

NEWS RELEASE

May 3, 2017

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Oregon Details Its Vision for Education to Federal Government

More than a year in the making, Oregon's State Plan represents statewide, collaborative effort

(Salem, Ore.) – Oregon submitted its [State Plan under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#) to the U.S. Department of Education today, detailing the values, goals, and strategies that will guide the state's education system going forward. The plan is founded on a statewide vision that ensures each and every Oregon student has access to and benefits from a world-class, well-rounded and equitable education. It outlines four commitments to enact the statewide vision and further improve and strengthen Oregon's schools:

- Prioritizing and advancing equity
- Extending the promise of a well-rounded education
- Strengthening district systems
- Fostering ongoing engagement

Since ESSA was signed into law in December 2015 to replace the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, Oregon Department of Education (ODE) staff have been hard at work, consulting with tribal leaders and holding more than two dozen community conversations around the state. The result of this collaboration with students, families, teachers, administrators, school boards, tribal leaders and community members is a document that represents Oregonians' hopes, dreams, aspirations and values for our students and schools.

"Education provides a pathway for every Oregonian to fulfill their potential," Governor Kate Brown said. "Oregon's ESSA State Plan supports a seamless system of education that ensures all students have the tools and opportunity to become lifelong learners, to graduate from high school and pursue rewarding careers."

ESSA provides more flexibility to states than did NCLB, encouraging innovation while maintaining a focus on accountability and improving underperforming schools. This allows Oregon to develop its own plan that reflects its citizens' priorities.

"Today is a tremendous milestone for Oregon. Oregon's State Plan is founded on equity and represents the voices and communities we serve," Deputy Superintendent Salam Noor said. "We want to put every one of our learners on a path to success from birth through high school. And

whether our students choose to attend college or go straight into the workforce, it’s critical that their school experience is full of opportunity.”

ESSA provides an opportunity for states to select specific school quality and student success indicators. For Oregon, those indicators include chronic absenteeism rates and ninth grade on-track figures, two areas that received broad statewide support as a part of the effort to increase the number of students graduating from high school. The new law also provides states the option to consider administering nationally recognized assessments like ACT or SAT for high school accountability purposes – an option Oregon will be pursuing.

“The State Board of Education unanimously supports Oregon’s State Plan under ESSA,” State Board of Education Chair Charles R. Martinez, Jr. said. “We are proud of the inclusive process to develop our plan and look forward to supporting the work as we move into implementation.”

The Oregon Plan represents the voices of Oregonians and is deeply rooted in advancing educational equity and truly building systems that eliminate systemic and historical barriers to student success. ODE ensured that tribal consultations and engagement with communities of color and organizations representing students with disabilities were a key part of the development process. This process also included feedback and listening sessions with members of student leadership groups, like Future Farmers of America (FFA) and Oregon’s Association of Student Councils (OASC), who provided direct input to ODE staff.

“This new law, more than ever before, creates an opportunity for tribal leaders to exercise their sovereign authority and play an active role in the creation of state policy in Oregon,” said Oregon Tribal Council Member Valarie Switzler. “We welcome the opportunity to strengthen our partnerships with the Oregon Department of Education and local school districts in order to support improved outcomes for American Indian students.”

To enhance individualized and personalized learning, Oregon’s Plan reinforces the commitment that every student in Oregon schools receives a well-rounded education. The Oregon Department of Education will provide supports to educators and districts so they may break down barriers that prevent our students from being successful. One strategy to do so will include facilitating more authentic partnerships between schools and community-based organizations.

“ESSA has sparked an urgency among state and local leaders in Oregon to take an intentional approach to addressing the needs of our most vulnerable children,” Self Enhancement, Inc. Founder Tony Hopson said. “I am proud of Oregon’s work to identify key levers to moving the work forward, including building sustained partnerships with community based and culturally-specific organizations like SEI.”

From the beginning, ODE adopted a grassroots approach to ESSA: listening to those in the field to help craft Oregon’s Plan. This process is being recognized nationally as a model for collaboration and has resulted in a plan with broad support.

“There is much for the Oregon Education Association to champion and support in our State ESSA plan. We are proud of the process and believe the plan’s recognition that improving schools takes all stakeholders – educators, families, and community organizations, will be key to our success,” OEA President Hanna Vaandering said. “We believe that those closest to students and schools should play a vital role in making decisions about teaching and learning. Our members are ready to work together to build the schools our students deserve.”

“On behalf of the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators, I want to commend ODE for their extensive and inclusive engagement efforts to develop Oregon’s State Plan,” COSA Executive Director Craig Hawkins said. “Oregon’s Plan offers key levers to advance our state’s focus on equity and ensure all students, schools, and educators are better supported to do their best work.”

ODE expects a response from the U.S. Department of Education regarding Oregon’s plan within 120 days. Implementation will be phased in, starting with the 2017-18 school year. ODE will conduct regular and broad stakeholder engagement in its implementation of ESSA, and is already engaging in outreach to redesign the school report card and develop systems to support educator effectiveness and low-performing schools.

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