



KATE BROWN  
Governor

October 11, 2017

Lindsey Capps  
Chief Education Officer  
Chief Education Office  
255 Capitol Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Miriam Calderon  
Early Learning System Director  
Oregon Early Learning Division  
775 Summer Street NE, Suite 300  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Colt Gill  
Acting Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Oregon Department of Education  
255 Capitol Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Ben Cannon  
Executive Director  
Higher Education Coordinating  
Commission  
255 Capitol St NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Elizabeth Keller  
Acting Executive Director  
Teacher Standards & Practices Commission  
250 Division St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Mr. Capps, Mr. Gill, Ms. Keller, Ms. Calderon, and Mr. Cannon,

My vision for the state's education system is to support Oregonians from all walks of life and abilities to achieve the education they need in their individual journeys from cradle to career.

We have accomplished a great deal in my first two years as Governor, and I wanted to put in writing to you my priorities and expectations for your work in further delivering on this vision.

#### Guiding Principles

I have two overarching guiding principles I wanted to clearly convey, both for existing programs and new initiatives and for the education continuum from early learning through higher education:

I. I expect that you will require a high standard of accountability in implementation, ensuring outcomes are measured and that every dollar of public investment for our students is well spent.

II. I expect that you will work in your respective roles to ensure that our children, students and young people are provided the full benefit of programs as intended and consistent with our State's Equity Lens for education.



## Specific Directives

### **1. Establish a Unified Education Budget**

Consistent with your prior collaboration in budget development, as we prepare for a new budget process, I am asking that you begin in earnest as an Education Cabinet to establish a framework for developing a unified education budget for the 2019-21 biennium that accomplishes the following:

- Ensures more students meet key education benchmarks;
- Recognizes critical opportunities to support key student transitions;
- Improves school readiness and attendance;
- Improves high school and college completion rates; and
- Establishes meaningful pathways to careers and strengthens workforce development.

### **2. Develop a New Statewide Early Learning Plan**

Since 2015, I have prioritized and delivered on expanded early childhood education opportunities and wraparound supports for children and families from birth to age 5. This has included new investments in affordable childcare, providing greater access to Head Start and high-quality preschool options, and streamlining programs serving our most vulnerable families. The latter has included voluntary home visiting to support at-risk families at the earliest stages of a child's life, programs that prevent abuse and neglect and support mental health, and other efforts to ensure parents are engaged in the learning and development of their child.

It is my expectation that as my Education Cabinet you will work closely together in your respective capacities and with other relevant state agencies to support a more integrated early learning system that serves all Oregon communities. I am looking to the leadership of the Early Learning System Director and Early Learning Council to develop a new statewide plan for early learning in Oregon from prenatal to age five.

I am also looking to the Early Learning System Director to work in tandem with the Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction to strengthen partnerships between our K-12 public schools, regional Early Learning Hubs and other community-based partners to better support the transition of students from prekindergarten through third grade.

I expect this Early Learning Plan and stronger collaboration with schools, communities and early learning leaders to result in proposals to be considered for inclusion in my recommended budget for the 2019-21 biennium.

### **3. Achieve Aggressive High School Graduation Goals**

The state has agreed to important goals in our Every Student Succeeds Act state plan to continuously increase high school graduation rates across all student populations. It is my expectation that the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) actively fosters collaborations between educators, schools and communities to ensure our state achieves these goals.

Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate Interim Progress Targets										
	Graduation Year									
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	Accountability Year									
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
All Students	74	76	78	79	80	82	85	86	88	90
Economically Disadvantaged	66	69	71	74	77	79	82	85	87	90
English Learners	51	55	60	64	68	73	77	81	86	90
Students with Disabilities	53	57	61	65	69	74	78	82	86	90
American Indian/Alaska Native	55	59	63	67	71	74	78	82	86	90
Black/African American	63	66	69	72	75	78	81	84	87	90
Hispanic/Latino	67	70	72	75	77	80	82	85	87	90
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	63	66	69	72	75	78	81	84	87	90
Asian	87	87	88	88	88	89	89	89	90	90
White	76	78	79	81	82	84	85	87	88	90
Multi-racial	73	75	77	79	80	82	84	86	88	90

*\*The accountability year reflects interim progress targets from the previous year.*

In addition, I'm directing that:

- Further planning and action will be taken to ensure that ODE's focus on equity and cultural responsiveness is further embedded across all Departmental programs and initiatives;
- Strategies to improve outcomes for traditionally underserved students under our statewide equity plans (African-American/Black Student Success State Plan, American Indian/Alaska Native State Plan, and English Language Learner Outcomes Improvement Plan) are clearly aligned with new investments in programs across school districts under Measure 98 as well as our statewide plan to address chronic absenteeism;
- Key functions of the Education Innovation Officer will be integrated within the existing structure of ODE to maintain a focus on identifying and scaling up effective practices to improve student outcomes;
- Further recommendations are provided to me on the programs administered by the Youth Development Division that serve Oregon's youth disconnected from school and the workforce, and the integration of these programs with drop-out prevention strategies and career-connected learning in K-12 and postsecondary education, and;
- As directed under SB 182, cross-agency resources will be dedicated to fulfill the vision and core functions of the public-nonprofit partnership established under the law to advance educator and school leader professional learning and culturally responsive practices in our schools.

#### 4. Expand Career Connected Learning Aligned to Workforce Needs

We have an opportunity to build on the goals and strategies outlined by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission focused on expanded career-connected degree programs, and those strategies called out through our statewide STEAM Education Plan, and implemented through state investments in career pathway programs across K-12 and Higher Education, and under Measure 98. It is my expectation that the Education Cabinet will work with our partners in workforce, business and industry to better align regional workforce needs with career-connected learning in our K-12 schools and certificate and degree programs at our community colleges and universities.

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I would like you to report to me by the 2018 Legislative Session on specific actions that can be undertaken by education agencies collectively to improve opportunities for Oregonians of all ages to obtain the career skills they need to thrive in our increasingly competitive economy in every region of the state.

Sincerely,



Governor Kate Brown