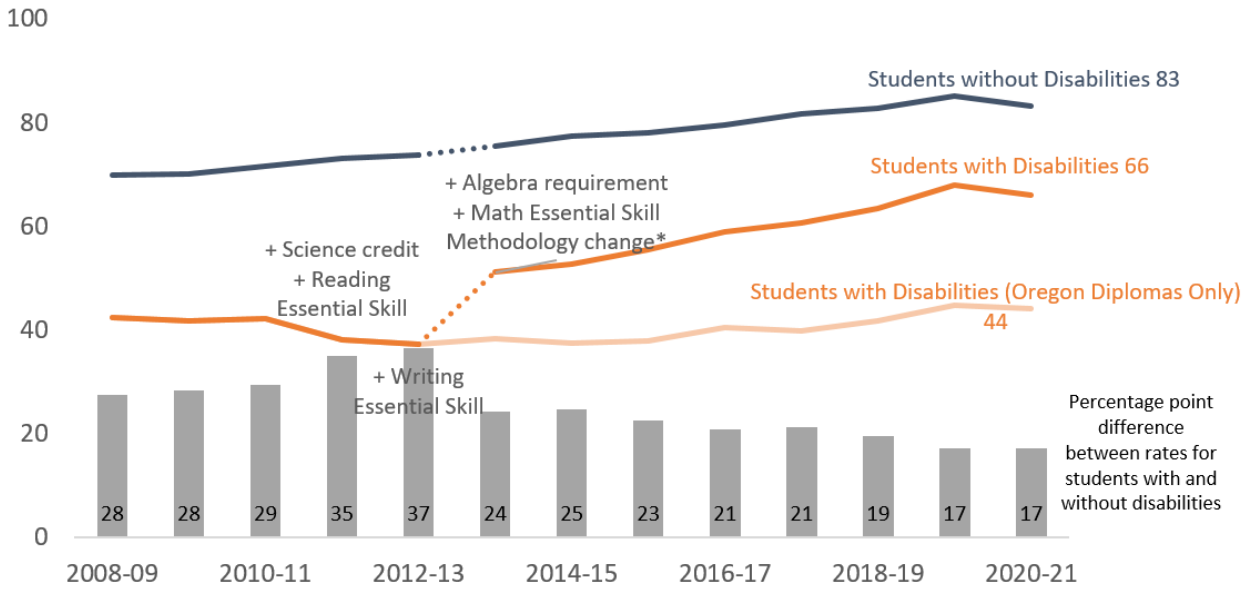
- Oregon Resident

Oregon's graduation rates for students with disability

Additionally, Oregon's students with disabilities (served through IEPs (Individualized Education Programs)) continue to experience disparate graduation outcomes, as displayed in Figure 9.[70]

Figure 9

Oregon's Four-Year Official Graduation Rates for Students with IEPs (Individualized Education Programs)



Note: Dotted lines represent a change in methodology as seen in Figure 5 the methodology change shows when the modified diploma rate was included as part of Oregon's official graduation rate, beginning in 2013–14. Other changes this year, including the new reporting and inclusion of students who met diploma requirements on time but remained enrolled for additional years of high school education, mean that this rate is not perfectly comparable to either previous rate shown. See Figure 5 for details.

Only 45% of Oregon's students with disabilities who are served through an IEP are graduating within four years with an Oregon Diploma (an additional 23% are receiving a Modified Oregon Diploma, for a total of 68% graduating on time in spring 2020). These rates dropped slightly in 2021, as shown in the chart above.

[70] Another group of students with disabilities, those served through Section 504 Plans, graduate at rates similar to those of students without disability accommodation plans.

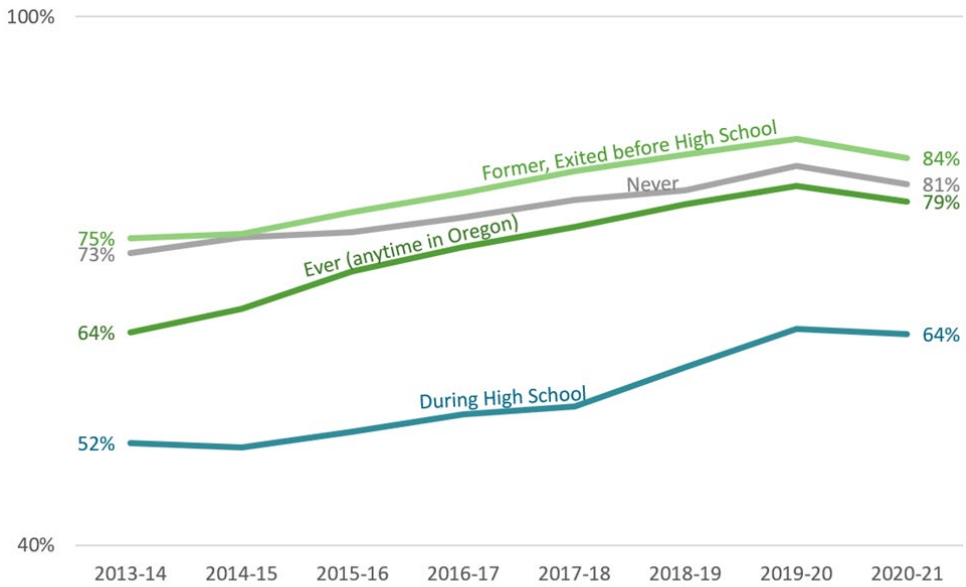
Oregon's graduation rates for English learners

Though there is some cause to celebrate the achievement of Oregon's students who are former English learners, who are graduating at rates higher than their peers who were never English learners, students who enter high school identified as English learners are graduating at rates far below the average for all students, as evidenced in Figure 10. Only 64% of Oregon students who are identified as English learners while in high school are experiencing successful graduation outcomes within four years (i.e., being awarded either an Oregon Diploma or Modified Oregon Diploma). Students who are identified as English learners while in high school also earn modified Oregon diplomas at disproportionate rates—more than 10% of this cohort was awarded a modified Oregon diploma in recent years, compared to about 4% overall.

> *"Making sure our Migrant/[English Learner] students are prepared for higher education…I have seen our students "pass" their core classes and still not be at a level where they could be successful in higher education if that was their goal after graduating. Nothing is more sad to me [than] seeing graduated seniors come back and tell me they had to drop out of college their first year because they weren't at the level they needed to be in math, reading, and writing."*
>
> *- Oregon Migrant Education Specialist*

Figure 10

Oregon's Four-Year Official Graduation Rates for Students who are English Learners

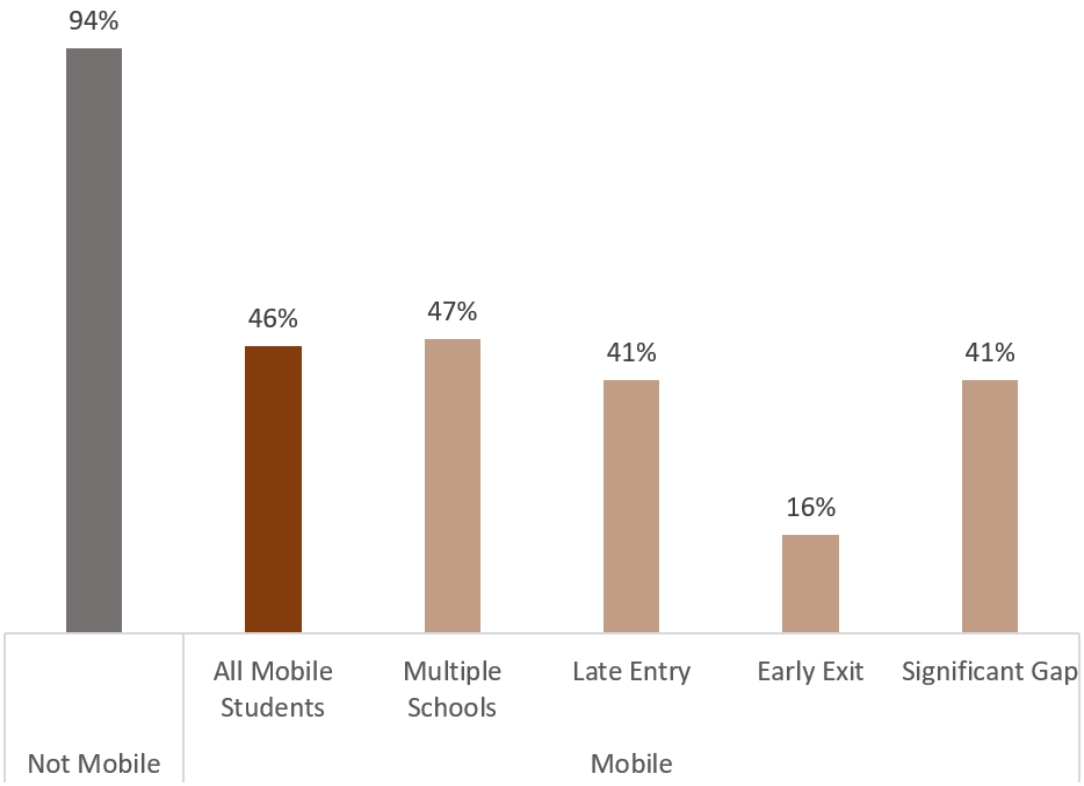


Oregon's graduation rates for students experiencing mobility

Students who experience within-year mobility, meaning that they transition between high schools, either within or across districts, or experience enrollment gaps, are roughly half as likely to graduate on time as those who do not. Note that while mobility is strongly associated with taking a longer time to graduate, the relationship may not be causal. For example, students who are already struggling or not receiving the support they need to graduate in a school may be more likely to leave that school early or to transfer to another school mid-year. On the other hand, the transfer may be the result of the student's family making relocation decisions for a variety of reasons, including financial reasons or, in the case of refugee students, out of necessity, and the student's academic success may not be a primary consideration during a family emergency. Education systems should seek to make transitions smooth and seamless for students and only seek to reduce mobility in as much as it is the result of students feeling unsupported or having inadequate access to resources in their original school.[71]

Figure 11

Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Within-Year Mobility, 2018–19



[71] For more information on student mobility and graduation rates, please see the *Student Mobility in Graduation Accountability Data Brief*. (https://www.oregon.gov/ode/reports-and-data/Documents/databrief_mobility_graduation.pdf)

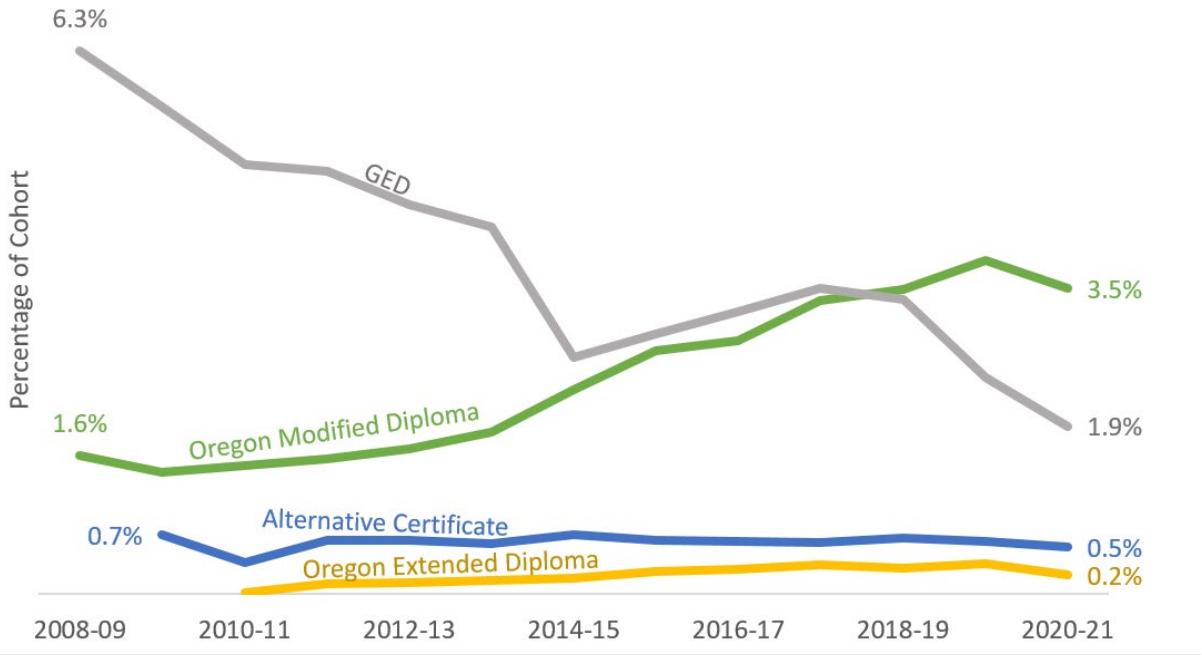
Note: Students are counted as mobile within a given school year if they met at least one of the following criteria: multiple schools (enrolled in more than one school during the year), late entry (first enrolled in Oregon public K–12 after the first school day in October), early exit (left K–12 enrollment before the first school day in May), or significant gap (a period of more than 10 weekdays between reported enrollment spans, during which no enrollment was reported for the student). Students are counted in Figure 11 if they met at least one of the mobility criteria during at least one of their four years of high school. Students may be included in more than one of the mobility sub-categories. Between-year mobility (students changing schools from one school year to the next, students who were not enrolled for an entire school year) is not included in the definition of mobility used in Figure 11.

Oregon graduation rates by diploma type

As mentioned above, there has been a steady increase in the percentage of students who are being awarded Modified Oregon Diplomas, which accounts for some of the increase in graduation rates over the past decade. Figure 12 shows that Modified Oregon Diploma rates have effectively doubled since 2009. As of 2020, 3.8% of Oregon students were awarded Modified Oregon Diplomas, compared to less than 2% in years before the credential was counted as a graduation and these diploma holders became eligible for federal financial aid upon enrollment in postsecondary programs. In the 2013–14 school year, approximately 750 students earned Modified Oregon Diplomas. That number has increased by about 150 students per year and was close to 1,750 students in 2020. A very low percentage of Oregon students are awarded Extended Oregon Diplomas (0.2%) or Alternative Certificates (0.5%).

Figure 12

Percentages of Students Awarded a Modified Oregon Diploma/Extended Oregon Diploma or Alternative Certificate, or a GED (Four-Year Rates)



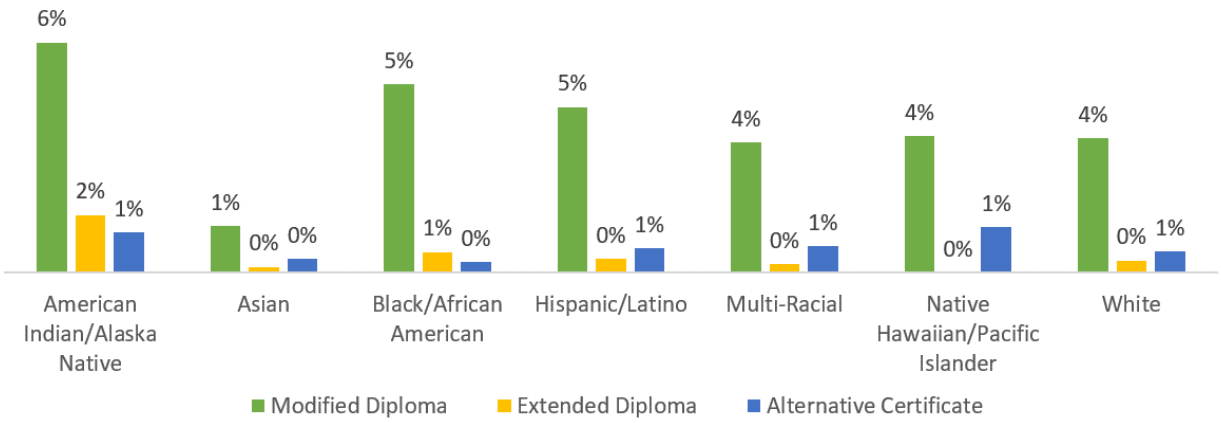
Oregon's education system is graduating students with different diploma types in ways that are patterned by race/ethnicity, as conveyed in Figure 13 below. When reviewing the four-year cohorts who graduated with modified diplomas, students who are American Indian/Alaska Native tribal members are over-represented when compared to peers.

"Most of my students and their families do not understand the difference between a modified and a standard and are scared that it will affect them after graduation if they don't have the standard. But the requirements for the standard are above their abilities. I'm confused why, when we already had inequity among graduation rates, etc.; our state decided to split graduation types, etc. in the first place."

- Oregon Educator

Figure 13

Percentages of Students Awarded a Modified or Extended Diploma, or an Alternative Certificate, by Race/Ethnicity (2019–20 Four-Year Cohort)

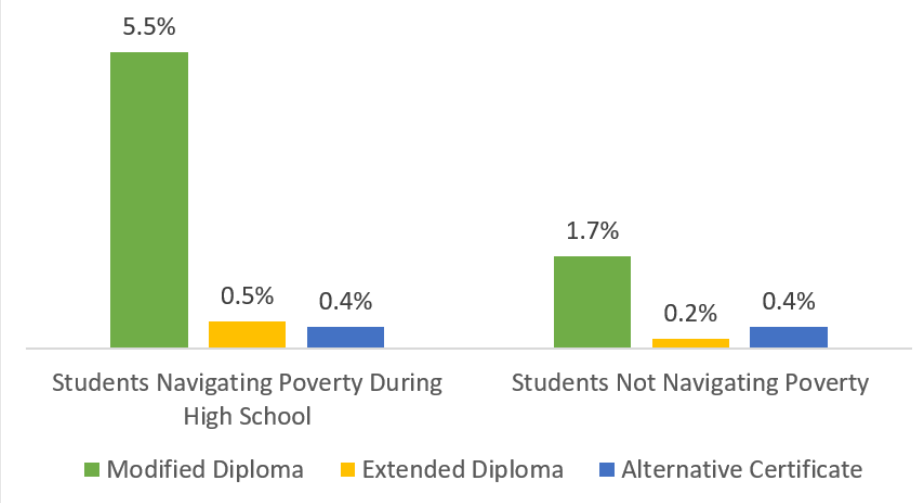


As shown in Figure 14, students navigating poverty (roughly 26,000 students per cohort, or 56-57% of the cohort in 2015-16 through 2019-20[72]) are more than three times as likely to be awarded a Modified Diploma than students not navigating poverty during high school, and nearly three times as likely to be awarded an Extended Diploma.

[72] The number of students navigating poverty, measured as the number of students eligible for lunch at no/reduced charge at any point during high school, increased substantially in the 2020-21 as a result of pandemic food assistance programs.

Figure 14

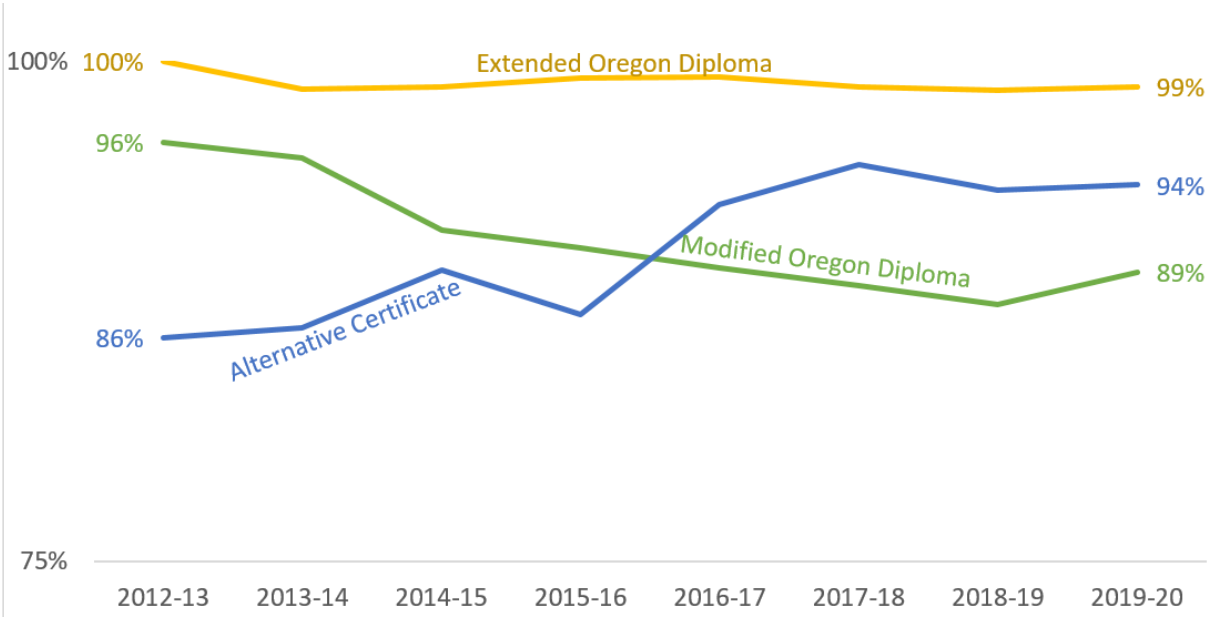
Percentages of Students Awarded a Modified or Extended Diploma, or an Alternative Certificate, by Poverty (2019–20 Four-Year Cohort)



Students with disabilities (served through IEPs while in high school) typically comprise 14–15% of the cohort (6,000-7,000 students) and are awarded around 8% of on-time Oregon Diplomas. They are far more likely, however, to earn other credential types, as shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15

Rates at Which Credentials Are Awarded to Students with Disabilities (Percentage of Each Credential Awarded to Students with Disabilities; Four-Year Cohort)



The Extended Oregon Diploma was originally created to serve students with significant cognitive disabilities, and it has consistently been awarded almost exclusively to students with disabilities, as seen above (99% of students who earned an Extended Diploma were students with IEPs). Relatively rare, it is awarded to an average of 112 students per year in each of the years shown in the chart above, and slightly more during the fifth year of high school.

The Alternative Certificate is a district-defined credential. Award rates vary substantially by district, likely in a reflection of varying district policies, but in recent years it too has primarily been awarded to students with disabilities. It is possible that a student earns an Alternative Certificate and a diploma.

> *"Despite [extended diplomas and alternative certificates] not being recognized as 'as 'real diplomas' by the state or potential employers, many of these students are still able to be placed in meaningful, gainful and appropriate employment opportunities that contribute to the community and a sense of personal well-being. My hope is there would be some way to document these outcomes in ways that reflect the hard work of these students, sped teachers and school districts."*
>
> *- Oregon Resident*

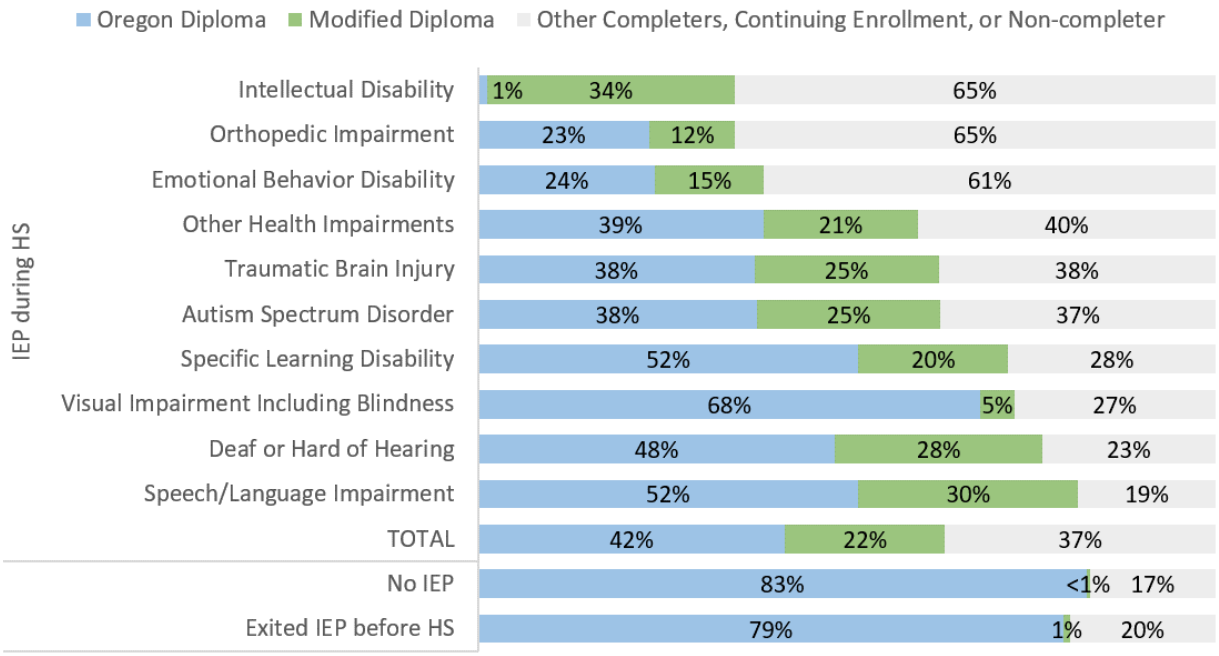
The Modified Oregon Diploma was originally awarded almost exclusively to students with disabilities served by IEPs, but since its recognition as "substantially similar" to the Oregon Diploma for purposes of postsecondary federal financial aid and graduation rate calculations, it has been increasingly awarded to students who were not served by IEPs. In 2019–20, 11% of the graduates with this credential were not served on an IEP at any point during high school.

As shown in Figure 16, modified diplomas are disproportionately awarded to students in every primary disability category, and to those who were served on an IEP earlier in their education but had exited that IEP before entering high school.

> *"I have worked with many families who have a child with a hearing loss. The school district has been rather quick in pushing a modified diploma instead of ensuring the students had access to general ed and a standard diploma."*
>
> *- Oregon Resident*

Figure 16

Modified Diploma Award Rates by Primary Disability (2018–19 Four-Year Graduates)



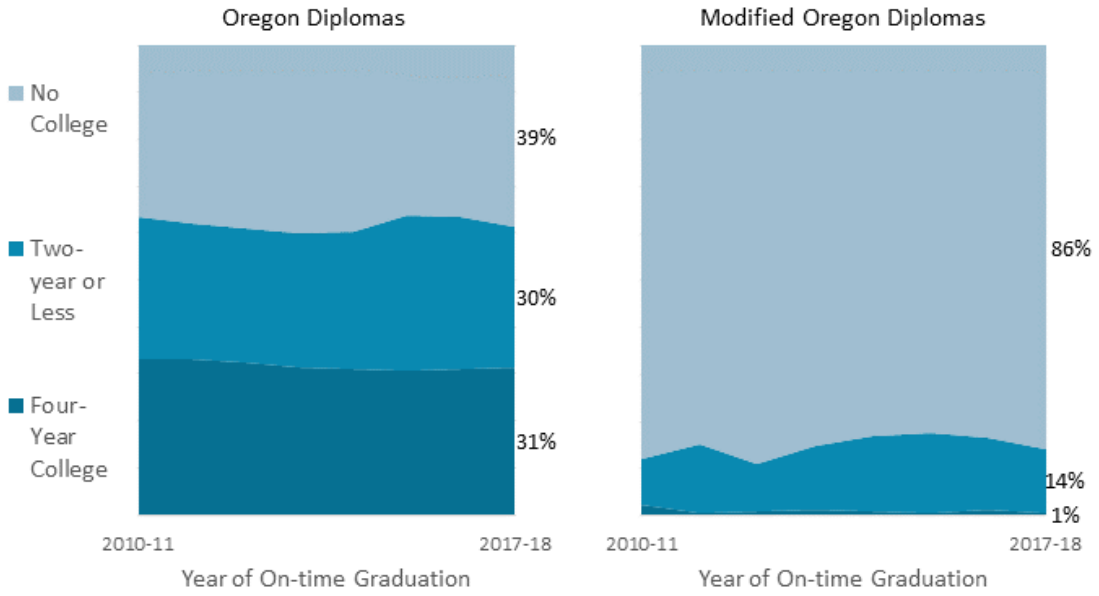
Note: The student group identified as deaf-blind is omitted here due to the small n-sizes in order to protect privacy.

Postsecondary Profile by Diploma Type

The type of diploma that a student is awarded is associated with differences in student postsecondary profiles. Colleges and universities report that access to postsecondary programs is not contingent on the diploma type (Modified, or Regular) but rather the courses that students take. Modified Diplomas have different course requirements and thus these students are less likely to have taken the courses required for admission to colleges and universities. Figure 17 shows the rates at which students who are awarded an Oregon Diploma engage in postsecondary opportunities within a year of graduation. It should be noted that the gray areas may include extended diplomas, adult basic education diplomas, and GED completion, or other modes that are not counted in Oregon's official graduation rate. Approximately 31% of Oregon students who are awarded an Oregon Diploma go on to a four-year college, while 30% attend two-year programs or other postsecondary options. Of the students who are awarded an Oregon diploma, 39% do not take any college courses within one year after graduation.

Figure 17

Postsecondary Profile for Students Who Are Awarded Oregon or Modified Diplomas, within One Year of On-Time Graduation



In contrast, students who are awarded a Modified Oregon Diploma are not going on to four-year or two-year colleges at comparable rates. Only 1% of students who are awarded a Modified Oregon Diploma go on to a four-year college, while 14% attend a two-year program or other postsecondary courses. Approximately 86% of students who are awarded a Modified Oregon Diploma do not pursue any college education within one year of high school graduation. These disparities remain constant even after controlling for disability (IEP) status—both students with and without disabilities are substantially less likely to enroll in postsecondary education if they are awarded a Modified Oregon Diploma. Additional investigation, including consultations with students and postsecondary admission officers, would be needed to understand the barriers faced by students who earn Modified Oregon Diplomas.

> *"I know that alternate types of diplomas can negatively impact students' acceptances to colleges. It seems encouraging may be a flawed attempt to provide options while actually being a trapdoor to long term disparities that are even harder to recover from if BIPOC students take them."*
>
> *- Oregon Resident*

> *"I felt like I graduated but not really because I had gotten a modified high school diploma. Even with this I was left alone and asked for the help. I still did not get it because that teacher was too busy with other students. I felt like I could not go to college because of this diploma. It is hard to go to any college with what I had heard from my counselor."*
>
> *- Oregon Student Experiencing Disabilities*

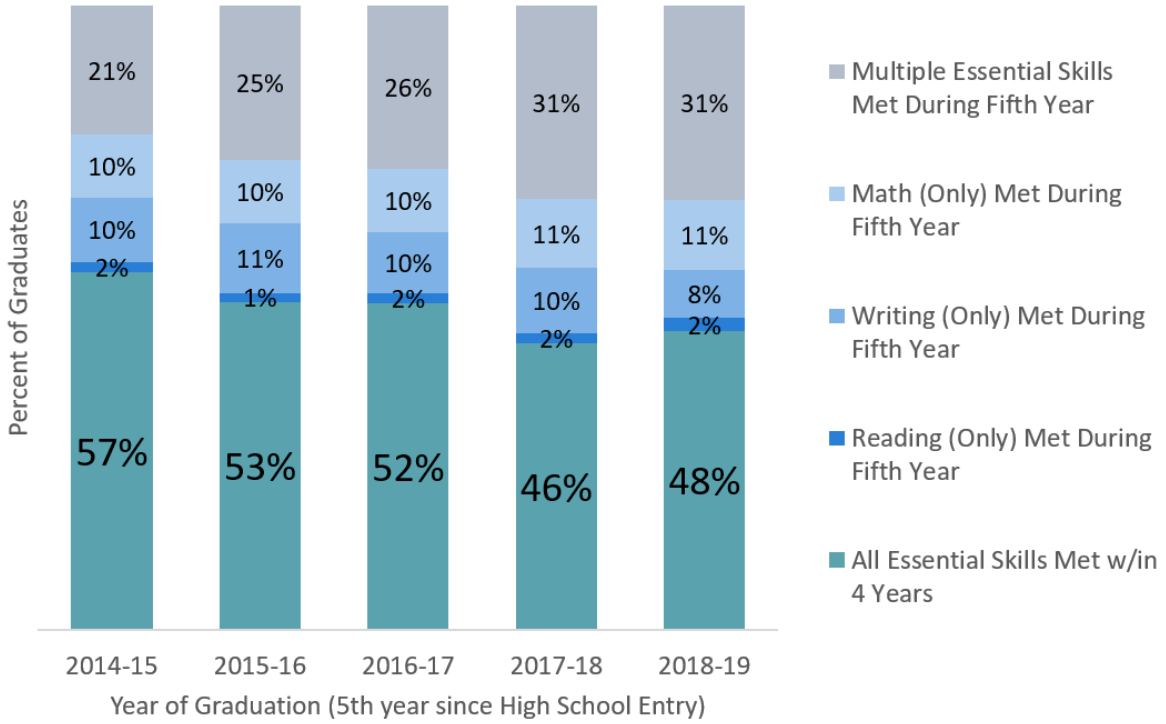
In addition to the postsecondary enrollment data shown in Figure 17, ODE conducts follow-up surveys of students who were served through IEPs at the time they left high school. These surveys revealed similar gaps in postsecondary enrollment by diploma type, and also found gaps in employment rates. The results showed that among students with IEPs who exited in 2019–20, 84% of those who had earned an Oregon Diploma were enrolled in postsecondary education or training, or employed, compared to only 69% of those who had earned a Modified Oregon Diploma.

Fifth-Year Graduation Profiles

ODE reviewed fifth-year graduation data for students who did not graduate with their four-year cohort. The data show that student graduation profiles are complex, involving an intersection of areas in which requirements have not been met (credit requirements, Assessment of Essential Skills requirements, and Extended Application, Education Plan and Profile, and Career Related Learning Experiences). Most students who were fifth-year graduates needed to meet additional diploma requirements beyond the Assessment of Essential Skills, as conveyed in Figure 18 (an average of 52% of students, across the years shown). Students who had not demonstrated proficiency in the reading, writing, and math Essential Skills within four years of beginning high school may have also needed additional credits or other requirements to graduate, and conversations with school and district leaders indicated that this is frequently the case.

Figure 18

Fifth-Year Graduate Profiles



The slight decrease in the percentage of students who demonstrated proficiency in the reading, writing, and math Essential Skills within four years of graduation correlates with a decrease in the percentage of students who graduated during their fifth year, as more students graduated with their four-year cohort over time. This suggests that the apparent decrease is actually the result of students who were closer to meeting diploma requirements by their fourth year receiving additional support to graduate within four years, which would then remove them from the dataset above.

"Things that I see as barriers for my students revolve around poverty, home supports, housing/food access, internet access, etc.-- they are not tied directly to graduation and they are barriers for my students generally. My experience over the past 12 years working with seniors is that I have not once seen a student not receive an Oregon diploma exclusively because of the essential skills requirement; students who haven't met essential skills have always also failed to meet diploma credit requirements."

- Oregon Educator

There are additional differences in this dataset by student group, with Black/African American and English learner/emerging bilingual students at higher likelihood of needing at least one essential skill during their fifth year. Only about one in four of the fifth-year graduates in these two groups had met all essential skill requirements by their fourth year.

Causes of Disparities

This section is written in response to the following text from Senate Bill 744:

> *(3) The review conducted under this section must include…*
>
> > *(f) The identification of the causes of disparities that have resulted from the requirements for high school diplomas in this state*

Graduation is the culminating event of a student's public school experience, and, as such, graduation rates reflect both the opportunities and the disparities in access and services faced by students across 13-plus years of public schooling, as well as those present in the larger social environment beyond schools. The causes of these disparities are complex and rooted in the historical context of the education system as well as the context of individual student lives, and, as such, are not simple to parse.

> *"We should ensure that college preparation does not act as the foundation of graduation requirements. Not every high school student should go to college. Trying to force that to happen serves College Board…and private loan companies. It does NOT serve marginalized students, especially when there are a lot of good paying careers that don't require four years of college, and therefore don't need to be on a 'college prep' track."*
>
> *- Oregon Counselor*

While it may not be possible to fully understand if graduation requirements solely or directly resulted in disparities in graduation rates in Oregon, it is possible to outline some of the factors that research shows impact graduation rates, and to explore which graduation requirements ODE's engagement partners perceive as impacting graduation outcomes for groups of students.

What the literature says about the causes for graduation disparities: Exclusion and inequity have been present from the start - our schools were not designed to welcome, include, and serve all students.

"I felt totally outmatched when I got to college. I felt like I was not well prepared for college level work or how to work through it. I wasn't confident or feeling empowered. I had to find outside sources of support to keep going. I wish I'd had more focus on my personal development and confidence before going to college."

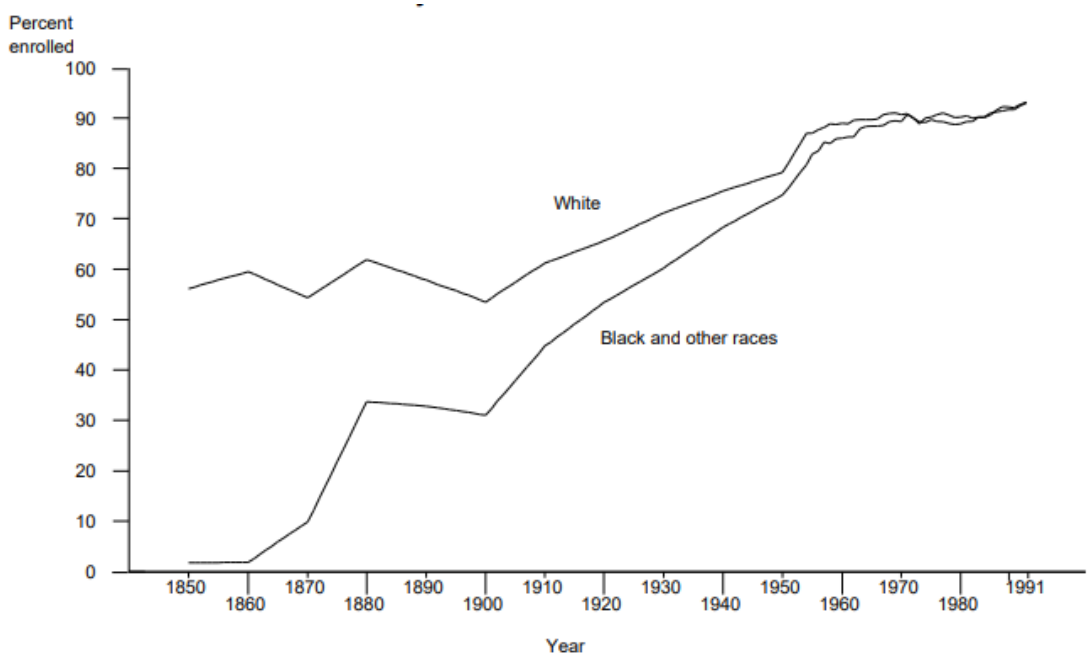
- Oregon Resident

It is important to consider historical context when attempting to understand the conditions of graduation disparities in the present moment. Reliable knowledge of what happened in the past informs understanding of the present and helps to construct meaning in current conditions. The expectation of universal enrollment in high school for all students is a success story of the last 100 years, but the lasting impact of longer term historical disparities in access to high-quality education for historically and currently marginalized students is a significant factor that impacts graduation outcomes[73]. Figure 19 shows the relative percentages of students of color in the United States who lacked access to public education itself until recently.

[73] Snyder, *120 Years of American Education*. (https://nces.ed.gov/pubs93/93442.pdf)

Figure 19

Percent of 5- to 19-Year-Olds Enrolled in School, by Race, 1850–1991



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970;* and Current Population Reports, Series P-20, *School Enrollment—Social and Economic Characteristics of Students, various issues.*

Students with disabilities were not assured of a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment until the passing of Public Law 94-142, now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, in 1975. In 1970, public schools in the United States educated only one in five students with disabilities[74]. Many students were not served in their neighborhood schools but were placed in state institutions for those with intellectual disabilities or mental illness. Family members often had little to no say about how their child was supported or educated[75].

For example, students who are newly arrived, immigrant English language learners arrive in Oregon's public schools every year. Research shows that these students require time to adjust to their new educational surroundings and they often report feelings of fear and isolation, partially stemming from differences in their education backgrounds.[76]

[74] *Individuals with Disabilities Act, "A History."* (https://sites.ed.gov/idea/IDEA-History)
[75] Osgood, R. L. (2008). The history of special education: A struggle for equality in American public schools. Praeger Publishers/Greenwood Publishing Group.
[76] Short and Boyson, *Helping Newcomer Students*.

Cultural identity and feeling of belonging is another factor that can impact graduation rates. Student's sense of belonging at school can have a large impact on achievement. A recent meta-study examined 82 separate studies of student belonging, and described a sense of belonging as a prerequisite to a successful high school experience[77]. That sense of belonging can be supported by courses like ethnic studies, which are designed to support students' cultural identity through the study of the humanities.

A recent study found that participation in a single ethnic studies course in 9th grade had an impact on student achievement. Students who participated in a 9th grade ethnic studies class had, on average, passed 6 more classes then the comparison group by their 4th year of high school, 90% of them graduated from high school, and they were 15% more likely to enroll in postsecondary education[78].

For some communities, that need for cultural support and belonging is particularly acute. The United States government has a unique federal trust responsibility, noted by the Supreme Court in the United States v. Mitchell, 1983 decision[79], which stems from the treaties signed between sovereign Tribes and the U.S. government beginning in the 1800s. While these treaties promised Tribes access to education (in exchange for land, resources, and rights) educational opportunities were not always equitable and this continues to today. The egregious history of the boarding school era, wherein students were taken from their families and communities to attend boarding schools far from their homes, stripped of their clothing, culture, language, and religious practices, often experiencing physically, mental, verbal, medical and sexual abuse, while being trained for menial positions, caused historical generational trauma still felt today in Native communities across America. A new federal study showing that more than 500 students died at Native American boarding schools only rekindles old wounds from this historical trauma[80].

A review of federal reports from 1928[81], 1969[82], and 2014[83] shows that the U.S. education system has been attempting to correct these conditions for at least ninety-four years. According to the 2014 Native Youth Report, Executive Office of the President, Native children

[77] Korpershoek, et al., "Relationships between school belonging," 641-680.
[78] Sade, Dee, and Penner, "Ethnic Studies."
[79] *United States vs. Mitchell,* 463 US 206. (https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/463/206/)
[80] KXLY, "*Burial sites*." (https://www.kxly.com/report-burial-sites-found-at-53-native-american-boarding-schools/
[81] National Indian Law Library, *Meriam Report*.
[82] National Indian Law Library, *Indian Education: A National Tragedy - A National Challenge (Kennedy Report)*. (https://www.narf.org/nill/resources/education/reports/kennedy/toc.html)
[83] Executive Office of the President, *2014 Native Youth Report*. (https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/20141129nativeyouthreport_final.pdf)

are far more likely than their non-Native peers to grow up in poverty, to suffer from severe health problems, and to face obstacles to educational opportunity. These conditions are systemic and severe and must be addressed through increased resources."[84]

The assimilation practices led to trying to indoctrinate children into mainstream culture and destroy their lifeways. American Indian/Alaska Native students are in ethnocentric and racist systems that leave them at odds with their elders and cultural teachings. Currently, some policymakers and leaders recognize the trauma that generations of children and communities have faced resulting from these assimilation policies and are moving toward strengthening better educational policies and practices through government-to-government relationships at the federal, state, and Tribal levels. A good summary of what education should be is found in this passage by Polingaysi Qoyawayma:

> "[Indians] should be regarded as valuable assets to the nation and to the world, for that is what they can be, once their talents and special abilities are recognized and encouraged.
>
> But don't ask them to peel off their brown skins and become white men. Peel though they might, there'd always be another layer of brown underneath. No. Rather, ask them to be themselves, help them to realize the value of their own heritage. Too much time has been spent trying to teach them to cast aside the Indian in them, which is equivalent to asking them to cease being. An Indian can no more be a white man than a white man can be an Indian. And why try? There is infinite good in the Indian culture pattern. Let's look at this thing objectively, understanding each other with charity; not disparaging the differences between us, but being gratefully aware of the good qualities we may adopt, one from the other."[85]

Students who immigrate to the United States as adolescents contend with a unique set of systemic challenges. The extent to which their schools can systematically evaluate international schooling experiences varies, and the evaluation of international transcripts often is left to counselors and registrars with little to no formal training in the evaluation of international transcripts.[86] This can result in limited transfer of credits that count toward graduation requirements and repetition of coursework covering content students have already mastered.

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[84] Executive Office of the President, *2014 Native Youth Report*. (https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/20141129nativeyouthreport_final.pdf)

[85] Qoyawayma, *No Turning Back*, 173-174.

[86] Greenberg Motamedi, et al., *Welcoming, Registering, and Supporting*. (https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED610689.pdf)

Students who are designated as English learners may find their schedules filled with English language development courses that count as elective credit and diminish their access to other courses. These students may also be tracked into content courses (such as ELA (English Language Arts) and math) that are designed just for English learners, where they are segregated with other English learner students, and have limited opportunities to develop relationships with students from other backgrounds.[87] This also lessens their opportunities for developing friendships with English speakers, which is a strong predictor of academic success.[88]

Students who are refugees may experience additional challenges related to the trauma of migration and the circumstances that caused them to leave their home country. Conditions in their home country may make it difficult to access prior schooling records.

Research shows that racism is "fundamental to racial disparities in educational attainment."[89] Oregon's data shows that districts consistently graduate students identifying as Hispanic/Latino/a/x, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, and American Indian/Alaska Native, and Multi-Racial at a lower rate than their White peers, though the gap is narrowing over time. Many Oregon schools are only recently attempting to attract a culturally and linguistically diverse professional teaching core and provide culturally responsive instruction. This contributes to Black/African Americans having higher than average rates of absenteeism in elementary school, near average in middle school, then much higher than average in high school.[90] In Oregon, about twice as many African American/Black students are disciplined than White students or the student population as a whole.[91] National research has found that there are no differences in the frequency of disruptive behaviors across demographic groups, yet, "African American students, low-income students, and students attending high-poverty urban schools are more likely to be referred to school officials, suspended, or expelled.[92] These disparities likely contribute to graduation disparities, not just within the African American/Black student group but across many of Oregon's other demographic groups.

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[87] Dabach, "*I Am Not a Shelter!*"(https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10824669.2014.954044); Callahan, "*Tracking*" (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.3102/00028312042002305); Gandara, "*Overcoming*." (https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/overcoming-triple-segregation)
[88] Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, and Todorova, *Learning a New Land.*
[89] Merolla, "Completing the Educational Career," 294.
[90] Oregon Department of Education, *African American/Black Student Success Plan*. (https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/equity/AfricanAmericanBlackStudentEducation/Documents/aabsSuccessPlan.pdf)
[91] Oregon Department of Education, *African American/Black Student Success Plan*. (https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/equity/AfricanAmericanBlackStudentEducation/Documents/aabsSuccessPlan.pdf)
[92] Skiba, et al., "The Color of Discipline."

In Oregon, students who identify as Latino/a/x make up nearly 25% of the total population of students across the state. Some districts are majority Latino/a/x, making up over 50% of the student population.[93] However, data collected through reading and math assessments in the 4th and 8th grades show Latino/a/x students are lagging behind average performance of peers.[94] While the broader problem racism poses to educational access is much larger than graduation requirements, several graduation requirements are likely implicated in this disparity, including the Essential Skills requirements, access to high-quality credit offerings, and the quality of the learning experience within the credit.

The implementation of the Assessment of Essential Skills requirements in reading, writing, and math yielded several inequitable outcomes in the diploma options that our education system made available to students, as well as how students demonstrated proficiency in relation to the requirements (i.e., which assessment option was leveraged). These outcomes yielded patterns that are concerning when evaluated by race/ethnicity (American Indian/Alaska Native tribal citizens, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino/a/x, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Asian, and White), disability status, and English learner status.

> *"Elements like a plan and profile that are often spread over years make it incredibly hard for our school where [many students enter in later grades]...It needs to be simplified and consider that marginalized students often have high mobility and are starting over."*
>
> *- Oregon School Administrator*

Additionally, districts graduate students experiencing disability at a lower rate than students who do not experience disability [Oregon's Four-Year Graduation Rates for Students with IEPs, ODE 2022)]. Districts also graduate students who are English learners at a lower rate than students whose home language is English (Oregon's Four-Year Official Graduation Rates for Students who are English Learners)]. Each of these Oregon trends in graduation rates are mirrored in national U.S. data (NCES, 2022),[95] and these trends are rooted in larger patterns of societal inequity. Issues of school quality and school environment are most likely linked to disparities in graduation rates in Oregon. Schools with high concentrations of students living in poverty are more likely to have undertrained and under-resourced teachers who are more likely to report students for behavioral reasons.[96] These

[93] Oregon Department of Education, Latino/a/x and Indigenous Student Success Plan.
[94] Oregon Department of Education, Latino/a/x and Indigenous Student Success Plan.
[95] National Center for Education Statistics, "Fast Facts."
[96] Glazerman, Mayer, and Decker, "Alternative routes to teaching."

differences in school quality play out in terms of graduation access through the quality of the learning experience contained in each course or credit and the quality of support provided for the non-credit graduation requirements, such as the Education Plan and Profile.

What engagement revealed about potential reasons for graduation disparities in Oregon
In direct engagement meetings and an online survey, educators in grades K–12 responded to the question, "Reflecting on your experiences as an educator, are there ways in which the current graduation requirements have created barriers for students? What could be done to make graduation requirements more fair?" When classified into recurring themes, the majority of identified barriers fell into the following five categories:

- Traditional mathematics pathway (i.e., three units beginning with algebra I);
- Essential Skills assessment requirements;
- Lack of flexibility in graduation criteria;
- Graduation requirements that are not responsive to post-high school plans; and
- Lack of understanding of requirements for different diplomas.

As with the targeted community engagement meetings conducted by Oregon's Kitchen Table, the K-12 educators viewed graduation barriers from a variety of perspectives that extended beyond the current graduation requirements as posed in the question. Many cited educational resource constraints that led to learning disparities before high school, language and cultural barriers, traumatic experiences, poverty, houselessness, drug addiction, and the absence of support systems in high school (See *Appendix D*).

> *"[Barriers include] lack of equitable access to resources to engage in courses/activities required. Systemic approaches favoring white supremacy, middle class values, lack of access to supports/resources."*
>
> *- Oregon Counselor*

Feedback about graduation access collected through statewide engagement (See *Appendix C*) fell into six major categories. Students from historically marginalized communities feel unwelcome, out of place, or unseen in school environments, which reduces learning. Respondents indicated that low expectations for students from historically marginalized

communities from educators, school, and community may be a barrier to graduation. Respondents from historically marginalized communities noted the negative effect of explicit or implicit messages that students from such communities are not successful in classes, tests, etc.

Restricted learning opportunities and limits on ways to demonstrate learning as potential barriers to graduation was another theme from respondents. Additionally, respondents mentioned that high teacher turnover or lack of teachers to fill certain positions limits the ability of districts to offer instruction and, consequently, limits student opportunity to learn.

Currently, learning and demonstrations of mastery are expected to occur within scripted times of day and on a standard four-year timeline. This could create barriers for students who learn at a different pace, or whose access to time is impacted by outside factors (such as mobility). Students who are required to demonstrate mastery in a language other than their "first," "home," or "primary" language may be experiencing barriers to fully showing what they know and can do. Oregon's new Access to Linguistic Inclusion policy may help to reduce some of these barriers.[97]

> *"I believe it is critical that Oregon continues to wrestle with the reality that traditional high school does not work for a significant number of students. The core issue is how can we build accountability for outcomes, but flexibility in how those outcomes are obtained? The significant percentage of students whose lives are impacted by trauma or poverty or homelessness will struggle disproportionately with an inflexible educational model."*
>
> *- Oregon Superintendent*

The education system in America was not designed for all learners. In order to redesign the system so that all students will thrive, there needs to be an intentional shift from discriminatory, exclusionary practices, whether intentional or not, to anti-racist and inclusive practices. Taken as a whole, the learning gained from listening to Oregon communities, looking at historical trends in Oregon's graduation rates, and reviewing national research studies tells a consistent story highlighting the disparities in graduation outcomes for Oregon's students who belong to historically and currently marginalized groups. This learning also reveals the relationship between the historical inequities present within Oregon's education system, including its graduation policies, and these disparate outcomes for students. While patterns of providing historically and marginalized students with inequitable graduation opportunities may not be isolated to Oregon, it is incumbent upon

[97] For more information see *Access to Linguistic Inclusion* policy. (https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/ELA/Documents/ALI Guidance and Explanation.pdf)

Oregon's education leaders to act with intent to build a new path forward that ensures equitable opportunities for Oregon's students of color, indigenous students, emergent English learners, students with disabilities, students experiencing poverty, and mobile students that recognize and build upon the diverse strengths of these students, their families, and communities.

ASSESSMENT OF ESSENTIAL SKILLS ANALYSIS

This section is written in response to the following text from Senate Bill 744:

> *(2)(b) Review state requirements related to demonstrations of proficiency in skills or academic content areas that are not related to career and technical education, with an emphasis on demonstrations of proficiency in Essential Learning Skills….*
>
> *(2)(b) Review state requirements related to demonstrations of proficiency in skills or academic content areas that are not related to career and technical education, with an emphasis on demonstrations of proficiency in Essential Learning Skills…*
>
> *(5)(b)(C) Include an analysis of the effectiveness of requiring students to demonstrate proficiency in Essential Learning Skills…*

Oregon instituted the Assessment of Essential Skills requirements from 2012 to 2014 (first reading, then writing, followed by mathematics). The Essential Skills policies were implemented to ensure that all students in Oregon were graduating with the skill set required for pursuing postsecondary education and training. As demonstrated above, the implementation of the Assessment of Essential Skills as graduation requirements yielded several inequitable outcomes in the diploma options that our education systems made available to students and how students demonstrated proficiency in relation to the requirements (i.e., which assessment option was leveraged). These outcomes show patterns that are concerning when evaluated by race/ethnicity, disability status, and English learner status. Outcomes that yield such patterns require interrogation to identify the barriers and sources of these inequities that exist in our education systems so that they can be removed.

How Students Demonstrate Proficiency in the Reading, Writing, and Math Essential Skills

ODE conducted a review of state graduation rates for the Oregon Diploma, the Modified Oregon Diploma, the Extended Oregon Diploma, and the Alternate Certificate as well as the ways in which students demonstrated proficiency in the reading, writing, and math Essential Skills. These data were evaluated with regard to student race/ethnicity, disability status (students served through IEPs or Section 504 plans), and English learner/emerging bilingual status, in order to address these questions. The data from these reviews are shared and described below.

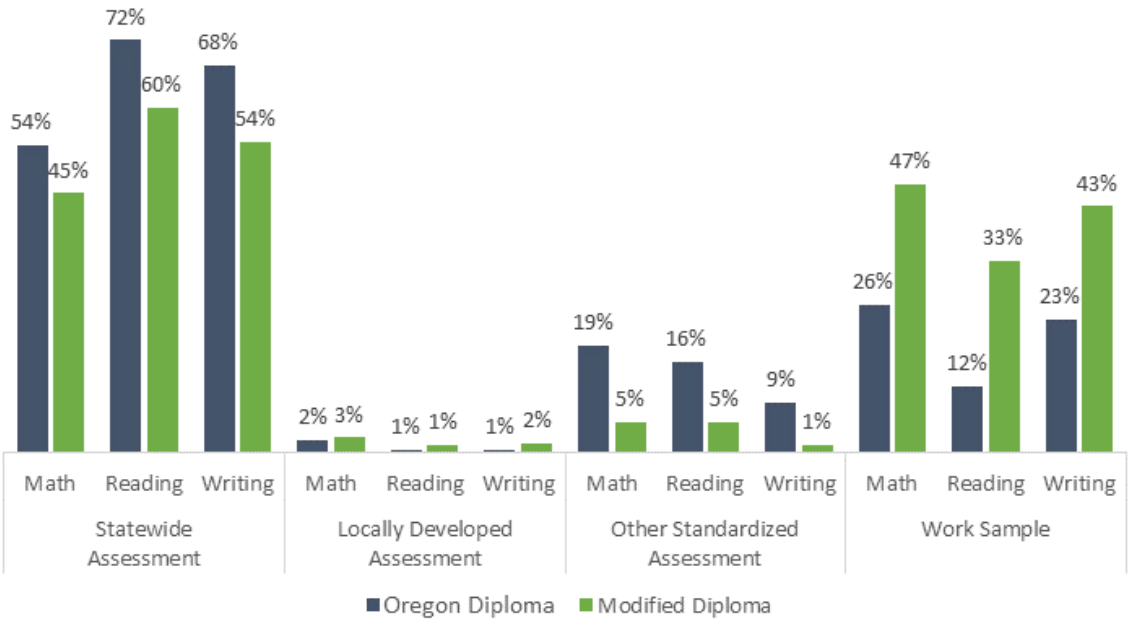
Historically, most Oregon students have used the state summative assessment to demonstrate proficiency in the reading, writing, and math Essential Skills, though percentages who do so have been steadily decreasing over time in math and reading. As shown by Figure 20 below, in

the last year for which demonstrations of proficiency in these three Essential Skills was required, 72% of on-time Oregon Diploma recipients met their reading Essential Skill requirement using the state summative assessment, while 68% did so in writing, and 54% used the state summative assessment to meet their proficiency requirement in mathematics.

> "These are not great indices for student success--right now, many of our students are simply traumatized and struggling with depression, anxiety, and a sense of futility. In addition many of them have too many work and family commitments to dedicate sufficient time to school. They struggle with the costs of housing; many have food insecurity. If state officials want to help students be successful in community college, fund our schools, so that we can lower tuition and create wrap-around services to address student need (we do not have a sufficient # of counselors to support students in crisis, for instance)"
>
> - Oregon Postsecondary Partner

Figure 20

How Students Met Their Assessment of Essential Skills Requirements, On-Time Graduates in 2018–19

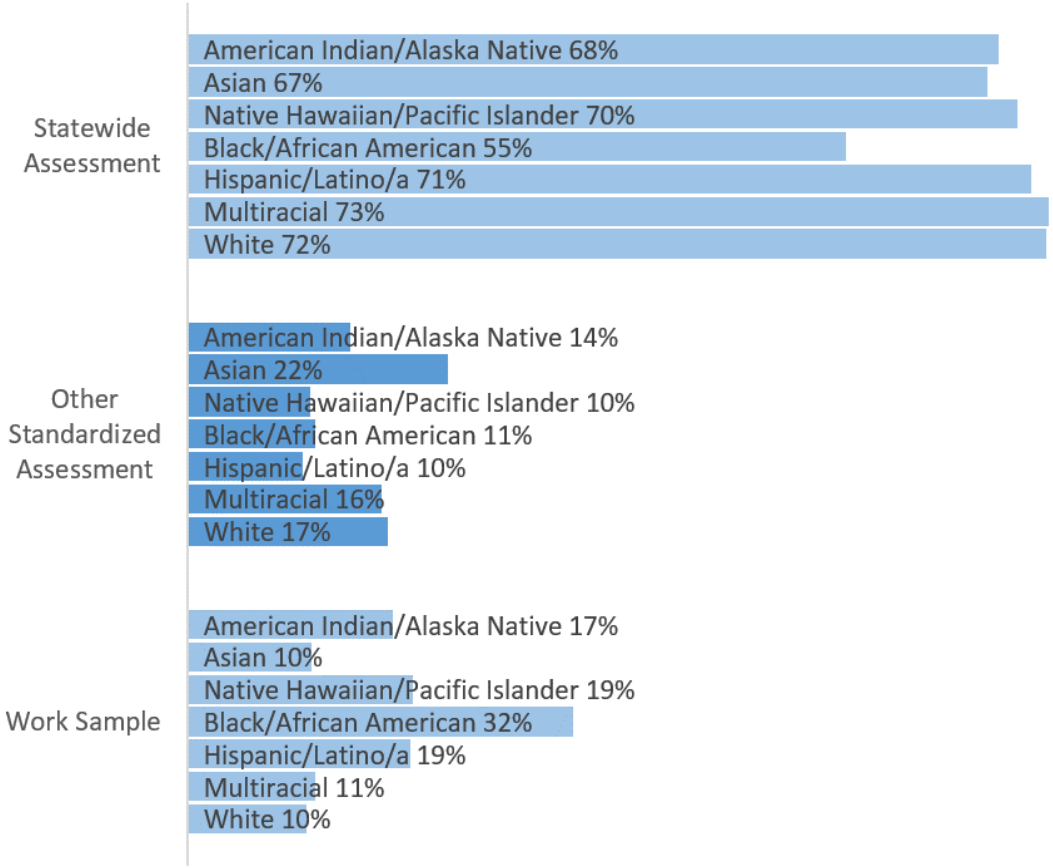


Figures 21 through 23 below show how students meet their reading, writing, and mathematics Essential Skills requirements with state-approved assessment options, disaggregated by race/ethnicity. These figures show that students who identify as Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native tribal citizens, and Hispanic/Latino/a/x are participating in the work sample option at rates that are much higher than other student groups. These data provide cause for some concern, as they may indicate that systems do not support students at the same level depending on how they demonstrate their Assessment of Essential Skills requirements or that the statewide test options may be implemented inequitably. Work samples can be wonderfully reflective of culturally responsive assessment practices, honoring student identity and agency, and may be leveraged appropriately by Oregon's education systems to reflect such a possibility. However, it may also be the case that students are given work samples because disparate learning opportunities have not allowed them to demonstrate proficiency in other ways. This is an area that requires additional engagement and discussion to understand how student interests are being impacted.

> *"There is always a disconnect from ODE's vision and school district's implementation processes. As a counselor I can tell you that we never had a single senior who did not graduate because of not passing Essential Skills. What does that mean? If they didn't clear it through the SBAC, PSAT, SAT then they will end up clearing it by the other forms allowed, mostly writing or math samples. The high school I worked at had dedicated classes for seniors to make sure they would [pass work samples]."*
>
> *- Oregon Counselor*

Figure 21

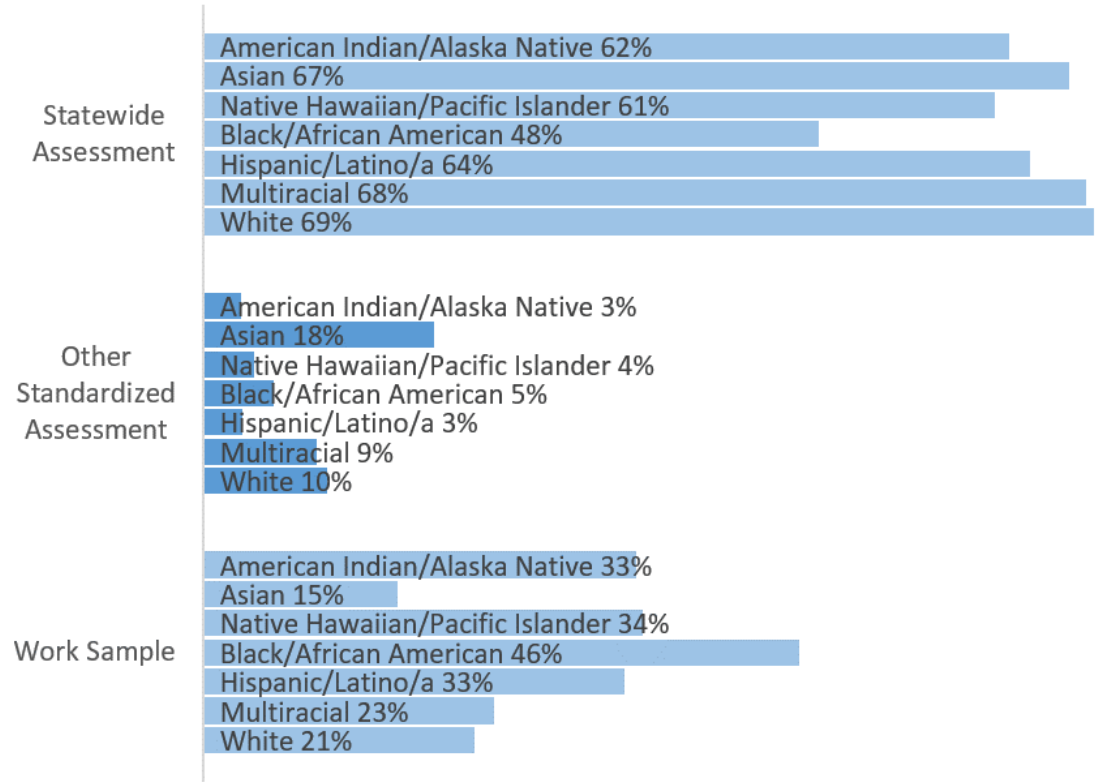
How Students Met Their Reading Proficiency Requirements by Race/Ethnicity, On-Time Graduates in 2018–19



Note: Locally Developed Assessments are not shown because no student group was at more than 1% for this method.

Figure 22

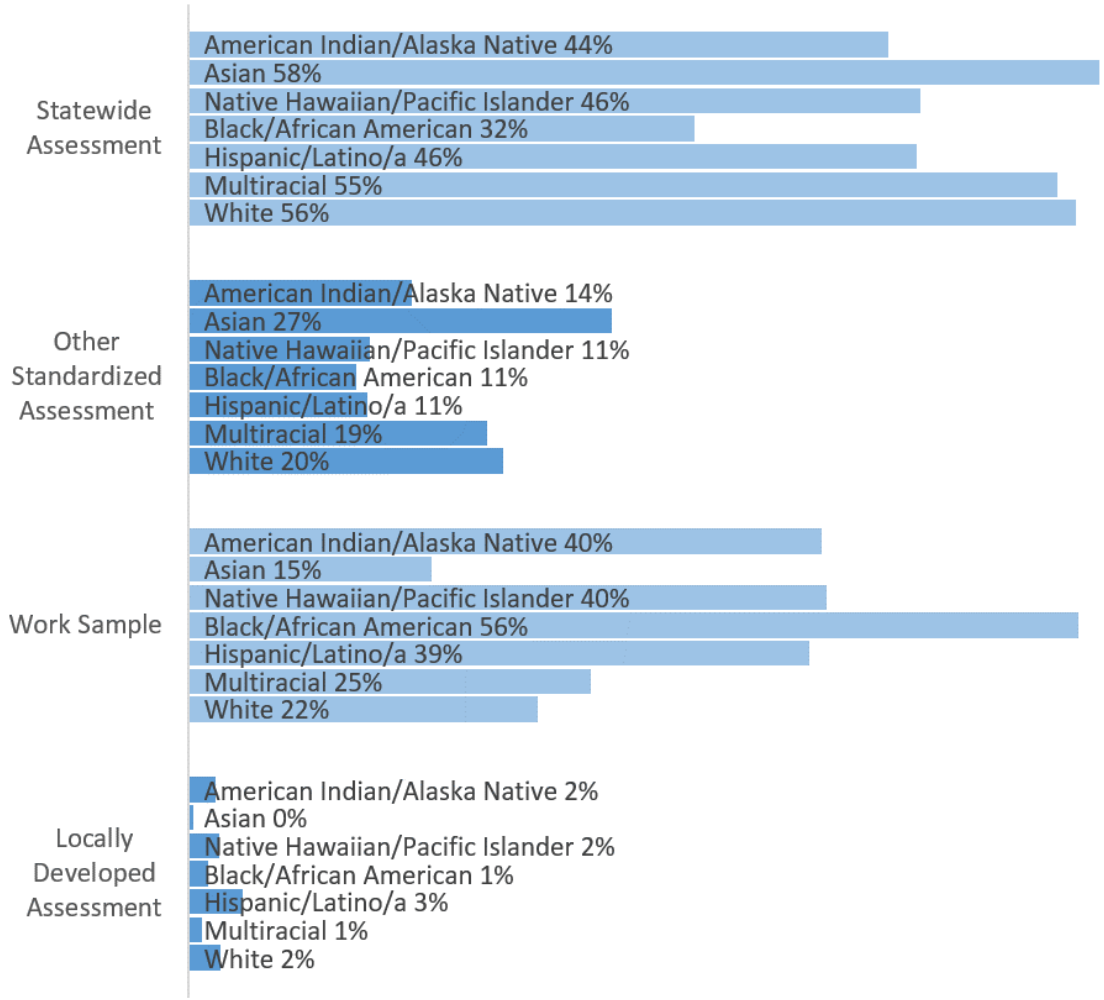
How Students Met Their Writing Proficiency Requirements by Race/Ethnicity, On-Time Graduates in 2018–19



Note: Locally Developed Assessments are not shown because no student group was at more than 1% for this method.

Figure 23

How Students Met their Mathematics Proficiency Requirements by Race/Ethnicity, On-Time Graduates in 2018–19

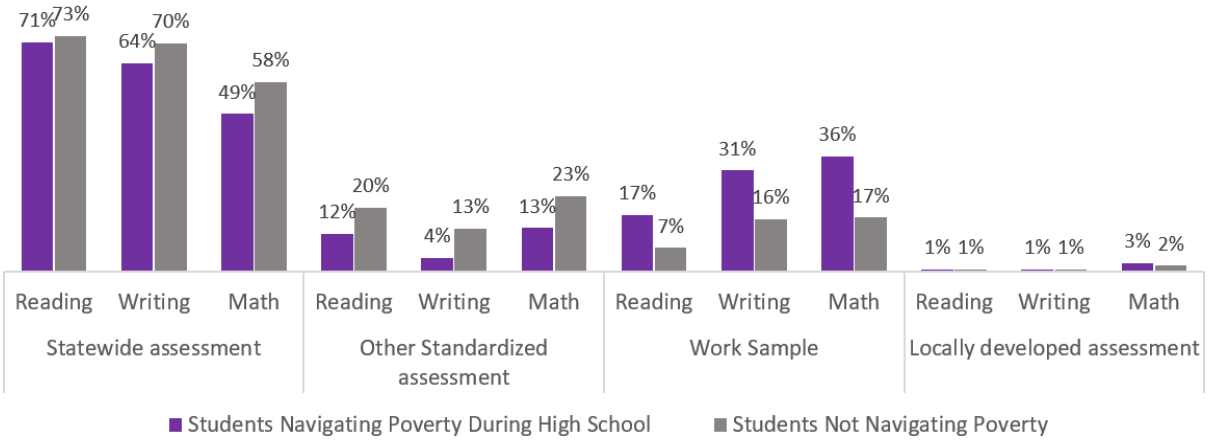


How Students Navigating Poverty Demonstrate Proficiency in the Essential Skills

As with other marginalized groups, students navigating poverty are more likely to use work samples to demonstrate proficiency in the three measured Essential Skills, as shown in Figure 24 below.

Figure 24

How Students Navigating Poverty Meet Their Reading Proficiency Requirements, On-Time Graduates in 2018–19



How Students Experiencing Disabilities Demonstrate Proficiency in the Essential Skills

Students experiencing disabilities, who are being served by IEPs, are also experiencing disparate systems outcomes in the ways they demonstrate proficiency in the reading, writing, and math Essential Skills. Figure 25 shows how students served by IEPs meet their reading proficiency requirements. The same pattern is present in writing and mathematics.

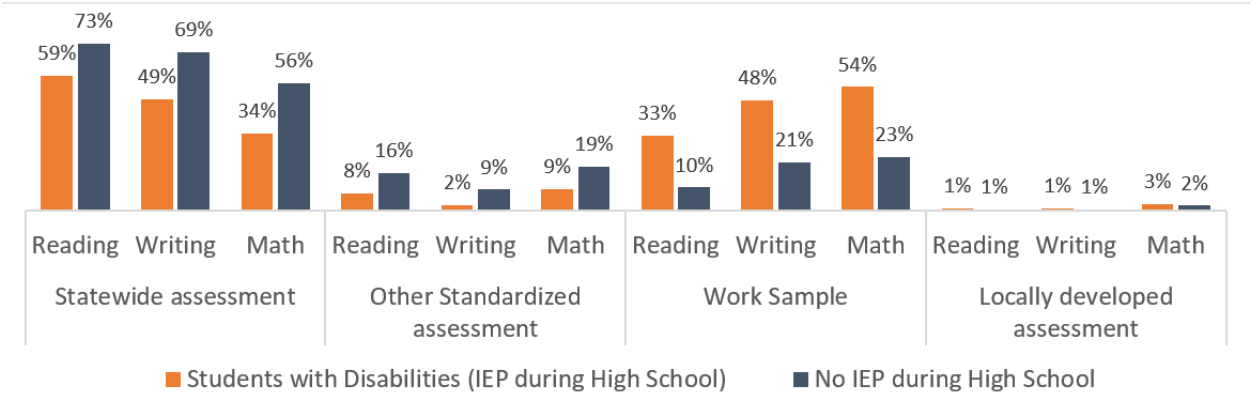
> *"The essential skills requirement has adversely impacted our students served by our [special education] program and also those who are served by our [English Language learner] programs. For some of our students, especially those on a modified diploma, they are not sure why they have completed these additional tasks and an inordinate amount of time is spent trying to help these students create a passing sample in order to graduate. The greater challenge with this is the essential skills devalues the work that takes place in the classroom. . Our teachers work hard to hold our students to high academic standards and provide supports that are tailored to each student's learning needs. When a student earns a passing grade…that grade reflects the work and accomplishment of that student."*
>
> *- Oregon Administrator*

Systems are graduating students served with IEPs using work samples at rates that are disproportionate to peers who are not served by IEPs. Again, this may be due to appropriate

use of work samples. Because of the way the program was implemented, where scoring was completed locally, it is not possible to determine whether work samples were being scored reliably.

Figure 25

How Students with IEPs Meet Their Reading Proficiency Requirements, On-Time Graduates in 2018–19



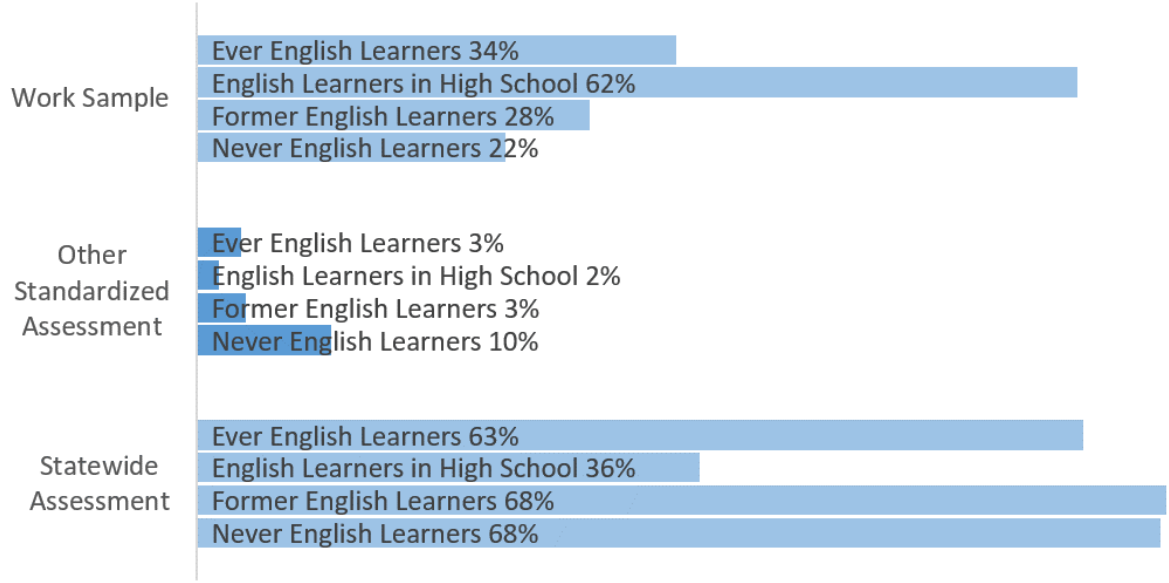
How English Learners Demonstrate Proficiency in the Essential Skills

Students who are emerging bilinguals, federally identified as English learners, are also experiencing disparate systems outcomes in the ways that they demonstrate proficiency in the reading, writing, and math Essential Skills. Figure 26 shows how students who are federally identified as English learners meet their writing proficiency requirements. The same pattern is present in reading and mathematics.

Systems are graduating students who are federally identified as English learners using work samples at rates that are disproportionately higher than their peers who are not so identified.

Figure 26

How Students who are English Learners Meet their Writing Proficiency Requirements, On-Time Graduates in 2018–19

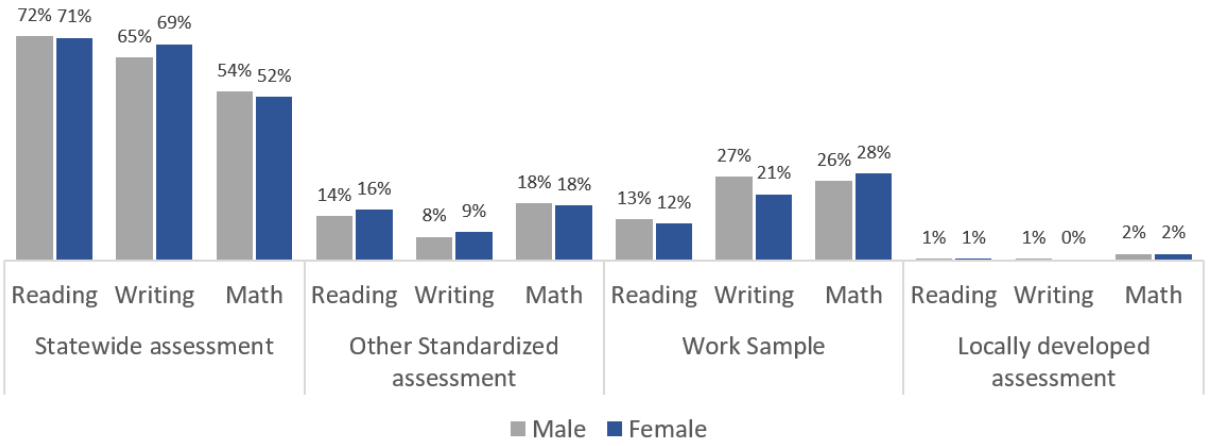


How Students Demonstrated Proficiency in the Essential Skills by Gender

Despite persistent inequities in graduation rates between male and female students, only small differences are seen in the methods by which male and female students demonstrate proficiency in the Essential Skills, as seen in Figure 27.

Figure 27

Method of Demonstrating Proficiency in Essential Skills by Gender, On-Time Graduates in 2018–19

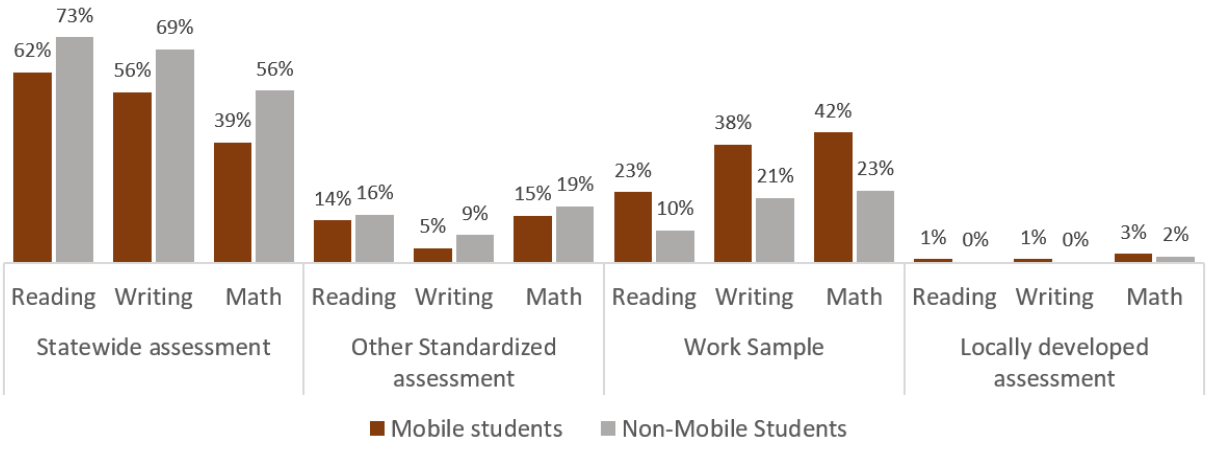


How Students Experiencing Mobility Demonstrated Proficiency in the Essential Skills

Students who experienced within-year mobility during high school are substantially more likely to use work samples to demonstrate proficiency in relation to the Essential Skills requirements, and substantially less likely to use the statewide assessment. This may be related to decreased educational opportunities afforded to these students, including potentially missing test windows due to their mobility. Given the significant differences in graduation rates between these groups (See Figure 11 above), comparisons of on-time graduates should be interpreted with caution. More than half of students experiencing mobility did not graduate on time and are therefore not included in Figure 28.

Figure 28

Method of Demonstrating Proficiency in Essential Skills by Within-Year Mobility, On-Time Graduates in 2018–19



Note: Students are counted as mobile within a given school year if they met at least one of the following criteria: multiple schools (enrolled in more than one school during the year); late entry (first enrolled in Oregon public K–12 after the first school day in October); early exit (left K–12 enrollment before the first school day in May); or significant gap (a period of more than 10 weekdays between reported enrollment spans, during which no enrollment was reported for the student). Students are counted in Figure 11 if they met at least one of the mobility criteria during at least one of their four years of high school. Students may be included in more than one of the mobility sub-categories. Between-year mobility (students changing schools from one school year to the next; students who were not enrolled for an entire school year) is not included in the definition of mobility used in Figure 28.

Analysis of Effectiveness of Reading, Writing, and Math Essential Skills Proficiency Requirements

This section is written in response to the following text from Senate Bill 744:

> *(5)(b)(C) Include an analysis of the effectiveness of requiring students to demonstrate proficiency in Essential Learning Skills and an explanation of the reasons the department concludes that requirements related to demonstrations of proficiency in Essential Learning Skills should be retained, modified or eliminated. If the department concludes that demonstrations of proficiency of Essential Learning Skills should be retained, the department shall provide recommendations for alternative methods for students to*

demonstrate proficiency in skills or academic content areas that are not related to career and technical education.

Test purpose and design is critical in the analysis of the Assessment of Essential Skills policy. Oregon's state summative assessments are designed to be reliable at the student group level to help inform systems-level decisions. They were not designed to be sufficiently reliable for high stakes, individual student level decisions such as graduation. This same critique can be applied to the other state-approved assessment options, as well. The other standardized assessments were primarily assessments that were used for college entrance examinations (which is a use that is becoming less common across the United States due to related equity and validity concerns). The work samples approach was also subject to similar criticism with regard to validity. Using these assessments for purposes for which they do not have explicit validity evidence is not consistent with educational measurement standards.

Though it was not feasible to causally identify all the factors and barriers that account for the disparities in graduation outcomes with extant data, ODE partnered with the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to review the impact of requiring assessments of the reading, writing, and math Essential Skills on students' postsecondary success. HECC staff conducted a study comparing postsecondary outcomes for students by race/ethnicity, disability status, and English learner status. The study looked at postsecondary success outcomes that included first grade point average (GPA), retention, credits completed versus attempted, and college level reading, writing, and math completion in the first year. The study identified no changes in outcomes for these student groups after the assessment of reading, writing and math Essential Skills began. The full study report is available in *Appendix H*.

HECC's study concluded that most of the student success indicators considered either did not change or declined during the period following the introduction of the Assessment of Essential Skills (also referenced earlier in this report at demonstrations of proficiency). Retention rates (the proportion of first year students returning for the following year) were flat during the entire period considered for university students and declined slightly for community college students. First-year grade point average (GPA) increased slightly for both groups over the period, but the increases were steady, the trends began prior to the introduction of Assessments of Essential Skills, and those did not appear to be associated with any inflection points in the data.

Both attempt and completion rates for college-level reading and writing courses dropped steadily among first-year university students during this period, with just 10% of students attempting a college-level reading course and 48% attempting a college-level writing course in

2020. Completion rates declined 5-6 percentage points over the same period. Among community college students, attempt rates for reading were flat, attempt rates declined for writing, but completion rates increased by 3-4 percentage points. College-level math course taking, and completion rates, increased slightly, but HECC concluded that these increases were not associated with the adoption of the math essential skill requirement.

The data displays presented above show that the Assessment of Essential Skills requirements in reading, writing and math were implemented in a manner that led to disparate outcomes. In addition, there is no evidence that the policy was effective in ensuring that Oregon students were better positioned to pursue their postsecondary goals because of the implementation of the policy. The study by HECC shows that the policy had no association with postsecondary success outcomes for student populations of concern. Data that ODE reviewed regarding fifth-year graduates also shows that the reasons why students do not graduate after 4 years are complex and that the Assessment of Essential Skills requirements, on average, were not the primary barrier for students. Nevertheless, the trend identified in those data shows that there is reason to be concerned that the policy may be impacting students in a more negative way over time.

Respondents to the Oregon's Kitchen Table engagement had mixed opinions about external validation of students' reading, writing, and math skills. Respondents were split nearly evenly on whether teachers should decide whether students are ready to graduate or if state testing is also needed. Just over half of respondents (53%) felt that credits and grades are sufficient evidence of reading, writing, and math skills, while just under half (47%) felt that some kind of standardized test was an important source of external validation. When asked how student proficiency should be measured in order to graduate, respondents favored samples of student work (38%) and teacher evaluation (33%). Statewide testing had less support at 20%.

> *"Grades are completely subjective and an unreliable measure of student growth and potential from one year to the next. Grading is inconsistent from teacher to teacher. Bias is heavily present in grading ESPECIALLY at the high school level. You will need to regulate grades [in the absence of a secondary validation system]."*
>
> *- Oregon Superintendent*

Educators in grades K–12 responded to the survey question, "Both the Assessment of Essential Skills and grades serve as a way to verify that students have the knowledge and skills that a diploma should signify. In addition to grades, does there need to be a secondary validation system? If yes, describe whether it should look like the Assessment of Essential Skills or take

another form." Responses split equally regarding the need for a secondary validation system. The second part of the question elicited a wide range of answers, with the Assessment of Essential Skills requirements receiving support from only a third of those who advocated for a secondary system for verifying student knowledge and skills. See *Appendix D* for a complete description of the content analysis procedure and detailed survey results.

The Assessment of Essential Skills policy had substantial implications for students' course choices, as it was implemented. Students who were not able to meet the proficiency threshold established for the state summative assessment in their junior year were placed into courses designed to help them meet their Essential Skills requirements through work samples in their senior year. Placement in these courses typically eliminated other elective course options for students, resulting in opportunity costs that are difficult to estimate. Educators reported that being assigned to these courses had a negative impact on student motivation to persevere at a time when many were close to meeting their requirements.

"I do not believe that there should be a secondary validation system. Let's trust the teachers that we hire to work with our children to determine if they have demonstrated the learning in their classes at a level that is proficient."

- Oregon Administrator

"They have been with our children for four years and know better than anyone who is capable of going on and who may have the ability to make it through the requirements and who is ready to graduate."

- Oregon Resident (translated from Spanish)

ODE's 50-state review revealed that states are moving away from high school exit examinations, with many states issuing retroactive diplomas to make amends for the inequities that the practice created for students during implementation:

- Only 11 states had graduation exit examinations in place for English language arts and math in 2020 (FL, LA, MA, MD, MI, NJ, NM, NY, OH, TX, and VA).
- Twelve states recently ended graduation exit examinations (AR, AZ, CA, GA, ID, IN, MN, NV, OK, RI, SC, and WA).
- One state placed an exit examination moratorium (PA).
- Seven states delivered retroactive diplomas (AK, AZ, CA, GA, NV, SC, and TX).
- One state was planning a new series of graduation examinations (CO).

Oregon's Assessment of reading, writing, and math Essential Skills approach was unique in several ways when compared to these exit examination practices, as multiple assessment options were available as well as multiple attempts, although it still constituted a single high stakes requirement that state summative assessments in English language arts (reading and writing) and mathematics, which evaluate systems level outcomes for student groups, were not designed to support. The states where retroactive diplomas were awarded had exit examinations that were the single way forward for students who wanted to graduate.

Based on these analyses, requiring students to demonstrate proficiency in Essential Skills does not appear to be an effective policy for ensuring that all students have access to high quality instructional programming in mathematics, reading, and writing.

Determinations

After conducting an analysis of Oregon's graduation requirements and their impacts, a review of other states' graduation requirements, and a substantial engagement process, ODE made two determinations, pursuant to the requirements in SB 744 in sections 3(e) and 3(g).

Determinations

In response to SB 744, Section 3(e), ODE submits the following determination:

> **Determination 1:** ODE has determined that the skills and knowledge expected by business, industry, and postsecondary education do not fully align with the current requirements for the Oregon Diploma.

In response to SB 744, Section 3(g), ODE submits the following determination:

> **Determination 2:** ODE has determined that the requirements for Oregon high school diplomas have been applied inequitably to different student populations.

The recommendations that follow denote how to implement those determinations in a manner that is aligned with community voice, current research, and best practices in service of equity. This section is written in response to the following text from Senate Bill 744:

> *(2) The Department of Education shall…*
>
> > *(c) Make recommendations for state requirements for high school diplomas in this state to reduce disparities and to ensure that every student will be on track to earn one of the high school diplomas.*
>
> *4(c) Develop recommendations for changes to the requirements for high school diplomas:*
>
> > *(A) Based on data and the engagement process described in paragraph (b) of this subsection; and*
> >
> > *(B) With the goal of ensuring that the processes and outcomes related to the requirements for high school diplomas are equitable, accessible and inclusive.*

5(b)(B) Recommend changes in legislation or administrative rules that will reduce disparities and ensure that every student will be on track to earn one of the high school diplomas offered in this state.

Recommendations

The recommendations offered in this report extend from themes that emerged from the review of Oregon's Diploma requirements, the review of other states' diploma requirements, the diverse engagements regarding Oregon's high school diploma requirements, and the analyses of graduation data. Together, these efforts resulted in common themes about how the Oregon high school diploma can address the changing landscape of education, workforce, and socio-cultural contexts, while honoring the strengths and meeting the needs of students. The engagement process also revealed that barriers to graduation arise across the entire K–12 education system, graduation requirements included.

Families and educators shared that their children and students experience inequitable outcomes because they have inequitable *access* to high quality instructional programming across their entire public education experience.

Updating the Oregon Diploma requirements to better reflect the values and needs of students, communities, business and industry, and higher education is an important part of a bigger goal. Changes to the graduation requirements must be a part of a larger effort to build an equitable, accessible, and inclusive education system and pathway to graduation and future opportunity.

Realizing the Implementation of Recommendations

In considering the lessons learned from this process, ODE developed the following set of recommendations to guide future work around graduation requirements and the Oregon Diploma. It is important to note that while the recommendations are described as discrete steps here, there will be a need for a coordinated implementation that is fully informed by deep education and community partner engagement:

- Research, develop, and implement specific graduation requirements across multiple pathways toward a single Oregon Diploma.
- Build capacity so that students have flexible access to all courses of instruction required to meet graduation requirements.
- Generate deep understanding in students, families, and communities about the meaning and value of an Oregon Diploma, options for achieving an Oregon Diploma, and factors to consider in diploma pathway decision-making.
- Design and deliver education that supports students on their journey to earning an Oregon Diploma and successfully transitioning to their next steps after graduation.

In addition to technical solutions, such as ensuring flexible access to courses, adaptive changes are needed within our K–12 education systems in order to transform them to better reflect the values and priorities of the communities they serve and the needs of our changing world. Improving high school graduation outcomes for students first involves ensuring that all students in Oregon feel a strong sense of belonging with their school, among their peers, from their educators, and in their communities.

> *"Critical thinking skills and the ability to judge the veracity of media that they come in contact with are critical."*
>
> *- Oregon Resident*
>
> *"As much as the content of the courses matter (of course), I think the most important things to learn are skills that can be applied later on in life to make informed decisions. For example, if there was greater science literacy and skills in critical thinking, we would not have people afraid to be vaccinated or ignorant to scientific facts."*
>
> *- Oregon Resident*

Addressing this need for coordinated systems transformation will take significant resources and require dedicated staff time solely for this purpose. A strong investment is needed in order to meet the recommendations established in this report. ODE would need to develop a team dedicated to developing graduation requirements and implementing the next generation of the Oregon Diploma.

The recommendations fall into three general categories: 1) credit requirements, 2) non-credit requirements, and 3) recommendations related to school system structures. As mentioned above, many of these recommendations are not intended to be discreet individual changes; the graduation requirements are part of a system of expectations that are mutually supportive. They should thus be undertaken together and provide for a reexamination of how schools structure learning opportunities and support students in earning the Oregon Diploma.

Recommendations for Changes to Diploma Requirements

The recommendations offered below are directly related to feedback received from Oregonians during the engagement process. ODE evaluated the policy implications and solutions that would align with that feedback. For example, ODE heard from community and education partners that financial literacy was critical for students' future success. The engagement process demonstrated that assessment of financial literacy as a diploma requirement was not tenable as a non-credit requirement, where an assessment of financial literacy would have been the policy solution. ODE was also aware that the State Board of Education already

adopted K–12 standards that require instruction in financial literacy. The recommendation ODE proposes in this area thus took form as a credit requirement as the appropriate policy solution to pursue. This process was used to develop all of the recommendations, which were also evaluated for strengths and consequences by partners from higher education, business and industry, and K–12 public education systems.

Throughout the engagement process, the most prevalent theme was that a one-size-fits-all approach cannot meet the needs and postsecondary plans for all students. Nearly every conversation, and many open-ended responses, mentioned the importance of providing students with a wider range of opportunities (in credits and assessment). Even when respondents agreed that all students need to learn the same set of basic skills, they also highlighted that students may learn and demonstrate mastery of those skills in different ways.

Credit requirement recommendations

Because the quality of students' learning experience is, in part, driven by the quality of courses, engagement and research themes illuminated the importance of policies that focus on increasing state-level accountability on schools and districts to provide high-quality learning experiences that prepare students for postsecondary transitions.

Math credit requirement

> **Recommendation 1:** Align the mathematics credit requirements with other content area credit requirements by referencing the Oregon mathematics standards without prescribing a specific course as a starting point.

How does this recommendation differ from the current requirement?

This recommendation retains the current 3-credit math requirement for an Oregon Diploma. However, the current math requirement is for 1 credit of Algebra 1 and two credits beyond algebra 1. This recommendation would align required math course taking with high school math standards for math credit, which is the case in all other subject area credits except for social sciences, following established statewide curriculum frameworks for high school course sequences. Removing the specification about Algebra 1 provides schools and districts more flexibility in planning for updated math course sequences aligned with Oregon State Mathematics Standards.

How does this recommendation align with ODE's review and engagement processes and make graduation requirements more equitable, inclusive, and accessible?

Many participants in the Oregon's Kitchen Table engagement were interested in seeing math requirements reflect students' interests as well as have direct, practical application for careers, education, and other paths in life after graduation. There was concern among educators and community members that the current math requirements were creating barriers for students and were applied in the same way to all students, regardless of postsecondary goals. In response, this recommendation connects math course taking decisions with postsecondary planning, thereby increasing relevance and allowing for more flexible options for students. There are 12 states that establish mathematics credit requirements without defining which courses students must take to earn them (and three states that have no statewide credit requirements). This recommendation is thus consistent with the approaches taken by other states.

This recommendation removes an unnecessary barrier that creates substantial opportunity costs for students. Algebra 1 is repeated more than any similar math course and that results in students having fewer elective credit opportunities.

> *"Ability to do arithmetic…Fundamental measuring skills, i.e., how many ounces in a pound. Basic knowledge like what temperature water boils at."*
>
> *- Oregon Workforce Representative (listing values and skills that should be prioritized)*

Redesigning the math requirements should also allow students to participate in courses that better align with their goals, making it more inclusive and accessible. Making mathematics more accessible promises to increase student motivation to attempt and complete math courses. Oregon's math standards remain and establish ambitious learning expectations for all students. All students are still required to take mathematics. All students still have the opportunity to pursue advanced math courses. All students will demonstrate proficiency in math through course grades and ODE maintains focus on student achievement through the administration of our Grade 11 Oregon Summative Mathematics Assessments. ODE is working with postsecondary partners to articulate math pathways opportunities for all students, as part of the Oregon Math Project[98], which includes work on Mathways.

[98] ODE, *Oregon Math Project* (2022). (https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/mathematics/Pages/Oregon-Math-Project.aspx)

Note: The legislature incorporated ongoing funding to support Mathways in the 2021 session; this initiative is working to build more relevant and flexible high school math course patterns.

"I know math is a big struggle for a lot of students. I also think a lot of high school math as is currently done is not applicable to future life, depending on the goals of the student. Other math topics, such as budgeting, making large purchases (house, car), credit, and other financial literacy are much more applicable to most students than their ability to solve quadratic functions or the Pythagorean theorem."

- Oregon Resident

"Mathematics for the high school diploma should prioritize development of quantitative reasoning, involving contexts that can apply to students' current and future interests. This should include understandings of algebra, geometry, and data science that are meaningful to students, so that they expect to understand and appreciate the mathematics they encounter beyond high school and become confident in their own mathematical reasoning."

- Oregon Postsecondary Educator

Future Planning credit requirement

Recommendation 2: Add a 1.0 credit requirement for a Future Planning course (within the existing 24 credit requirement) that includes financial planning, interviewing, resume building, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and Oregon Student Aid Application (ORSAA) completion, and other post-secondary preparation that will impact future success.

How does this recommendation differ from the current requirement?

While some schools support students in developing interview skills, resumes, applying for financial aid, and completing employment and/or college applications, these are not currently graduation requirements. This recommendation would establish dedicated time for all students to receive such support.

Oregon social sciences content standards include learning targets related to financial literacy. This new course in future planning would focus on the practical application of financial literacy

standards as a part of planning for postsecondary transitions. Therefore, this course would be complementary to the existing social science learning experiences.

> *"I think students in high school…need a class on personal finance and resume writing. Quite a few students don't understand what contracts, loans and finances are. These are important when they are renting apartments, living on campus and borrowing money to fund their education."*
>
> *- Oregon Postsecondary Staff*

How does this recommendation align with ODE's review and engagement processes and make graduation requirements more equitable, inclusive, and accessible?

A substantial theme during engagement was that students need an opportunity to acquire a variety of real-world skills. Providing time for these skills will help students successfully transition to career, college, and adult life. This includes, for instance, helping students understand financial burdens and commitments they may be asked to take on for college or as part of adult life, which have been found to inequitably burden disadvantaged populations.

Non-credit requirement recommendations

One concern that surfaced in engagement and research was that the non-credit graduation requirements were creating barriers, were needlessly complicated, and unevenly implemented. The recommendations below focus on streamlining and aligning these requirements and providing districts with more support for their implementation.

Education plan and profile

Recommendation 3: Expand the Education Plan and Profile requirement to include a two-year post-graduation plan; establish increased support and accountability for schools to provide instructional time and support for students to complete the Education Plan and Profile; revise the Education Plan and Profile to function as a means of tracking *all* graduation requirements.

How does this recommendation differ from the current requirement?

With this recommendation, schools would support students in their postsecondary planning and navigation for up to two years after graduation to increase the likelihood of success. This would be a new requirement.

Oregon Administrative Rule only requires reporting (annually) that the district adhered to the graduation requirements rule in total. This recommendation would require districts to report on individual graduation requirements separately to ensure that all are receiving appropriate attention. This way the implementation of the Education Plan and Profile—including providing time and support for implementation—could be more closely monitored and supported.

Currently, the Education Plan and Profile is mostly focused on tracking course taking and doing postsecondary planning. This recommendation updates the Education Plan and Profile resources to also include tracking the completion of other graduation requirements, such as Extended Application and Career Related Learning Experiences.

How does this recommendation align with ODE's review and engagement processes and make graduation requirements more equitable, inclusive, and accessible?

The use of an Education Plan and Profile was supported by engagement sessions and research. By using school advisors, schools interrupt inequities that spring from relying on access to adults at home for postsecondary planning and graduation support. Some of Oregon's most disadvantaged students do not have the benefit of a consistent adult presence in their lives. Additionally, by extending this support through the first two years after graduation, schools are extending a safety net for students who may otherwise not have access to adult guidance for decision making, changing their plans, and newfound independence.

The review and engagement processes showed that the Education Plan and Profile is seen as an important guidance activity and a tool for student success, but the way that profile is implemented matters. Accountability for use of the Education Plan and Profile should shift from the student to the school, and ODE should give schools increased guidance and support in using the tool.

Essential skills list and definitions

> **Recommendation 4:** Retain, but update the list of Essential Skills and definitions and then integrate these skills into the Future Planning course credit, the Extended Application diploma requirement, and the Career Related Learning Experience diploma requirement as well as throughout the educational experiences across K–12.

How does this recommendation differ from the current requirement?

The current definition of Essential Skills is that they are "process skills that cross academic disciplines and are embedded in the content standards. The skills are not content specific and

can be applied in a variety of courses, subjects, and settings" (OAR 581-022-0102). The current Essential Skills include nine skills that were determined to be central to learning nearly 15 years ago. The definition will need to be updated to convey that the Essential Skills are embedded in courses, the Extended Application, and Career Related Learning Experiences. Beyond that, the list of skills will be updated to reflect current needs expressed by workforce, industry, and higher education partners.

How does this recommendation align with ODE's review and engagement processes and make graduation requirements more equitable, inclusive, and accessible?

Given the rate of societal change, the definitions of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions students need to pursue their postsecondary goals should be revisited. Oregon communities will be necessary partners in this process. The process will require a strong equity lens to ensure that changes interrupt existing inequities. Through focused development and application of the skills thus defined in partnership with communities, more students would succeed during and after high school. The skills could also be built into low-stakes tools that educators could use to provide students with feedback while their learning is underway.

There are contemporary needs that the current Essential Skills do not address. Any update to the Essential Skills must also be defined by community, as they may become vehicles for perpetuation of cultural biases if there are not shared, inclusive understandings for terms (e.g., "work ethic" and "professionalism"). The skills must be placed on equal footing, where certain skill sets are not emphasized over others by the requirements. Oregon has a critical opportunity now, to re-focus attention on a well-rounded education that ascribes equal importance to the revised Essential Skills and allows schools to integrate all of the skills across K–12 experiences. Students will also be able to determine which skills they need to enhance most, depending on their goals.

Demonstration of proficiency in reading, writing, and math Essential Skills

> **Recommendation 5:** Maintain focus on demonstrating math, reading, and writing proficiency through demonstration of knowledge and skills in courses; remove the duplicative requirement for all students to demonstrate proficiency again through a separate assessment (Assessment of Essential Skills). Develop reporting for systems accountability that publicly reports targeted staffing and post-secondary outcomes.

How does this recommendation differ from the current requirement?

This recommendation eliminates the requirement that students complete an additional state-approved assessment—beyond those provided as a part of their language arts or math course credits—to demonstrate proficiency in reading, writing, and math Essential Skills. This also eliminates the Essential Skills student-level data collection.

How does this recommendation align with ODE's review and engagement processes and make graduation requirements more equitable, inclusive, and accessible?

There was strong support for students building skills in reading, writing, and math, while there was mixed understanding and support for a state assessment requirement to ensure proficiency. Data about the Assessment of Essential Skills and feedback from educators and community members indicate that policy around reading, writing, and math Essential Skills was seen as an unnecessary barrier in the high school graduation process.

The assessment component of graduation was popular at the time Oregon adopted it. Since then, most states have been moving away from this type of requirement. Feedback revealed ambivalence and confusion about the requirement among students, parents, and educators in Oregon. Educators suggested that the Assessment of Essential Skills requirements created a recordkeeping burden for school counselors and restricted course options for students who use local assessments rather than the statewide test; disproportionately reducing options for electives for students from marginalized groups.

The review of statewide data shows this requirement does not benefit students in their preparation for postsecondary transitions.

With elimination of the Assessment of Essential Skills requirements, students would still be expected to be proficient in foundational academic subjects. It would be up to educators to determine proficiency through the student's course grades and non-credit requirements. Given

the lack of support and inefficacy of the Assessment of Essential Skills requirements, what alternatives might be available to protect student interests?

Students need the support of educators, counselors, social workers, therapists, and nurses to succeed and graduate. ODE could publicly report about the availability of these staffing resources available at the district and school level.

ODE heard from students and educators that grades can be volatile and inaccurate; we also heard that educator grades are the best representation of student achievement. Current research shows that grade point average is the best single predictor of postsecondary success. Standards-based grading practices, including efforts such as ODE's equitable grading practices work, could be expanded as part of a larger solution set for this challenge. ODE also supports academic achievement testing at the 11th Grade level in English language arts, mathematics, and science that provides a systems-level view of how well student group needs are being met, when participation is at required levels.

There are other system indicators that could be publicly reported to help protect student interests while not creating barriers or expending educator energy or instructional time. For example, ODE could publish postsecondary outcome data for every high school, delineating, for example, the percentages of graduates who attain meaningful employment or are enrolled in a community college or university within the first year after graduation. ODE could also publish high school grade point averages so the public could review and evaluate whether grade inflation may be occurring.

Extended Application

Recommendation 6: Revise the Extended Application requirements so they align with the updated Essential Skills list and definitions; establish increased accountability for schools to provide instructional time and support for students to complete the Extended Application.

How does this recommendation differ from the current requirement?

The Essential Skills will be revised based on information collected from workforce and industry, higher education, and ODE's review process. Once the Essential Skills are revised, the Extended Application requirements and resources will need to be revised to align.

Oregon Administrative Rule only requires reporting that the district adhered to the graduation requirements rule in total. This reporting process is completed annually. This recommendation would require districts to report adherence to each respective graduation requirement

separately within Division 22 to ensure that all requirements receive appropriate attention and monitoring. This way the implementation of the Extended Application—including providing time and support for implementation—could be more closely monitored and supported. Increased support and guidance for the Education Plan and Profile would also include guidance for documenting this project, therein reinforcing planning for this requirement as well.

How does this recommendation align with ODE's review and engagement processes and make graduation requirements more equitable, inclusive, and accessible?

The Extended Application is defined as "the application and extension of knowledge and skills in the new and complex situations related to the student's personal career interests and post-high school goals." This aligns with engagement feedback regarding the value of students having flexible means of showing what they know and having opportunities to practice the skills necessary for later life. By connecting this learning experience to the Essential Skills, students will be practicing in ways that connect to the student's interest within the context of a rich project.

Career-Related Learning Experiences

> **Recommendation 7:** Revise the Career-Related Learning Experiences requirement so it aligns with the updated "Essential Skills" list and definitions, and academic standards and/or continuing technical education (CTE) skill sets; establish increased accountability for schools to provide instructional time and support for students to complete the Career-Related Learning Experiences.

How does this recommendation differ from the current requirement?

The current Career-Related Learning Experiences requirement was not aligned with the Essential Skills, academic standards, or CTE skill sets. This recommendation is to align them all.

Similar to the substantiation provided for Recommendation 6 above, this recommendation would require districts to report adherence to each respective graduation requirement separately within Division 22 to ensure that all requirements receive appropriate attention and monitoring.

How does this recommendation align with ODE's review and engagement processes and make graduation requirements more equitable, inclusive, and accessible?

This recommendation aligns with feedback about the value of students having opportunities for career exploration and for flexibility in their learning. Career-Related Learning Experiences are

based on fields and industries of interest to the students. By connecting this learning experience to the revised Essential Skills, students will be practicing these valued skills within the context of career exploration relevant to their field of interest. These experiences will also help students visualize professions, which is especially important for students who do not have access to broad professional networks.

Oregon Diploma Options

> **Recommendation 8:** Use practices and examples from around the nation on diploma pathways to make a single Oregon Diploma accessible to all students.

How does this recommendation differ from the current requirement?

Current practice allows students to work toward an Oregon Diploma, a Modified Oregon Diploma, an Extended Diploma, or an Alternative Certificate (not a diploma). When implemented, the Oregon Diploma would be the only diploma and it would be made accessible through flexible pathways. Planning for this change would be informed by learning from work underway in other states.

How does this recommendation align with ODE's review and engagement processes and make graduation requirements more equitable, inclusive, and accessible?

Currently only the standard Oregon Diploma provides course credit requirements designed for access to the full continuum of postsecondary opportunities. Requiring all students to work towards an Oregon Diploma and supporting their success will ensure every student has similar opportunities after high school.

With the passage and implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (P.L. 114-95), states were expected to prioritize student attainment of a regular high school diploma, which means the "standard high school diploma awarded to the preponderance of students in the State that is fully aligned with State standards, or a higher diploma" (Section 8101(43)). Though states are allowed to maintain a state-defined alternate diploma for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, ODE engagement efforts revealed that alternate diplomas in Oregon are seen as limiting opportunities after high school. These perceptions are corroborated by Oregon data that shows that a Modified or Extended Diploma is associated with substantially lower rates of enrollment in college credit courses within a year of high school graduation (See Figure 17). Engagement, research, and national trends all support carefully and intentionally moving to a single Oregon Diploma, made available and accessible through multiple pathways.

CONCLUSION

Senate Bill 744 presented the Oregon Department of Education with an historic opportunity to connect with community and education partners whose voices have not been meaningfully involved in prior policy development in the interrogation of current graduation policy and practice. The transparent process implemented was designed to be equitable, accessible, and inclusive. It was also designed to generate recommendations for the Legislature and State Board of Education to consider in making Oregon's graduation requirements mirror this same commitment to equity, access, and inclusion.

Partnerships with higher education, workforce, industry, and Oregon's Kitchen Table were invaluable in accomplishing this task. While much progress has been made, further engagement with community and education partners will be needed to bring these recommendations to fruition and to ensure that any new policies that might be adopted do not create inequities in implementation. ODE has articulated the changes that would be needed to relevant Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) and Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs) should the recommendations in this report be adopted by the Legislature and State Board, in *Appendix I*.

While the engagement process reviewed current graduation policy and practices in Oregon, there was not an opportunity to engage with community and education partners in reviewing potentially innovative practices that were garnered from the 50-state review. ODE has compiled a *Vision for Future-Ready Graduates* in *Appendix J*, which outlines policies and practices that could be incorporated into Oregon's graduation conversation in the future based on examples from other states. The department is committed to staying in that conversation and supporting the implementation of graduation policies and practices that give all students an ambitious and meaningful path to their respective futures.

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APPENDIX A: SENATE BILL 744

SECTION 1. (1) As used in this section, “high school diploma” means the high school diploma options offered in this state under ORS 329.451, including a high school diploma, a modified diploma, an extended diploma and an alternative certificate.

(2) The Department of Education shall:

(a) Review state requirements for high school diploma options offered in this state, as those requirements are prescribed by ORS 329.451 and by rules adopted by the State Board of Education.
(b) Review state requirements related to demonstrations of proficiency in skills or academic content areas that are not related to career and technical education, with an emphasis on demonstrations of proficiency in Essential Learning Skills.

(c) Make recommendations for state requirements for high school diplomas in this state to reduce disparities and to ensure that every student will be on track to earn one of the high school diplomas.

(3) The review conducted under this section must include:

(a) An evaluation of the use of alternative certificates and how the requirements for alternative certificates compare to the requirements for other high school diplomas;

(b) An evaluation of the role of a school district or a public charter school when a student who has the documented history described in ORS 329.451 (7)(b) or (8)(b) seeks to pursue a high school diploma with more stringent requirements than a modified diploma or an extended diploma, as provided by ORS 329.451 (1)(c);

(c) A comparison of high school diploma requirements in this state with high school diploma requirements in other states;

(d) The identification of the expectations of employers and postsecondary institutions of education related to the skills and knowledge of persons who earn high school diplomas in this state;

(e) The determination of whether the skills and knowledge expected to be attained by persons who earn high school diplomas in this state, as identified in paragraph (d) of this subsection, align with the requirements for high school diplomas in this state;

(f) The identification of the causes of disparities that have resulted from the requirements for high school diplomas in this state; and

(g) The determination of whether the requirements for high school diplomas in this state have been applied inequitably to different student populations. Enrolled Senate Bill 744 (SB 744-B) Page 1

(4) When conducting the review and developing recommendations under this section, the department shall:

(a) Use a transparent process that is equitable, accessible and inclusive; (b) Enable and encourage meaningful engagement with:

(A) Representatives from historically underserved students, including students who:

(i) Have a disability;

(ii) Are from an immigrant or refugee population;

(iii) Are from racial or ethnic groups that have historically experienced academic disparities;

(iv) Are English language learners; or

(v) Are from a federally recognized Indian tribe of this state;

(B) Youth-led organizations that engage and empower youth; and

(C) Communities from across this state; and

(c) Develop recommendations for changes to the requirements for high school diplomas:

(A) Based on data and the engagement process described in paragraph (b) of this subsection; and

(B) With the goal of ensuring that the processes and outcomes related to the requirements for high school diplomas are equitable, accessible and inclusive.

(5)(a) Not later than September 1, 2022, the department shall provide a report to:

(A) The interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to education; and

(B) The State Board of Education.

(b) The report required under paragraph (a) of this subsection shall:

(A) Include a summary of the components of the review conducted as described in subsection (3) of this section, including information on the comments gathered during the engagement process described in subsection (4)(b) of this section.

(B) Recommend changes in legislation or administrative rules that will reduce disparities and ensure that every student will be on track to earn one of the high school diplomas offered in this state.

(C) Include an analysis of the effectiveness of requiring students to demonstrate proficiency in Essential Learning Skills and an explanation of the reasons the department concludes that requirements related to demonstrations of proficiency in Essential Learning Skills should be retained, modified or eliminated. If the department concludes that demonstrations of proficiency of Essential Learning Skills should be retained, the department shall provide recommendations for alternative methods for students to demonstrate proficiency in skills or academic content areas that are not related to career and technical education.

SECTION 2. Section 1 of this 2021 Act is repealed on June 30, 2023.

SECTION 3. Notwithstanding any rules adopted by the State Board of Education, a student may not be required to show proficiency in Essential Learning Skills as a condition of receiving a high school diploma during the 2021-2022, 2022-2023 or 2023-2024 school year. SECTION 4. This 2021 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2021 Act takes effect on its passage.

APPENDIX B: HISTORY OF OREGON DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS

This appendix discusses the history of Oregon's diploma requirements since the early 1990s, when many states around the nation, including Oregon, transitioned to diploma requirements that focused on the use of assessments to monitor and align performance standards of students and schools. This period also marked a move toward creating consistent diploma requirements across the state. A significant funding change occurred in 1990 as well, the shift from the more stable property tax state revenue stream to a more dynamic income tax revenue stream. Over time, and especially during the decade that followed national No Child Left Behind legislation in 2002, the requirements related to funding for school districts became increasingly driven by student achievement.

In 1991, the Oregon Legislature passed the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century (House Bill 3565) with the intent to ensure that Oregon students would be prepared for the new and changing economy by providing consistent performance standards across the state and increasing educational focus on occupational study. The high school diploma requirements associated with this law included the creation of optional Certificates of Initial Mastery (CIM) and Certificates of Advanced Mastery (CAM). With this program, students who met grade 10 performance standards would receive a CIM, then select an area of interest to focus on in their junior and senior years of high school to work towards their CAM. These interest areas included arts and communications, business and management, health services, human resources, industrial and engineering systems, and natural resource systems. With this law, the legislature intended to blend school, work, and community learning experiences within a student's area of interest to authentically prepare students for postsecondary education or work after high school. CIM participation reached its peak in the 2004–05 school year, with 37% of high school graduates earning a certificate, but by 2006–07 had declined to 29%. During the years CIM was operative, participation in the credential was much higher for students with high academic achievement. Asian, White, and Multiracial/Multiethnic graduates were substantially more likely to earn a CIM than graduates who were Black, Hispanic, or Native American.

The state never implemented the other half of the certificate program, the CAM. The legislature delayed implementation of CAM in 1997, delayed it again in 2003, and then abolished both CIM and CAM in 2007 before the state adopted policies for supporting or awarding CAMs.

In 2002, the Oregon Board of Education created four additional requirements for obtaining a high school diploma. First, it required students to develop an Education Plan and Profile. The Education Plan requires the student to identify personal and career interests, tentative educational and career goals, and post-high school next steps; set goals to prepare for the

transition to the student's next steps; and design, monitor, and adjust a course of study that meets the interest and goals of the student. This adjusted course of study may include in-class learning, career-related learning, or other learning experiences that show a student's ability to apply knowledge and skills in new and complex situations. The Education Profile requires students to monitor progress and achievement toward standards, including content standards, Essential Skills, the extended application standard (discussed in more detail below), and other standards where appropriate (e.g., industry standards). It also requires students to document other personal accomplishments determined by the student or school district and review progress and achievement in the above profile requirements at least annually.

Second, the state board required students to build a Collection of Evidence to demonstrate Extended Application. Extended Application is a student's application and extension of knowledge and skills in new and complex situations related to the student's personal and career interests and post-high school goals.

Third, the board required students to demonstrate career-related knowledge and skills in the areas of personal management, problem solving, communication, teamwork, employment foundations, and career development.

Fourth, the board required a Career-Related Learning Experience in which students were asked to identify experiences they would like to have in high school related to personal and career interests and goals. This exercise would be included in their Education Plan. As part of this exercise students identified expectations for learning and the academic and career-related learning standards they were preparing to meet and reflected on the learning experience to determine if those expectations had been met, along with any additional local district requirements.

The third requirement above was removed from the high school diploma when CAM was abolished in 2007. Requirements one, two, and four remain.

In 2008, the board adopted the Essential Skills graduation requirement, which required students to show proficiency in skills deemed essential for adult life in order to graduate. The board designated nine skills as Essential Skills, but only three were ever required for graduation. Those three Essential Skills were: reading and comprehending a variety of text (required for students starting high school in or after 2008–09), writing clearly and accurately (2009–10), and applying mathematics in a variety of settings (2010–11). The other six Essential Skills were: listen actively and speak clearly and coherently; think critically and analytically; use technology to learn, live, and work; demonstrate civic and community engagement; demonstrate global literacy; and demonstrate personal management and teamwork skills. The board intended for

all nine skills to eventually be embedded in educational content standards throughout the state.

In theory, students could demonstrate proficiency in Essential Skills in a variety of courses, subjects, and settings, but most students completed the requirement through standardized assessments. The Essential Skills requirements and assessments were suspended in 2020 due to COVID-19 and then paused in 2021 (SB 744) during the present review.

Credit requirements saw few changes over the last 30 years. In 2005, the legislature increased the high school diploma credit requirement for students graduating on or after July 1, 2009, from 22 to 24 credit hours, including three credits of math and four credits of English.[99] The board then phased in new credit categories and minimum credits, including three credits of science, three credits of social science, one credit of health, one credit of physical education, three credits from career and technical education, arts, or a world language, and six credits of electives. For students first enrolled in grade 9 during the 2010–11 school year or later it also required that the three math credits would include one credit at the algebra I level and two credits at a higher level. In 2021, the legislature added a half credit of civics but kept the total credit count at 24.

While credit requirements were relatively stable during this period, Oregon did see the creation of new types of diplomas that each have their own credit requirements. In 2008, the legislature adopted the Modified Oregon Diploma and the Alternative Certificate to make diploma requirements more flexible for students.

The Modified Oregon Diploma was intended for students with an "inability to maintain grade level achievement due to significant learning and instructional barriers," which includes, but is not limited to, students experiencing disabilities. Like the regular diploma, the Modified Oregon Diploma requires 24 credits. However, the Modified Oregon Diploma shifts the distribution of the credits, requiring instead at least 12 credits in academic subject areas, including three credits of language arts (with no written composition requirement), two credits of math (with no algebra requirement), two credits of science, two credits of social science, one credit of health, one credit of physical education, and one credit of career technical education, arts, or languages. The remaining 12 credits could be tailored to the student's needs as identified in their plan. Students who are working toward the Modified Oregon Diploma may earn credit

[99] House Bill 3129. This law also allowed students who did not meet the credit requirements to receive diplomas if they mastered these subjects according to standards or otherwise demonstrated proficiency. The legislature then removed this part of the law in 2011 due to a conflict with the statute and the requirements for earning credits in OAR 581-022-1131.

through regular education, with or without accommodations or modifications, and they can earn credit for demonstrating proficiency. Between 2009 and 2012, Modified Oregon Diplomas accounted for just under 2% of the high school graduating cohort. A slight increase occurred in the following years: in 2019–20 the Modified Oregon Diplomas accounted for just under 4% of the high school graduating cohort.

The Alternative Certificate is a high school completion document that may be earned by a student who does not satisfy the requirements for the regular Oregon Diploma or Modified Diploma. To be eligible for an Alternative Certificate, a student must have met the criteria requirements as specified in district school board policies, which vary substantially between districts. Between 2009 and 2019, the Alternative Certificate accounted for less than 1% of the high school graduating cohort in Oregon.

In 2009, the legislature adopted a third graduation option, the Extended Diploma, which requires 12 credits. In the original law, a student was eligible for the Extended Diploma if they met two conditions: First, they needed a documented history of an inability to maintain grade level achievement due to significant learning and instructional barriers or a medical condition that creates a barrier to achievement. Second, they needed to participate in an alternate assessment beginning no later than grade six and lasting for two or more assessment cycles or they needed to have a serious illness or injury that occurred after grade eight that changed their ability to participate in grade level activities and that resulted in their participation in alternate assessments. In 2013, the legislature removed the alternate assessment requirement because some students had Individual Education Programs that exempted them from assessments, disqualifying them from receiving the Extended Diploma. The change expanded the eligibility of the Extended Diploma to all students with instructional barriers, not just students with disabilities defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Act. Between 2009 and 2019, Extended Diplomas accounted for less than 1% of the high school graduating cohort in Oregon, and they were even less prevalent than the Alternative Certificate.

Realizing that the diploma requirements were not a full representation of what would be necessary for students to successfully make postsecondary transitions, in 2014, the Oregon Education Investment Board also adopted a College-and-Career-Readiness Definition.[100]

[100] For more information see *College and Career Readiness Definition for Oregon*. (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eDn9vQCOCF-hIx4keb9cjNYRdAKAaUKt/view)

APPENDIX C: OREGON'S KITCHEN TABLE ENGAGEMENT REPORT

The Oregon's Kitchen Table Engagement Report is a summary of engagement efforts conducted via Oregon's Kitchen Table, an organization that connects decision-makers and those working on public projects with Oregonians of various backgrounds to share feedback, ideas, and resources. The report summarizes ODE's engagement process with Oregon's Kitchen Table, including who participated, which kinds of feedback were requested from ODE, and a summary of responses.

APPENDIX D: RESULTS FROM TARGETED EDUCATOR ENGAGEMENT AND SURVEYS

Introduction

Between November 2021 and May 2022, three online surveys and four in-person engagement meetings were conducted to solicit input on high school diploma questions. The questions addressed to each respondent group and number of responses received are listed in Table E-1 below.

Table E-1 Data Sources

Respondent Group	Question	Method	Number of Responses
Workforce representatives[1]	The Oregon Department of Education is evaluating its graduation policies and requirements pursuant to Senate Bill 744 and will make recommendations to the Legislature and the State Board about a possible redesign. What values and skills should be prioritized in the Oregon Diploma?	Survey	443
postsecondary[2] educators	In your professional experience, what should the high school diploma include (the required teaching, learning and assessment that school districts must provide to all students) to support students' success in education and training beyond high school?	Survey	148
K-12 educators[3]	As you think about the rate of societal change, new technologies shifting employability skills, and the role of education, what knowledge and skills would you say are the most important for	Survey	89
		Targeted engagement meetings[4]	116

Respondent Group	Question	Method	Number of Responses
	Oregon graduates to have as they leave our K-12 system and transition to their next steps?		
	Reflecting on your experiences as an educator, are there ways in which the current graduation requirements have created barriers for students? What could be done to make graduation requirements more fair?	Survey	89
		Targeted engagement meetings	140
	Both the Assessment of Essential Skills and grades serve as a way to verify that students have the knowledge and skills that a diploma should signify. In addition to grades, does there need to be a secondary validation system? If yes, describe whether it should look like the Assessment of Essential Skills or take another form.	Survey	89
	Both Assessment of Essential Skills and grades serve as a way to verify that students have the foundational knowledge and skills of reading, writing, and mathematics. In addition to grades, does there need to be a secondary validation system? If yes, describe this validation system, including what skills and/or knowledge it should measure and	Targeted engagement meetings	72

Respondent Group	Question	Method	Number of Responses
	how it should measure them?		
	Oregon has multiple diplomas, including the Oregon Diploma, the Modified Diploma, and the Extended Diploma, as well as an Alternate Certificate. Other states have a single Diploma with multiple pathways that students can use to earn that Diploma. What would you hope to see if Oregon revamps its graduation requirements?	Targeted engagement meetings	55

A content analysis of responses to the open-ended questions was conducted to identify recurring themes. The following tables list the response categories by frequency of occurrence, limited to the most common within each group. Less frequently occurring response categories are available as a resource for ideas as implementation of the recommendations in this report proceeds.

Identification of Expected Values, Skills, and Knowledge of Diploma Recipients

The questions regarding valued skills, knowledge, and abilities of high school graduates elicited a wide range of responses across the three groups surveyed or engaged in person. A few expected differences between groups emerged: employers cited “work ethic” and “professionalism” most often, while higher education responses were most frequently aligned with “critical thinking and information literacy” and “knowledge and skills in traditional/basic academic subjects.” K-12 educators’ responses most often were categorized under “life skills” and “career-related learning skills.” Nevertheless, many categories were highly valued across groups, including “communication skills,” “collaboration,” and “critical thinking and information literacy.” The full text of the open-ended responses contains numerous insights into the expected meaning of an Oregon diploma that applies to all students, regardless of their post-high school plans.

Table E-2 Workforce Representatives' Most Important Values and Skills to be Prioritized in the Oregon Diploma

Value and Skill Category	Number	Percent
Work ethic: ability to initiate and follow through on tasks	101	22.8%
Professionalism: responsible and respectful of people and processes	94	21.2%
Communication skills: listens and speaks to others effectively; communicates in a variety of media; writes for authentic purposes; reads critically	93	21.0%
Life skills: financial literacy; foundational understanding of government and civics; knows how to self-advocate and seek out help; knows how to access educational and community resources	67	15.1%
Collaboration: engages effectively with a team; has good interpersonal communication skills; has conflict resolution skills	66	14.9%
Knowledge and skills in traditional/basic academic subjects	65	14.7%
Critical thinking and information literacy: ability to analyze problems and explore alternatives; independently access and evaluate the validity of information; articulate and support ideas coherently; focus on thinking, not rote regurgitation of facts	64	14.4%
Cultural awareness and humility: Openness to learn from people of different backgrounds and beliefs	61	13.8%
Career-related learning skills: employability skills; community-based experiential learning; knowledge of career opportunities and how to get there	56	12.6%

Value and Skill Category	Number	Percent
Resiliency: Ability to bounce back from difficulty	45	10.2%

Table E-3 postsecondary Educators' Most Important Diploma Requirements to Support Students' Success in Education and Training beyond High School

Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Category	Number	Percent
Critical thinking and information literacy: ability to analyze problems and explore alternatives; independently access and evaluate the validity of information; articulate and support ideas coherently; focus on thinking, not rote regurgitation of facts	36	24.3%
Knowledge and skills in traditional/basic academic subjects	36	24.3%
Communication skills: listen and speak to others effectively; communicate in a variety of media; write for authentic purposes; read critically	31	20.9%
Career-related learning skills: employability skills; community based experiential learning; knowledge of career and educational opportunities and how to get there	24	16.2%
Life skills: financial literacy; foundational understanding of government and civics; how to self-advocate and seek out help; how to access educational and community resources	21	14.2%
Time Management: Prompt, ready, and responsive to deadlines	18	12.2%
Cultural awareness and humility: Openness to learn from people of different backgrounds and beliefs	17	11.5%
Digital fluency: Skilled with technology	15	10.1%

Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Category	Number	Percent
Collaboration: engages effectively with a team; has good interpersonal communication skills; has conflict resolution skills	11	7.4%
Analysis solution mindset: Eager and able to solve problems	9	6.1%

Table E-4: K-12 Educators' Important Knowledge and Skills for Oregon Graduates to Have as they Leave Our K-12 System and Transition to their Next Steps[5]

Knowledge and Skill Category	Number	Percent
Life skills: financial literacy; foundational understanding of government and civics; knowledge of how to self-advocate and seek help; knowledge of how to access community resources	44	21.5%
Career-related learning skills: employability skills; community-based experiential learning;· knowledge of career opportunities and how to get there	41	20.0%
Communication skills: listen and speak to others effectively; communicate in a variety of media; read critically; write for authentic purposes	38	18.5%
Collaboration: knowledge of how to engage effectively with a team; good interpersonal communication skills; conflict resolution	28	13.7%
Critical thinking and information literacy: analyze problems and explore alternatives; independently access and evaluate the validity of information; articulate and support ideas coherently; focus on thinking, not rote regurgitation of facts	29	13.7%

Knowledge and Skill Category	Number	Percent
Digital Fluency: Skilled with technology	28	13.7%
Practical application of skills: taught to meet the variety of job requirements and adult responsibilities	24	11.7%
Work ethic: ability to initiate and follow through on tasks	23	11.2%
Analysis Solution Mindset: Eager and able to solve problems	20	9.8%
Professionalism: responsible and respectful of people and processes	17	8.3%

Identification of Barriers Created by Current Graduation Requirements

Both groups of K-12 educators viewed graduation barriers from a variety of perspectives that extended beyond the current graduation requirements as posed in the question. Many cited educational resource constraints that led to learning disparities before high school, language and cultural barriers, traumatic experiences, poverty, houselessness, drug addiction, and the absence of support systems in high school. Approximately 31 percent of online responses and 25 percent of targeted engagement responses cited systemic factors not directly related to graduation requirements, suggesting that only changing graduation requirements would not necessarily have a major impact on reducing disparities.

The five most frequently cited barriers created by current graduation requirements are listed in Tables E-5 and E-6. The rank order is consistent for both types of engagement.[6]

Table E-5: K-12 Educators Barriers Created by Current Graduation Requirements Identified in Online Survey

Barrier Category	Number	Percent
Essential Skills assessment requirements	17	19.1%
Traditional mathematics pathway (i.e., three units beginning with algebra I)	10	11.2%
Lack of flexibility in graduation criteria (i.e., greater options for awarding credit)	9	10.1%
Graduation requirements that are not responsive to post-high school plans	5	5.6%
Lack of understanding of requirements for different diplomas[7]	4	4.5%

Table E-6: K-12 Educators Barriers Created by Current Graduation Requirements Identified in Targeted Engagement Meetings

Barrier Category	Number	Percent
Traditional mathematics pathway (i.e., three units beginning with algebra I)	16	11.4%
Essential Skills assessment requirements	11	7.9%
Lack of flexibility in graduation criteria (i.e., greater options for awarding credit)	10	7.1%
Graduation requirements that are not responsive to post-high school plans	7	5.0%
Lack of understanding of requirements for different diplomas	6	4.3%

Recommended Verification of Knowledge and Skills

K-12 educators responded to variations of the question:

"Both Assessment of Essential Skills and grades serve as a way to verify that students have the foundational knowledge and skills of reading, writing, and mathematics. In addition to grades, does there need to be a secondary validation system? If yes, describe whether it should look like the Assessment of Essential Skills or take another form." The targeted engagement groups' second part was worded: "If yes, describe this validation system, including what skills and/or knowledge it should measure and how it should measure them?"

Content analysis of responses from each engagement method are summarized in Tables E-7 and E-8 below.

Table E-7: K-12 Educator Online Survey Respondents

Question	Response Category	Number	Percent
Part 1: In addition to grades, does there need to be a secondary validation system?	Yes	37	41.6%
	No	36	40.4%
	No Response	16	18.0%
Part 2: If yes, describe whether it should look like the Assessment of Essential Skills or take another form.	Assessment of Essential Skills	13	35.1%
	Another form (see full text of responses)	20	54.1%
	No response	4	10.8%

Table E-8: K-12 Educator Targeted Engagement Group Respondents

Question	Response Category	Number	Percent
Part 1: In addition to grades, does there need to be a secondary validation system?	Yes	27	37.5%
	No	22	30.6%
	No Response	23	31.9%
Part 2: If yes, describe this validation system, including what skills and/or knowledge it should measure and how it should measure them.	Assessment of Essential Skills	5	18.5%
	Another form (see full text of responses)	21	77.8%
	No response	1	3.7%

As shown in Tables E-7 and E-8, both groups were fairly evenly divided regarding the need for a secondary validation system to supplement course grades, with a slight plurality in favor. Of those answering the equivalent of "Yes" to Part 1, the current system for assessing Essential Skills was favored by 35.1 and 18.5 percent. A wide variety of alternative approaches to validate foundational skills and knowledge was provided in the open-ended answers. As invited by the question wording used with the in-person targeted engagement groups, the second part of the question was interpreted more broadly than the assessment of reading, writing, and mathematics. Examples include implementation of equitable grading practices, standards-based proficiency demonstrations, portfolios, senior projects, work-based performance assessments, and allowing student choice among the full range of Essential Skills.

SINGLE VS. MULTIPLE DIPLOMAS

Targeted engagement meetings with K-12 educators addressed the issue of single versus multiple diploma system as posed in the following question:

"Oregon has multiple diplomas, including the Oregon Diploma, the Modified Diploma, and the Extended Diploma, as well as an Alternate Certificate. Other states have a single Diploma with multiple pathways that students can use to earn that Diploma. What would you hope to see if Oregon revamps its graduation requirements?"

Responses were classified as either favoring the current multiple diploma system (43.1 percent) or favoring a single diploma with multiple pathways (56.9 percent). Illustrative quotes from each perspective:

Comments favoring a single diploma with multiple pathways:
"I struggle with modified diplomas. I have heard and see people put emerging bilinguals on a modified diploma to offer them access to electives. I do like having different options and different ways we can give students different options for a diploma, rather than lower expectations."

"Knowing what a student can do with their diploma would be more powerful, especially if they are required to do some kind of career pathway. If a student would know what those pathways would allow them to do in their future would be even more powerful. It would be great to not just be a checklist for graduation."

"Seen systems that if there is a perception that they are on a modified diploma it can violate their civil rights. Being on a modified diploma can send bad messages to students, families, and educators working with those students."

"How wonderful it would be if a student knew what their diploma met and what it could mean for them. I know I can go to an electrical apprenticeship, or I know I am ready for a community college, or I know I am ready for a 4-year. It would be great if students could have some say in what a diploma was for them."

"Could personalizing through multiple pathways lead to flexibility in student pacing and possibly early graduation?"

"Multiple pathways would be tailored to the student's abilities and a modified diploma wouldn't be needed."

"Do multiple diplomas have the same requirements or different ones--students on modified can't access postsecondary options; could different pathways solve this? Where are there options for flexibility?

"I really like the idea of pathways that lead to the same diploma—don't want students to have marginalized diplomas; rather vocational just as meaningful as any other path."

"If we change the diplomas we need to be careful to not start tracking students; Oregon diploma should mean access to wherever they want to go even if they took different pathways."

"How do we make systems more flexible to prepare students for what they want to do post-HS? Room for students to explore paths that are interesting/feel right for them without being locked in."

"How can we offer more credit opportunities earlier in their k-12 career to students? We have seen a huge uptick in students asking for early graduation and 8th graders who want HS credit."

"More inclusive grading practices can be included in the regular diploma."

Comments favoring a multiple diploma system:

"Modified/extended were created because students on IEPs were being tracked into alternate certificates and not being given any academic coursework in some cases (just lifeskills for the entire K-12 experience)."

"Multiple diplomas preferred, gives a truer picture of student outcomes, haven't seen lots of confusion."

"Putting students on a modified path feels like a relief; a more attainable path for them."

"There can be a value to modified/extended diplomas. Gives some students a hope they can leave with modified, something to work towards that will be of value to them after HS."

"Validity to having different diploma types; but schools get dinged in graduation rates for having different diploma types."

"Nice about current: required to have core classes, decrease credits for modified, but still 24 credits. Allows schools to have high expectations for students while also providing support."

"I love the multiple diploma system. Gives students different pathways."

"WA state had one diploma and it felt like there were a lot of barriers there."

"Son was classified as a non-completer impacted by autism. The fact that he is marked as a non-completer doesn't feel right."

"Virtual school struggle - students who come in credit deficient. Don't qualify for extended but may not earn enough credits before aging out. Trying to get these students workforce ready - is there an alternative credential that would be appropriate for them?"

[1] Workforce representatives were surveyed by Oregon Workforce Talent Development Board and ODE as reported in *Appendix E*.

[2] Postsecondary educators were surveyed by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission as reported in *Appendix F*.

[3] K-12 educators were surveyed and invited to participate in targeted engagement meetings by ODE.

[4] Specific groups participating in the targeted K-12 educator engagement meetings were: COSA Administrators of Color Network 3/16/22; OALA 4/8 Engagement Session; Counselor Engagement Sessions; OASSA Engagement Sessions.

[5] Counts are combined across both K-12 groups (online survey and targeted engagement).

[6] Consistency across the two independent samples of K-12 educators provides evidence supporting generalizability of the findings.

[7] "Lack of understanding of requirements for different diplomas" is listed as a barrier created by current graduation requirements due to the complexity of communication and decision-making around the choice of diploma options.

APPENDIX E: WORKFORCE AND TALENT BOARD SURVEY REPORT

In fall 2021, Dialogues in Action, in partnership with the Oregon Workforce Talent Development Board and ODE, developed and administered an employer survey. Respondents to the survey answered the open-ended question: “The Oregon Department of Education is evaluating its graduation policies and requirements pursuant to Senate Bill 744 and will make recommendations to the legislature and the State Board of Education about a possible redesign. What values and skills should be prioritized in the Oregon Diploma?”

This is the link to the final Workforce and Talent Board Survey Report.

APPENDIX F: HECC POSTSECONDARY PARTNER SURVEY REPORT

In 2021, the Oregon legislature passed Senate Bill 744, which directs the Oregon Department of Education to review state requirements for high school diplomas and to report results of the review to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to education and to the State Board of Education.

The Oregon Department of Education is using a multi-pronged approach to gathering both quantitative and qualitative information regarding high school requirements to inform the recommendations to the Legislative Assembly, including the history of high school diploma requirements in Oregon, assessment of other states' high school diploma requirements, surveys of employers and postsecondary institutions, focus groups with community members in regions throughout the state, and more. This report is a synthesis of the responses to a survey sent to postsecondary partners in spring of 2022 regarding their experience with, and perspectives of the high school diploma requirements. It summarizes the survey results, including qualitative data using themes that emerged from open-ended questions. These results will be included in the ODE report to the Legislative Assembly in September 2022.

This report was undertaken by staff in HECC's Office of Research and Data, Academic Policy and Authorization, Community Colleges and Workforce Development, and Diversity Equity and Inclusion. As the single state entity responsible for ensuring pathways to higher educational success for Oregonians statewide, the HECC sets state policy and funding strategies, administers numerous programs and over $1.2 billion annually of public funding, and convenes partners working across the public and private higher education arena to achieve state goals. More information about HECC can be found at www.oregon.gov/highered. Questions about the HECC should be directed to info.HECC@state.or.us, and questions about this report should be directed to Erin Weeks-Earp, Alignment and Articulation Policy Specialist.

This is the link to the final HECC Postsecondary Partner Survey report.

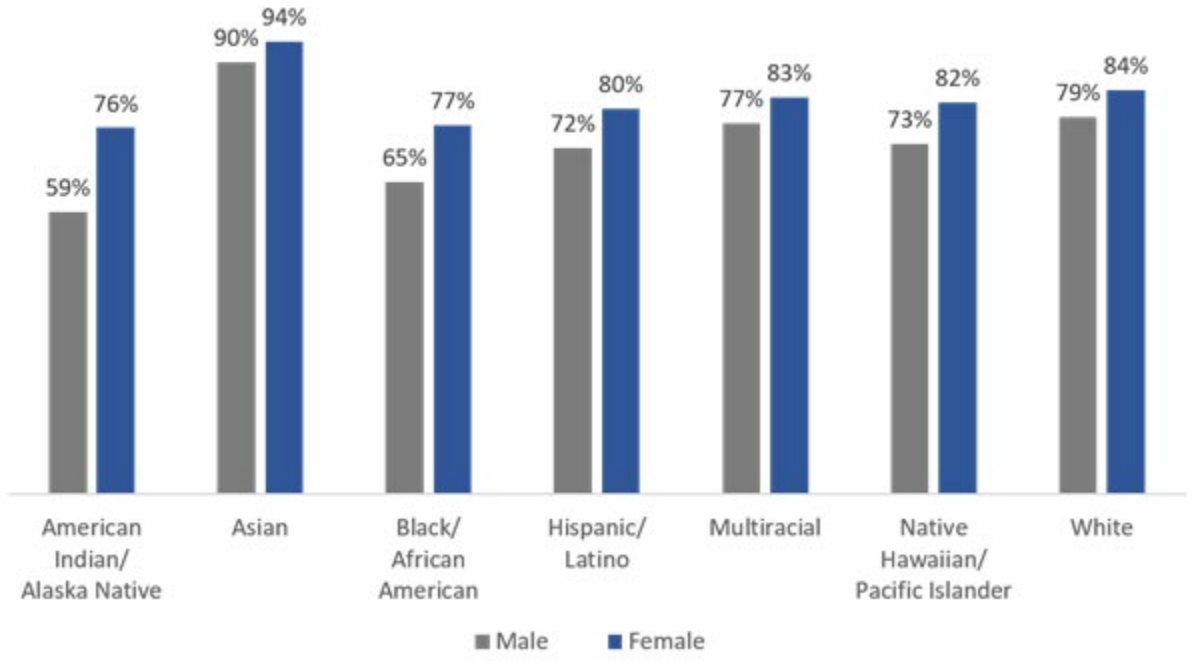
APPENDIX G: ON-TIME COHORT GRADUATION RATES FOR ADDITIONAL STUDENT GROUPS

Student Group	Number of Students in Adjusted Cohort	On-time Graduation Rate 2019–20
All students	45,679	82.6%
Students with experience of incarceration or detention[101]	948	33.1%
Recent Arrivers[102]	743	66.9%
Students served through Section 504 Plans[103]	3,078	84.2%
Students navigating houselessness	3,998	60.5%
Migrant Students[104]	1,331	79.9%
Students identified as Talented and Gifted	4,134	96.1%
Male	23,542	80.0%
Female[105]	22,072	85.5%

[101] Students who had ever been enrolled in a Youth Corrections Education Program or a Juvenile Detention Education Program in Oregon.
[102] These are students who were born outside the US and US territories (including military bases) - anyone without a US birth certificate who has had less than three cumulative years of education in the US at any point during high school. Foreign exchange students are excluded from the calculation where possible.
[103] For more information on this population, see Students on Section 504 Plans: Overview of a Potential Focal Population.
[104] Students served through the Migrant Education Program, which provides services for students whose families move between Oregon districts or into Oregon due to agricultural or fishing employment. More helpful information and further illustration of the experiences of these students is available in this US federal program manual.
[105] A small number of students identified as non-binary in this data year. Due to small cell size and the recency of this data element in ODE's data systems, they are not included in public reporting for this data year.

Poverty	Race/Ethnicity	Number of Students in Adjusted Cohort	On-time Graduation Rate 2019–20
Students not Navigating Poverty	American Indian/Alaska Native	164	72.6%
	Asian	1,074	95.2%
	Black/African American	225	80.0%
	Hispanic/Latino/a/x	1,827	78.9%
	Multiracial	1,190	89.8%
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	76	78.9%
	White	15,266	90.4%
Students Navigating Poverty (while in High School)	American Indian/Alaska Native	470	65.3%
	Asian	808	88.2%
	Black/African American	842	75.3%
	Hispanic/Latino/a/x	8,795	79.6%
	Multiracial	1,446	73.7%
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	245	75.9%
	White	13,251	76.5%

Figure 30- On-time Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2018-19



APPENDIX H: HECC POSTSECONDARY OUTCOMES STUDY REPORT

Preface: In 2021, the Oregon legislature passed Senate Bill 744, which directs the Oregon Department of Education to review state requirements for high school diplomas and to report results of the review to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to education and to the State Board of Education. The bill also suspends the requirements of demonstrating proficiency in the reading, writing, and mathematics essential skills as a condition of earning a diploma during the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school year.

The Oregon Department of Education is using a multi-pronged approach to gathering both quantitative and qualitative information regarding high school requirements to inform the recommendations to the Legislative Assembly, including the history of high school diploma requirements in Oregon, assessment of other states' high school diploma requirements, surveys of employers and postsecondary institutions, focus groups with community members in regions throughout the state, and more. This report is a component of the research agenda gathered to develop the recommendations. It summarizes postsecondary education outcomes among recent Oregon State high school graduates over the last decade; specifically assessing whether student postsecondary outcomes in higher education improve with the implementation of the assessment of reading, writing, and mathematics essential skills proficiency requirements.

This report was undertaken in HECC's Office of Research and Data, including staff in both the Postsecondary Research and Data program and the interagency Oregon Longitudinal Data Collaborative program. As the single state entity responsible for ensuring pathways to higher educational success for Oregonians statewide, the HECC sets state policy and funding strategies, administers numerous programs and over $1.4 billion annually of public funding, and convenes partners working across the public and private higher education arena to achieve state goals. More information about HECC can be found at www.oregon.gov/highered. Questions about the HECC should be directed to info.HECC@state.or.us, and questions about this report should be directed to the Director of the Office of Research and Data, Amy Cox, at amy.cox@state.or.us.

This is the link to the final HECC Postsecondary Outcomes Study report.

APPENDIX I: RECOMMENDED POLICY CHANGES

329.451 High school diploma; modified diploma; extended diploma; alternative certificate; grade level advancement. (1)(a) At or before grade 12, a school district or public charter school shall award a high school diploma to a student who completes the requirements established by subsection (2) of this section.

(b) A school district or public charter school shall award a modified diploma to a student who satisfies the requirements established by subsection (7) of this section, an extended diploma to a student who satisfies the requirements established by subsection (8) of this section or an alternative certificate to a student who satisfies the requirements established by subsection (9) of this section.

(c) A school district or public charter school may not deny a student who has the documented history described in subsection (7)(b) or (8)(b) of this section the opportunity to pursue a diploma with more stringent requirements than a modified diploma or an extended diploma for the sole reason that the student has the documented history.

(d) A school district or public charter school may award a modified diploma or extended diploma to a student only upon receiving consent as provided by subsection (6) of this section.

(2)(a) In order to receive a high school diploma from a school district or public charter school, a student must satisfy the requirements established by the State Board of Education and the school district or public charter school and, while in grades 9 through 12, must complete at least:

(A) Twenty-four total credits;

(B) Three credits of mathematics; and

(C) Four credits of language arts.

(b) If a school district or public charter school requires a student to complete more than 24 total credits, as provided by paragraph (a)(A) of this subsection, the school district or public charter school may only require the student to complete additional credits for:

(A) Subjects for which the State Board of Education has established academic content standards under ORS 329.045;

(B) Courses provided as part of a career and technical education program; or

(C) Courses that provide, or qualify to provide, credit at postsecondary institutions of education.

(c)(A) A school district or public charter school that requires students to satisfy any requirements not specified by paragraph (a) of this subsection or by rule of the State Board of Education must grant to a student a waiver of the requirements established by the school district or public charter school if the student is or, at any time from grade 9 to 12, was:

(i) A foster child, as defined in ORS 30.297;

(ii) Homeless, as determined under rules adopted by the State Board of Education based on standards adopted by the Department of Human Services;

(iii) A runaway, as determined under rules adopted by the State Board of Education based on standards adopted by the Department of Human Services;

(iv) A child in a military family covered by the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, as determined under rules adopted by the State Board of Education;

(v) A child of a migrant worker, as determined under rules adopted by the State Board of Education; or

(vi) Enrolled in the Youth Corrections Education Program or the Juvenile Detention Education Program.

(B) For any student identified under subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, a school district or public charter school must accept any credits earned by the student in another school district or public charter school and apply those credits toward requirements specified by paragraph (a) of this subsection or by rule of the State Board of Education if the credits satisfied those requirements in that other school district or public charter school.

~~(3) A student providing work samples to demonstrate proficiency in Essential Learning Skills as may be required under subsection (2) of this section must be allowed to use accommodations described in the student's individualized education program or the student's plan developed in accordance with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794. As used in this subsection, the term "accommodations":~~

~~(a) Includes, but is not limited to:~~

~~(A) Additional time to demonstrate proficiency.~~

~~(B) The ability to demonstrate proficiency in an alternative location that is secure and proctored.~~

~~(C) The use of text-to-speech or speech-to-text technology or other assistive technology.~~

~~(b) Does not include modifications that lower the proficiency standards or that are used solely to earn modified credit.~~

~~(4) A student may satisfy the requirements of subsection (2) of this section in less than four years. If a student satisfies the requirements of subsection (2) of this section and a school district or public charter school has received consent as provided by subsection (6) of this section, the school district or public charter school shall award a high school diploma to the student.~~

(3~~5~~) If a school district or public charter school has received consent as provided by subsection (6) of this section, the school district or public charter school may advance the student to the next grade level if the student has satisfied the requirements for the student's current grade level.

(4~~6~~)(a) For the purpose of receiving consent as provided by subsections (1)(d), (4) and (5) of this section, consent shall be provided by:

(A) The parent or guardian of the student, if the student:

(i) Is under 18 years of age and is not emancipated pursuant to ORS 419B.550 to 419B.558; or

(ii) Has been determined not to have the ability to give informed consent regarding the student's education pursuant to a protective proceeding under ORS chapter 125; or

(B) The student, if the student is 18 years of age or older or is emancipated pursuant to ORS 419B.550 to 419B.558.

(b) For the purpose of awarding a modified diploma or extended diploma as provided by subsection (1)(d) of this section or of awarding a high school diploma as provided by subsection (4) of this section, consent must be received during the school year for which the diploma will be awarded.

(5~~7~~) A school district or public charter school shall award a modified diploma only to students who have demonstrated the inability to meet the full set of academic content standards for a high school diploma with reasonable modifications and accommodations. To be eligible for a modified diploma, a student must:

(a) Satisfy the requirements for a modified diploma established by the State Board of Education; and

(b) Have a documented history of an inability to maintain grade level achievement due to significant learning and instructional barriers or have a documented history of a medical condition that creates a barrier to achievement.

(6~~8~~) A school district or public charter school shall award an extended diploma only to students who have demonstrated the inability to meet the full set of academic content standards for a high school diploma with reasonable modifications and accommodations. To be eligible for an extended diploma, a student must:

(a) While in grade nine through completion of high school, complete 12 credits, which may not include more than six credits earned in a self-contained special education classroom and shall include:

(A) Two credits of mathematics;

(B) Two credits of language arts;

(C) Two credits of science;

(D) Three credits of history, geography, economics or civics;

(E) One credit of health;

(F) One credit of physical education; and

(G) One credit of the arts or a world language; and

(b) Have a documented history of:

(A) An inability to maintain grade level achievement due to significant learning and instructional barriers;

(B) A medical condition that creates a barrier to achievement; or

(C) A change in the student's ability to participate in grade level activities as a result of a serious illness or injury that occurred after grade eight.

(7~~9~~) A school district or public charter school shall award an alternative certificate to a student who does not satisfy the requirements for a high school diploma, a modified diploma or

an extended diploma if the student meets requirements established by the board of the school district or public charter school.

(8~~10~~) A student shall have the opportunity to satisfy the requirements of subsection (7), (8) or (9) of this section by the later of:

(a) Four years after starting grade nine; or

(b) The student reaching the age of 21 years, if the student is entitled to a public education until the age of 21 years under state or federal law.

(9~~11~~)(a) A student may satisfy the requirements described in subsection (7), (8) or (9) of this section in less than four years if consent is provided in the manner described in subsection (6)(a) of this section.

(b) The consent provided under this subsection must be written and must clearly state that the parent, guardian or student is waiving the time allowed under subsection (10) of this section. A consent may not be used to allow a student to satisfy the requirements of subsection (7), (8) or (9) of this section in less than three years.

(c) A copy of all consents provided under this subsection for students in a school district must be forwarded to the district superintendent.

(d) Each school district must provide to the Superintendent of Public Instruction information about the number of consents provided during a school year.

(10~~12~~)(a) A student who qualifies to receive or receives a modified diploma, an extended diploma or an alternative certificate shall:

(A) Have the option of participating in a high school graduation ceremony with the class of the student; and

(B) Have access to instructional hours, hours of transition services and hours of other services that are designed to:

(i) Meet the unique needs of the student; and

(ii) When added together, provide a total number of hours of instruction and services to the student that equals at least the total number of instructional hours that is required to be provided to students who are attending a public high school.

(b)(A) The number of instructional hours, hours of transition services and hours of other services that are appropriate for a student shall be determined by the student's individualized education program team. Based on the student's needs and performance level, the student's Individualized Education Program team may decide that the student will not access the total number of hours of instruction and services to which the student has access under paragraph (a)(B) of this subsection.

(B) A school district may not unilaterally decrease the total number of hours of instruction and services to which the student has access under paragraph (a)(B) of this subsection, regardless of the age of the student.

(c) If a student's individualized education program team decides that the student will not access the total number of hours of instruction and services to which the student has access under paragraph (a)(B) of this subsection, the school district shall annually:

(A) Provide the following information in writing to the parent or guardian of the student:

(i) The school district's duty to comply with the requirements of paragraph (a)(B) of this subsection; and

(ii) The prohibition against a school district's unilaterally decreasing the total number of hours of instruction and services to which the student has access.

(B) Obtain a signed acknowledgment from the parent or guardian of the student that the parent or guardian received the information described in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph.

(C) Include in the Individualized Education Program for the student a written statement that explains the reasons the student is not accessing the total number of hours of instruction and services to which the student has access under paragraph (a)(B) of this subsection.

(d) For purposes of paragraph (a)(B) of this subsection, transition services and other services designed to meet the unique needs of the student may be provided to the student through an interagency agreement entered into by the school district if the individualized education program developed for the student indicates that the services may be provided by another agency. A school district that enters into an interagency agreement as allowed under this paragraph retains the responsibility for ensuring that the student has access to the number of service hours required to be provided to the student under this subsection. An agency is not required to change any eligibility criteria or enrollment standards prior to entering into an interagency agreement as provided by this paragraph.

(11~~13~~) A school district or public charter school shall:

(a) Ensure that students have on-site access to the appropriate resources to achieve a high school diploma, a modified diploma, an extended diploma or an alternative certificate at each high school in the school district or at the public charter school.

(b) Provide literacy instruction to all students until graduation.

(c) Annually provide, to the parents or guardians of a student who has the documented history described in subsection (8)(b) of this section, information about the availability of a modified diploma, an extended diploma and an alternative certificate and the requirements for the diplomas and certificate:

(A) Beginning in grade five; or

(B) Beginning after a documented history described in subsection (8)(b) of this section has been established.

(12~~14~~) A school district or public charter school shall allow a student to participate in the high school graduation ceremony with the class of the student and to wear:

(a) Native American items of cultural significance as provided by ORS 332.112; or

(b) A dress uniform issued to the student by a branch of the Armed Forces of the United States if the student:

(A) Qualifies to receive a high school diploma, a modified diploma, an extended diploma or an alternative certificate under this section; and

(B) Has completed basic training for, and is an active member of, a branch of the Armed Forces of the United States. [2005 c.827 §1; 2007 c.407 §1; 2007 c.660 §12; 2009 c.618 §1; 2011 c.240 §1a; 2011 c.286 §1; 2011 c.313 §7; 2011 c.546 §1; 2013 c.15 §4; 2013 c.64 §1; 2013 c.761 §3; 2014 c.42 §§5,6; 2017 c.433 §1; 2017 c.726 §6; 2019 c.210 §1; 2021 c.45 §2; 2021 c.97 §24; 2021 c.178 §1]

Note: The amendments to 329.451 by section 1, chapter 175, Oregon Laws 2021, become operative January 1, 2026, and first apply to high school diplomas awarded on or after January 1, 2026. See section 2, chapter 175, Oregon Laws 2021. The text that is operative on and after January 1, 2026, is set forth for the user's convenience.

581-022-2000

Diploma Requirements

(1) Each district school board and public charter school with jurisdiction over high school programs shall award diplomas to all students who fulfill all state requirements as described in sections (2) to (8) of this rule and all local school district requirements as described in district school board policies or all public charter school requirements as described in the policies or charter of the public charter school.

(2) Unit of Credit Requirements for students who were first enrolled in grade 9 during the 2010–2011 school year:

(a) Each student shall earn a minimum of 24 units of credit to include at least:

(A) English Language Arts — 4 (shall include the equivalent of one unit in Written Composition);

(B) Mathematics —3; ~~(shall include one unit at the Algebra I level and two units that are at a level higher than Algebra I)~~;

(C) Science — 3;

(D) Social Sciences 3 — (including history, civics, geography and economics (including personal finance);

(E) Health Education — 1;

(F) Physical Education — 1;

(G) Career and Technical Education, The Arts or World Languages — 3 (units shall be earned in any one or a combination)~~.~~;

(H) Future Planning — 1.

(b) A district school board or public charter school with a three-year high school may submit through the waiver process alternative plans to meet unit requirements;

(c) A district school board or public charter school may increase the number of units required in specific areas, and may increase or decrease the number of elective units; however, the total units of credit required for graduation shall not be less than 24;

(d) A district school board or public charter school must waive any additional district requirements if students are or, were at any time from grade 9-12:

(A) A foster child, a child receiving 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the child welfare agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions, and pre-adoptive homes. A child is in foster care in accordance with this definition if the foster care facility is licensed and payments are made by the State, Tribal or local agency for the care of the child, whether adoption subsidy payments are being made prior to the finalization of an adoption, or whether there is Federal matching of any payments that are made;

(B) Homeless, a child who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; a child who is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; is living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; is living in emergency or transitional shelters; or is abandoned in hospitals; a child whose primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; a child who is living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; an unaccompanied youth not in physical custody of a parent or guardian;

(C) A runaway, an unmarried child under 18 years of age who, without consent of the parent or other person having legal custody of that child, leaves and stays away from the home or other dwelling place provided for the child by that person;

(D) A child in a military family covered by the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children;

(E) A child of a migrant worker, a worker that moved as a migratory agricultural worker or migratory fisher due to economic necessity from one residence to another residence, and from one school district to another; or

(F) Enrolled in the Youth Corrections Education Program or the Juvenile Detention Education Program.

(e) A school district or public charter school must accept any credits earned by students qualified for the additional district credit requirements waiver in another school district or public charter school and must apply them toward the 24 Units of Credit Requirements for the diploma.

(f) A school district or public charter school may grant high school credit for courses taken prior to grade 9 if students taking pre-grade 9 courses are required to meet performance criteria that are equivalent to the performance criteria for students taking the same high school courses;

(g) Course syllabi shall be written for courses in grades 9 through 12 and shall be available to students, staff, parents, the district school board and other interested individuals.

(3) Unit of Credit Requirements for students who were first enrolled in grade 9 during the 2022–2023 school year or first enrolled in grade 9 in any subsequent school year:

(a) Each student shall earn a minimum of 24 units of credit aligned to the Oregon State Board adopted standards to include:

(A) English Language Arts — 4 (shall include the equivalent of one unit in Written Composition);

(B) Mathematics —3; ~~(shall include one unit at the Algebra I level and two units that are at a level higher than Algebra II)~~;

(C) Science — 3;

(D) Social Sciences 3 — (shall include 0.5 unit of US civics credit in addition to at least 2.5 units of credit aligned to the Oregon State Board adopted standards for U.S. history, world history, geography, economics, and financial literacy);

(E) Health Education — 1;

(F) Physical Education — 1;

(G) Career and Technical Education, The Arts or World Languages — 3 (units shall be earned in any one or a combination)~~.~~;

<u>(H) Future Planning — 1.</u>

(b) A district school board or public charter school with a three-year high school may submit through the waiver process alternative plans to meet unit requirements;

(c) A district school board or public charter school may increase the number of units required in specific areas, and may increase or decrease the number of elective units; however, the total units of credit required for graduation shall not be less than 24;

(d) A district school board or public charter school must waive any additional district requirements if students are or, were at any time from grade 9-12:

(A) A foster child, a child receiving 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the child welfare agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions, and pre-adoptive homes. A child is in foster care in accordance with this definition if the foster care facility is licensed and payments are made by the State, Tribal or local agency for the care of the child, whether adoption subsidy payments are being made prior to the finalization of an adoption, or whether there is Federal matching of any payments that are made;

(B) Homeless, a child who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; a child who is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; is living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; is living in emergency or transitional shelters; or is abandoned in hospitals; a child whose primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; a child who is living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; an unaccompanied youth not in physical custody of a parent or guardian;

(C) A runaway, an unmarried child under 18 years of age who, without consent of the parent or other person having legal custody of that child, leaves and stays away from the home or other dwelling place provided for the child by that person;

(D) A child in a military family covered by the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children;

(E) A child of a migrant worker, a worker that moved as a migratory agricultural worker or migratory fisher due to economic necessity from one residence to another residence, and from one school district to another; or

(F) Enrolled in the Youth Corrections Education Program or the Juvenile Detention Education Program.

(e) A school district or public charter school must accept any credits earned by students qualified for the additional district credit requirements waiver in another school district or public charter school and must apply them toward the 24 Units of Credit Requirements for the diploma.

(f) A school district or public charter school may grant high school credit for courses taken prior to grade 9 if students taking pre-grade 9 courses are required to meet performance criteria that are equivalent to the performance criteria for students taking the same high school courses;

(g) Course syllabi shall be written for courses in grades 9 through 12 and shall be available to students, staff, parents, the district school board and other interested individuals.

(4) Each student shall demonstrate proficiency in essential skills adopted by the State Board of Education as provided in OAR 581-022-2115;

(5) School districts shall develop a process that provides each student the opportunity to develop an education plan and build an education profile in grades 7 through 12 with adult guidance. The plan and profile shall be reviewed and updated periodically (at least annually) and be supported by a Comprehensive Guidance Program as defined in OAR 581-021-0435.

(6) Each student shall develop an education plan and build an education profile.

(a) Each student shall develop an education plan that:

(A) Identifies personal and career interests;

(B) Identifies tentative educational and career goals and post high school next steps (i.e. college, workforce, military, apprenticeship, other);

(C) Sets goals to prepare for transitions to next steps identified in section (7)(b);

(D) Designs, monitors and adjusts a course of study that meets the interest and goals of the student as described in subsection (a) (A), (B) and (C) of this rule that includes but is not limited to:

(i) Appropriate coursework and learning experiences;

(ii) Identified career-related learning experiences; and

(iii) Identified extended application opportunities.

(b) Through the education profile each student shall:

(A) Monitor progress and achievement toward standards including:

(i) Content standards;

(ii) Essential skills;

(iii) Extended application standard; and

(iv) Other standards where appropriate (e.g. industry standards).

(B) Document other personal accomplishments determined by the student or school district.

(C) Review progress and achievement in subsection (b)(A) and (B) of this subsection at least annually.

(7) Each student shall build a collection of evidence, or include evidence in existing collections(s), to demonstrate extended application (as defined in OAR 581-022-0102);

(8) Each student shall participate in career-related learning experiences outlined in the education plan (as defined in OAR 581-022-0102);

(9) Notwithstanding sections (1) to (8) of this rule, each district school board or public charter school governing board with jurisdiction over high school programs shall award a modified diploma to those students who have demonstrated the inability to meet the full set of academic content standards even with reasonable modifications and accommodations and who fulfill all requirements as described in OAR 581-022-2010.

(10) Notwithstanding sections (1) to (8) of this rule, each district school board or public charter school governing board with jurisdiction over high school programs shall award an extended diploma to those students who have demonstrated the inability to meet the full set of academic content standards even with reasonable modifications and accommodations and who fulfill all requirements as described in OAR 581-022-2015.

(11) Notwithstanding sections (1) to (8) of this rule and as provided in OAR 581-022-2020, schools districts and public charter schools shall make an alternative certificate available to students as an alternative for students who do not obtain the regular diploma, modified diploma or extended diploma.

(12) Attendance Requirements:

(a) Twelve school years shall be required beginning with grade 1, except when the school district adopts policies providing for early or delayed completion of all state and school district credit and performance requirements;

(b) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, a student may satisfy the requirements of sections (2)(6) of this rule in less than four years. If the school district or public charter school has the consent of the student's parent or guardian, a school district or public charter school shall award a diploma to a student upon request from the student, if the student satisfies the

requirements for the diploma that apply to the student based on the date of graduation of the student or the school year when the student first enrolled in grade 9, as applicable.

(c) If a school district or public charter school has the consent of a student's parent or guardian, the school district or public charter school may advance the student to the next grade level if the student has satisfied the requirements for the student's current grade level.

(d) The requirement for obtaining the consent of a student's parent or guardian under subsections (b) and (c) of this section does not apply to a student who is:

(A) Emancipated pursuant to ORS 419B.550 to 419B.558; or

(B) 18 years of age or older.

(e) The district school board may adopt policies for alternative learning experiences, such as credit by examination and credit for off-campus experiences;

(f) With any modification of the attendance requirements for graduation, school district and public charter school staff shall consider age and maturity of students, access to alternative learning experiences, performance levels, school district or public charter school guidelines and the wishes of parents and guardians.

(13) A school district or public charter school shall ensure that students have access to the appropriate resources to achieve a diploma at each high school in the school district or at the public charter school.

Statutory/Other Authority: ORS 326.051 & 329.451
Statutes/Other Implemented: ORS 326.051, 329.451 & 339.280
History:
ODE 22-2022, amend filed 04/26/2022, effective 04/26/2022
ODE 15-2022, amend filed 03/24/2022, effective 03/24/2022
ODE 21-2018, amend filed 06/05/2018, effective 06/06/2018
ODE 3-2018, amend filed 01/30/2018, effective 01/30/2018
Renumbered from 581-022-1130 by ODE 16-2017, f. & cert. ef. 7-5-17
ODE 45-2014, f. & cert. ef. 12-17-14
ODE 20-2009, f. & cert. ef. 12-10-09
ODE 5-2009(Temp), f. 6-29-09, cert. ef. 6-30-09 thru 12-22-09
ODE 18-2008, f. & cert. ef. 6-27-08
ODE 18-2007, f. & cert. ef. 9-10-07
ODE 18-2006, f. 12-11-06, cert. ef. 12-12-06

ODE 12-2002, f. & cert. ef. 4-15-02
EB 2-1997, f. 3-27-97, cert. ef. 9-1-97

581-022-2115

~~Assessment of~~ Essential Skills

(1) Definitions. As used in this rule:

~~(a) "Assessment option" means an assessment approved to assess proficiency in the Essential Skills for the purpose of earning a high school diploma or a modified diploma.~~

(a~~b~~) "Essential Skills" means process skills that cross academic disciplines and are embedded in ~~the content standards~~ courses, Extended Application, and the Career Related Learning Experience. The skills are not content specific and can be applied in a variety of courses, subjects, and settings.

(b~~c~~) "Local performance assessment" means a standardized measure (e.g., activity, exercise, problem, or work sample scored using an official state scoring guide), embedded in the school districts' and public charter schools' curriculum that evaluates the application of students' knowledge and skills.

(c~~d~~) "Official state scoring guide" means an evaluation tool designed for scoring student work that includes specific, consistent assessment criteria for student performance and a 1-6 point scale to help rate student work. It is used by Oregon teachers to evaluate student work samples.

~~(e) "Student-initiated test impropriety" means student conduct that:~~

~~(A) Is inconsistent with:~~

~~(i) The Test Administration Manual; or~~

~~(ii) Accompanying guidelines; or~~

~~(B) Results in a score that is invalid.~~

(d~~f~~) "Work sample" means a representative sample of individual student work (e.g., research papers, statistical experiments, speaking presentations, theatrical performances, work experience) that may cover one or more content areas and therefore may be scored using one or more official state scoring guide(s). A~~t the high school level, a~~ work sample can be used to

fulfill ~~both~~ the local performance assessment requirement described in Section 2 of this rule. ~~and the Essential Skills requirement described in Section 3 of this rule.~~

~~(2) School districts and public charter schools that offer grades 3 through 8 or high school shall administer local performance assessments for students in grades 3 through 8 and at least once in high school. For each skill area listed in section (17) of this rule, the assessments shall consist of:~~

~~(a) One work sample per grade scored using official state scoring guides; or~~

~~(b) Comparable measures adopted by the district.~~

~~(3) School districts and public charter schools shall require high school students to demonstrate proficiency in the Essential Skills using assessment options that are approved by the State Board of Education for the purpose of student eligibility for:~~

~~(a) The high school diploma as established in OAR 581-022-2000; or~~

~~(b) The modified diploma as established in OAR 581-022-2010.~~

~~(4) Pursuant to ORS 339.115 and 339.505, school districts and public charter schools shall provide any eligible student with instruction in and multiple assessment opportunities to demonstrate proficiency in the Essential Skills for the purpose of achieving the high school diploma or the modified diploma.~~

~~(5) To be eligible to receive a high school diploma or a modified diploma:~~

~~(a) For students first enrolled in grade 9 during the 2008-2009 school year, school districts and public charter schools shall require students to demonstrate proficiency in the Essential Skill listed in section (16)(a) of this rule: Read and comprehend a variety of text.~~

~~(b) For students first enrolled in grade 9 during the 2009-2010 school year, school districts and public charter schools shall require students to demonstrate proficiency in the Essential Skills listed in sections (16)(a)-(b) of this rule:~~

~~(A) Read and comprehend a variety of text; and~~

~~(B) Write clearly and accurately.~~

~~(c) For students first enrolled in grade 9 during the 2010-2011 school year, school districts and public charter schools shall require students to demonstrate proficiency in the Essential Skills listed in section (16)(a)–(c) of this rule:~~

~~(A) Read and comprehend a variety of text;~~

~~(B) Write clearly and accurately; and~~

~~(C) Apply mathematics in a variety of settings.~~

~~(d) For students first enrolled in grade 9 during the 2011-2012 school year or first enrolled in grade 9 in any subsequent school year, school districts and public charter schools shall require students to demonstrate proficiency in the Essential Skills listed in Section 16(a)–(c) of this rule and any additional Essential Skills for which:~~

~~(A) The State Board of Education has adopted the determination to phase in for inclusion in the high school diploma and modified diploma requirements; and~~

~~(B) The State Board of Education has adopted assessment options by March 1 of the student's 8th grade year.~~

~~(e) School districts and public charter schools may require students to demonstrate proficiency in additional Essential Skills beyond the minimum requirements described in section (5)(a)-(d) of this rule.~~

~~(6) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall establish an Assessment of Essential Skills Review Panel (AESRP) to make recommendations on:~~

~~(a) The phasing in of Essential Skills for inclusion in the high school diploma and the modified diploma requirements;~~

~~(b) The adoption of assessment options to measure students' proficiency in the approved Essential Skills for the purpose of the high school diploma or the modified diploma; and~~

~~(c) The achievement standards used to determine student eligibility for the high school diploma or the modified diploma.~~

~~(7) The AESRP shall work toward the goal of a system with a high degree of technical adequacy and equivalent rigor between assessment options as practicable.~~

~~(8) The AESRP shall base its recommendations on evidence provided by:~~

~~(a) School districts;~~

~~(b) Research organizations; and~~

~~(c) Other experts.~~

~~(9) The AESRP shall consist of assessment experts from:~~

~~(a) School districts, including but not limited to:~~

~~(A) Superintendents;~~

~~(B) Principals;~~

~~(C) Curriculum Directors;~~

~~(D) Educators;~~

~~(E) Special education educators; and~~

~~(F) English Language Learners (ELL) educators;~~

~~(b) postsecondary education institutions; and~~

~~(c) Business partners who have expertise in:~~

~~(A) Assessment design;~~

~~(B) Assessment administration; or~~

~~(C) Use of assessments~~

~~(10) The State Board of Education shall make the determination to adopt the AESRP's recommended assessment options, and achievement standards for the purpose of conferring high school diplomas and modified diplomas. The determination of the State Board of Education will be final and not subject to appeal.~~

~~(11) The ODE shall issue the State Board of Education's intentions regarding the AESRP's recommendations by December 15 of each year and formal notice of the State Board of Education's final determination regarding the AESRP's recommendations by March 1 of each year as an addendum to the Test Administration Manual, which the ODE shall issue by August 1 of each year.~~

~~(12) School districts and public charter schools shall adhere to the requirements set forth in the Test Administration Manual to:~~

~~(a) Administer;~~

~~(b) Score;~~

~~(c) Manage; and~~

~~(d) Document the district and school assessments of students' proficiency in the Essential Skills required to receive a high school diploma or a modified diploma.~~

~~(13) School districts and public charter schools shall establish conduct and discipline policies addressing student-initiated test impropriety.~~

~~(14) School districts and public charter schools shall allow students to use assessment options and achievement standards adopted by the State Board of Education in a student's ninth through twelfth grade years as follows:~~

~~(a) Students may demonstrate proficiency in the Essential Skills using assessment options adopted in their ninth through twelfth grade years.~~

~~(b) Students may use achievement standards adopted in their 9th through 12th grade years that are equal to or lower than the achievement standards approved as of March 1 of the students' 8th grade year.~~

~~(15) Districts may develop and administer a local assessment option for students to demonstrate proficiency in the Essential Skills, using established professional and technical standards in place of the assessment options adopted by the State Board of Education as described in section 14 of this rule. Districts that choose this option are required to publish:~~

~~(a) A communication strategy to ensure stakeholders are notified of the district's approach to the local assessment option; and~~

~~(b) Materials written in plain language that contain descriptions of the~~

~~(A) Purpose of the assessment;~~

~~(B) Scoring methodology;~~

~~(C) Method by which students and parents will receive results from the assessment;~~

~~(D) Criteria for determining student proficiency using the assessment; and~~

~~(E) Criteria for determining which students will have access to the assessment~~

~~(16) The ODE shall publish the subset of Essential Skills assessment options and the associated performance levels which may be used by each of Oregon's postsecondary institutions as defined by those institutions' policies provided to the ODE by October 15 of each year.~~

~~(17)~~ (2) The Essential Skills identified by the State Board of Education as of July 1, 2008 are as follows:

(a) Read and comprehend a variety of text;

(b) Write clearly and accurately;

(c) Apply mathematics in a variety of settings;

(d) Listen actively and speak clearly and coherently;

(e) Think critically and analytically;

(f) Use technology to learn, live, and work;

(g) Demonstrate civic and community engagement;

(h) Demonstrate global literacy; and

(i) Demonstrate personal management and teamwork skills.

~~(18)~~ (3)School districts and public charter schools shall include one or more local performance assessments for grades 3 through 8 and for high school for each of the following skill areas:

(a) Writing;

(b) Speaking;

(c) Mathematical problem-solving; and

(d) Scientific inquiry.

~~(19) School districts and public charter schools may include one social science analysis work sample that is administered in accordance with school district or public charter school policies as a local performance assessment for grades 3 through 8 and for high school.~~

~~(20) For students on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan, if a student's IEP or 504 Team determines that the nature of a student's disability prevents the student from demonstrating proficiency in an Essential Skill using any of the approved assessment options listed in the Test Administration Manual, the student's IEP Team may exempt the student from the requirement as listed in the Test Administration Manual and determine an appropriate replacement assessment option for the student to use that addresses the Essential Skill in a manner that is consistent with:~~

~~(a) The student's instructional plan; and~~

~~(b) The state assessment criteria adopted by the State Board of Education.~~

~~(21) For students seeking a modified diploma, school districts and public charter schools may modify the assessment options adopted by the State Board of Education when the following conditions are met:~~

~~(a) For students on IEP or 504 Plans:~~

~~(A) School districts and public charter schools must comply with all requirements established by the student's IEP or 504 Plan when implementing modifications for work samples;~~

~~(B) School districts and public charter schools must comply with OAR 581-022-2100 section (4)(d) when implementing modifications for a statewide assessment.~~

~~(b) For students not on IEP or 504 Plans:~~

~~(A) School districts and public charter schools may only implement modifications for work samples that are consistent with the modifications the student has received during instruction in the content area to be assessed in the year in which the work sample is administered.~~

~~(B) School districts and public charter schools must obtain approval from the school team responsible for monitoring the student's progress toward the modified diploma before implementing modifications for work samples.~~

~~(C) Consistent with OAR 581-022-2100, school districts and public charter schools may not implement modifications for statewide assessments for students who are not on an IEP or 504 Plan.~~

~~(22) The Essential Skills graduation requirements established by Sections 3, 4, and 5 of this rule are waived for students graduating in the 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024 school years.~~

Statutory/Other Authority: ORS 329.451, 338.025, 339.115 & 339.505
Statutes/Other Implemented: ORS 329.045, 329.075, 329.451, 329.485 & 338.115
History:
ODE 16-2022, amend filed 03/24/2022, effective 03/24/2022
ODE 12-2021, amend filed 04/21/2021, effective 04/21/2021
Renumbered from 581-022-0615 by ODE 16-2017, f. & cert. ef. 7-5-17
ODE 8-2011, f. & cert. ef. 7-1-11
ODE 19-2009, f. & cert. ef. 12-10-09
ODE 10-2009(Temp), f. & cert. ef. 9-1-09 thru 2-28-10
ODE 17-2008, f. & cert. ef. 6-27-08

581-022-2120

Essential Skill Assessments for English Language Learners

(1) Definitions. As used in this rule:

(a) "Assessment option" means an assessment approved to assess proficiency in the Essential Skills for the purpose of earning a high school diploma or a modified diploma.

(b) "English Language Learner" (ELL) means a student who meets the definition of "Limited English Proficient" found in Title IX, Part A, Section 9101.25 of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).

(c) "Essential Skills" means process skills that cross academic disciplines and are embedded in the content standards. The skills are not content specific and can be applied in a variety of courses, subjects, and settings.

(d) "Qualified Rater" means any individual who is:

(A) Trained to a high degree of proficiency in scoring the assessment administered to the student; and

(B) Endorsed by the school district or public charter school, consistent with local school board policy, as proficient in the student's language of origin for the purposes of accurately scoring the student's work in the student's language of origin.

(2) Consistent with OAR 581-022-2115, school districts and public charter schools must adopt a policy whether to allow ELL students to demonstrate proficiency in all required Essential Skills in the students' language of origin.

(3) If a school district or public charter school adopts a policy allowing ELL students to demonstrate proficiency in the Essential skills in the students' language of origin under Sections 2 and 3 of this rule, that policy must include the following:

(a) Development of a procedure to provide assessment options as described in the Test Administration Manual in participating ELL students' language of origin.

(b) Development of a procedure to ensure that locally scored assessment options administered in an ELL student's language of origin are scored by a qualified rater.

Statutory/Other Authority: 329.075 & ORS 326.051
Statutes/Other Implemented: ORS 329.045, 329.075 & 329.485
History:

ODE 18-2019, amend filed 05/17/2019, effective 05/17/2019
ODE 10-2018, amend filed 04/03/2018, effective 04/03/2018
~~Renumbered from 581-022-0617 by ODE 16-2017, f. & cert. ef. 7-5-17~~
~~ODE 22-2016, f. & cert. ef. 3-22-16~~
~~ODE 18-2010, f. & cert. ef. 12-17-10~~

APPENDIX J: A VISION FOR A FUTURE-READY GRADUATE

Oregon educational systems need adaptive changes to move the recommendations of this report to reality if they are adopted. It will take time and require investment of human resources, engagement, and planning. **These recommendations will require careful execution to ensure that they are not implemented inequitably.**

Additional support for five-year cohort. Oregon's emphasis on graduation rates can result in practices that do not protect student interests. For example, students who need more than four years to graduate may not feel supported given that the graduation rate is based on completion in four years (by federal definition) and excludes other forms of high school attainment, such as the GED. ODE could do more to communicate about the value of fifth-year cohort calculations for educational equity.

In summary, Oregon must endeavor to define and publish system indicators that hold education accountable for creating the conditions in which students can graduate.

Improving Belonging

Improving high school graduation outcomes requires ensuring that all students feel welcome, seen, and listened to. They need a strong sense of belonging with their school, peers, educators, and communities. Oregon's students who are members of Tribes, who come from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds, who have disabilities, who are experiencing houselessness or poverty, who are experiencing mobility or are from refugee or migrant populations, or any student who identifies with a marginalized group, such as students who identify as LGBTQ2SIA+, need curricula, instruction, and assessment practices that honor them in ways they can see. They need staff members, educators, and administrators at their school who look like them and their family. They need all staff and educators to see their genius, their joy, and their funds of knowledge and expertise as being central to the learning process at school.

Respondents (particularly respondents from historically marginalized communities) advocated for a school environment that reflects, welcomes, and supports student identities. They named the need for educators, schools, and communities to expect that students from historically marginalized communities will learn and demonstrate high levels of performance. Linguistic access would also reduce barriers. Respondents wondered about the ability to offer assessments of learning in different languages. This was most frequently raised in the context of the "first" or "home" language students from immigrant or refugee communities.

In response, ODE has established and is in the process of implementing several Student Success Plans, several of which are funded through the Student Success Act (SSA), to directly address and support the differential needs of students and their parents, families, and communities who have been historically or are currently underserved by Oregon's education system. These Plans, focused on African American/Black, Latino/a/x and Indigenous, American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, LGBTQ2SIA+, and English language learners and multilingual students are designed with a pre-kindergarten through higher education framework. They focus grantee efforts on supporting students, families, and their communities with the resources needed to overcome disproportionate impacts and learning gaps created by the system. Similarly, ODE initiatives supported by the Safe and Inclusive Schools (SIS) team focus on school culture, climate and enhancing student belonging. These initiatives are all aligned with ODE's Integrated Model of Mental Health. In addition to training and resourcing for educators and administrators, these initiatives support the whole child in a successful educational journey that leads to graduation.

Providing Additional Time for Students

Flexible time requirements might increase equitable access to graduation. Students who experience mobility have disruptions in their formal education, or students who learn on a different schedule might be better served if there were more options for when and how quickly to complete learning (outside of school hours, shorter or longer than the standard four-year model, etc.). Many students would benefit from more alignment and overlap between K–12 and postsecondary training. One improvement would be for ODE to explore how Oregon could provide the opportunity for schools to intentionally design five-year high school experiences. Optional fifth-year programs would be designed by districts in collaboration with community, businesses, industry, and higher education to support students in their post-graduation goals.

Improving Outcomes for Students Experiencing Mobility

The engagement process brought to light several barriers that students experience after moving to Oregon schools from another state or country. These barriers include challenges with the allotted time to meet Oregon's graduation requirements and difficulties having credits from their previous school honored in Oregon. Students also have challenges getting their records transferred.

The substantial efforts of the Oregon Legislature and ODE staff to develop and implement the Access to Linguistic Inclusion policy should help address some much-needed flexibility in the area of language arts credit. That might alleviate some challenges for students experiencing mobility. If the recommendation to allow for more flexibility in math courses is supported, that

will also address some of the pressure on students who do not have a full four years to complete graduation requirements after a move.

ODE could work with districts and families—specifically families of students who are immigrants or refugees and families of students who experience mobility—to develop reasonable, respectful policies to support students in meeting Oregon's graduation requirements when their high school years have been impacted by mobility.

Expanding IB Diploma Reciprocity

Oregon does not currently have a policy in place for students who complete the challenging International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma program. Consideration should be given to honor the IB Diploma with a formal reciprocity agreement. Washington implemented such a policy successfully, and no risks have been identified. ODE could consider such a policy.

Improving Public Engagement

Graduation requirement revision would need to be the subject of focused engagement with community and education partners, paying particular attention to the needs and feedback from marginalized communities, students and families experiencing poverty or houselessness, and students with disability. This feedback would be critical to reduce or eliminate mistakes, anticipate challenges, and ensure that graduation requirements are equitable.

Supporting Equitable Implementation

The Oregon Legislature and the Oregon State Board have important roles to play in bringing these recommendations to fruition by supporting equitable implementation. The legislature can help to ensure that ODE has the needed staff and financial resources to continue to engage with community and education partners to develop implementation resources and plans during the 2023–25 biennium. They can also change statutes to support the recommendations in this report. The State Board can best support ODE in developing culturally-responsive engagement plans, ensuring that the public are made aware of the plans and the ongoing deliverables, and by making necessary regulatory changes to support these recommendations. The State Board is central to this effort, as they are closely associated with the ongoing work to infuse equity into Oregon's education systems and have been the primary architects of previous diploma policy efforts.

Putting Increased Resources to Work

Feedback included recommendations to investigate how the state can ensure that schools have the resources, capacity, and tools to support students as they work to meet requirements.

States that have conducted comprehensive review and implementation of graduation requirements, such as Ohio, have invested heavily in staffing in order to support the process. Ohio has an Office of Graduation and multiple staff who work exclusively on training, technical assistance, and support. With support from the legislature, ODE could hire 3.0 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) staff positions to coordinate implementation of diploma requirements and practices, training resources, guidance, and technical assistance. These would include 1.0 FTE project analyst (to plan and manage the implementation of the revised requirements) and 2.0 FTE education specialists (1.0 dedicated to supporting guidance and training, 1.0 to continuously improve state and district diploma practices and provide technical assistance).

With these additional staff resources, ODE could help support districts in implementing these recommendations in every district and school:

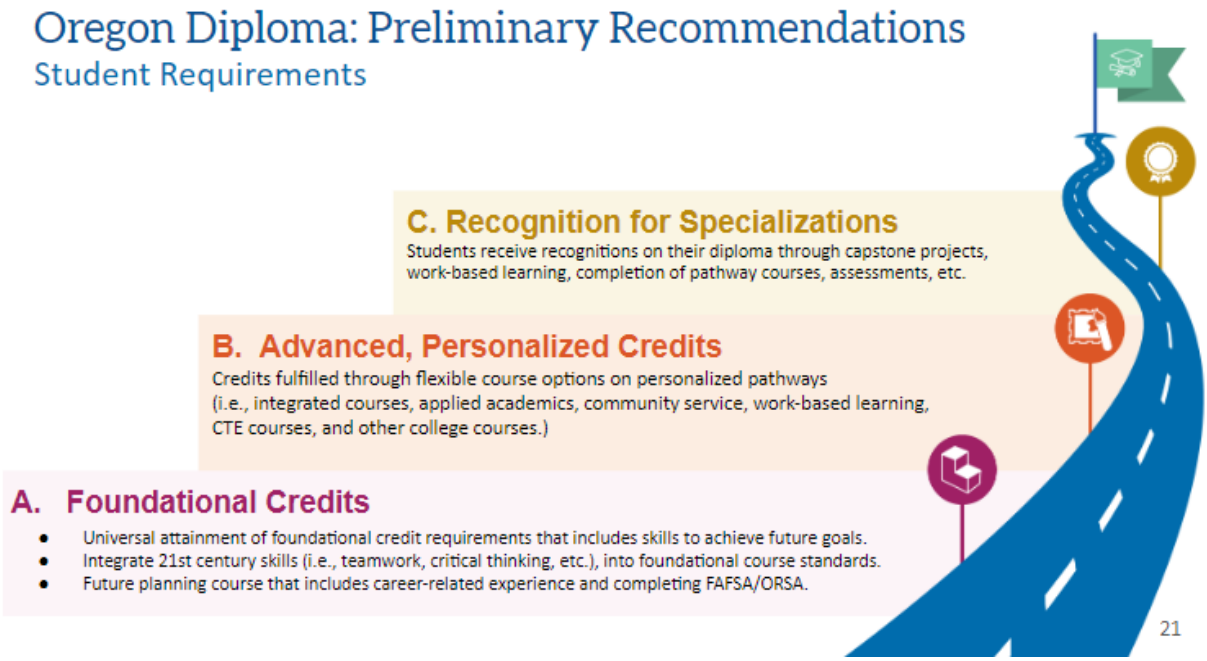
- Provide increased communication, dissemination, and implementation of ODE's equity stance and explore additional strategies and partnerships to increase equity training opportunities available to schools.
- Develop a statewide system or set of resources that will help students transition between districts or programs.
- Connect with districts to help define what resources or training they might need to help them navigate conversations about graduation requirements with students and families.
- Build systems and resources to support ongoing, sustained community and education partner engagement that need to be developed.
- Research and develop OARs and other policy documents that increase accountability for schools and districts to provide high-quality learning experiences that prepare students for life after graduation.
- Research how to increase comparability across schools in terms of high school course offerings, with special focus on remote and rural communities.

Envisioning New Paths to a Diploma

The visioning work included in this section primarily reflects ODE's review of other state practices filtered through the themes from engagement. It includes approaches to diploma requirements that ODE is curious about studying further, in consultation with Tribes in Oregon and through further engagement with community and education partners.

Supporting this vision would require substantial investment in additional research, engagement, and development. ODE also remains aware that implementation of policies in these areas would need to be simple and equitable. Figure 25 depicts one way Oregon could approach transformation of diploma requirements.

Figure 25



Potential Streamlined Approach to Graduation Requirements

Foundational credits

ODE would like to investigate streamlining credit earning, while providing flexibility for students to earn advanced, personalized credits on the pathway of their choice. Students would first attain core foundational credit, then have options for credit earned through flexible course options on personalized pathways. Part of this investigation should center on whether these pathways should all lead to a single Oregon Diploma, or if Oregon should maintain its current diploma options.

The foundational credits would include traditional academic subjects integrated with 21st century skills, such as teamwork and critical thinking. They would also integrate a single-credit future-planning course that would include career-related experiences, financial planning and other household management skills, and completion of the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and ORSAA (Oregon Student Aid Application).

Advanced, personalized credits

Schools would have the flexibility to offer integrated and targeted learning experiences supporting real-world connections, opportunities for community service, work-based learning, career and technical education and college coursework. These would follow the foundational credits. These advanced educational experiences would integrate knowledge across disciplines. Students and families should have support to understand and choose from flexible pathways.

Recognition for specializations

Another common engagement theme was the desire to honor student strengths. ODE could explore expanding Diploma Seals, such as the Biliteracy Seal, to communicate and recognize learning. Examples could include a Career Specialization Seal, Career Readiness Seal, or Advanced Academics. Diploma seals would enable students to bring documentation of talents into their postsecondary lives.