



# EDUCATION RANKINGS

LPRO: LEGISLATIVE POLICY AND RESEARCH OFFICE

## BACKGROUND BRIEF

This brief provides a broad overview of Oregon's education system and how that system compares to systems in other states. Data is primarily taken from U.S. Department of Education sources, as reported by state departments of education.

### GENERAL STATISTICS

Oregon's education system consists of 197 school districts and 19 educational service districts (ESDs) that employ over 30,000 teachers to serve over a half-million students in more than 1,200 public schools, as well as educational components of the juvenile corrections system and the Youth Development Division of the Oregon Department of Education (ODE).

Oregon's 567,098 students enrolled in the fall of 2013 ranked 29<sup>th</sup> among states and the District of Columbia. The state's pupil-teacher ratio that year was 22.2, the fourth largest in the nation.<sup>1</sup> Oregon's education system serves a diverse group of students. Figure 1 shows student diversity by ethnicity. Figure 2 shows the percentage of Oregon students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch programs, the percentage classified as English language learners, and the percentage of students served under the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as well as how Oregon ranks in those categories compared to other states and the District of Columbia.

#### TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

#### GENERAL STATISTICS

#### GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND HISTORY

#### STATE POLICIES

#### EDUCATIONAL RESULTS

#### TEACHING WORKFORCE

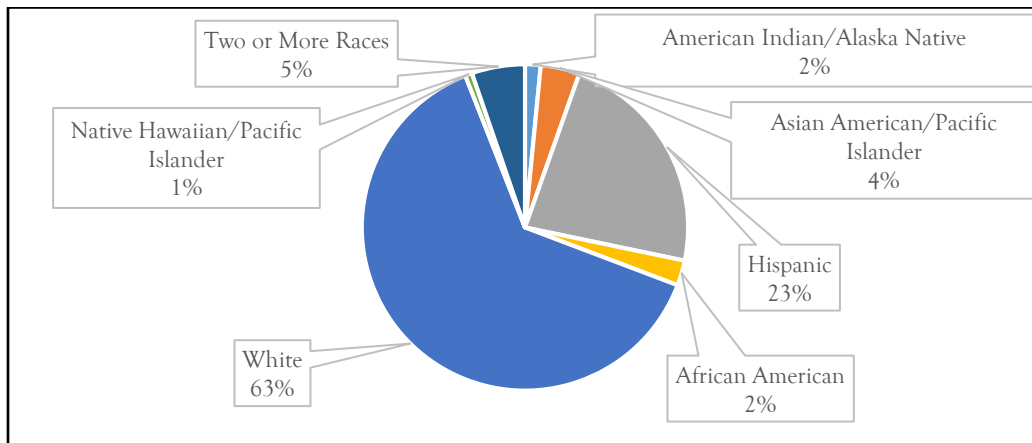
#### FUNDING

#### SCHOOL SAFETY

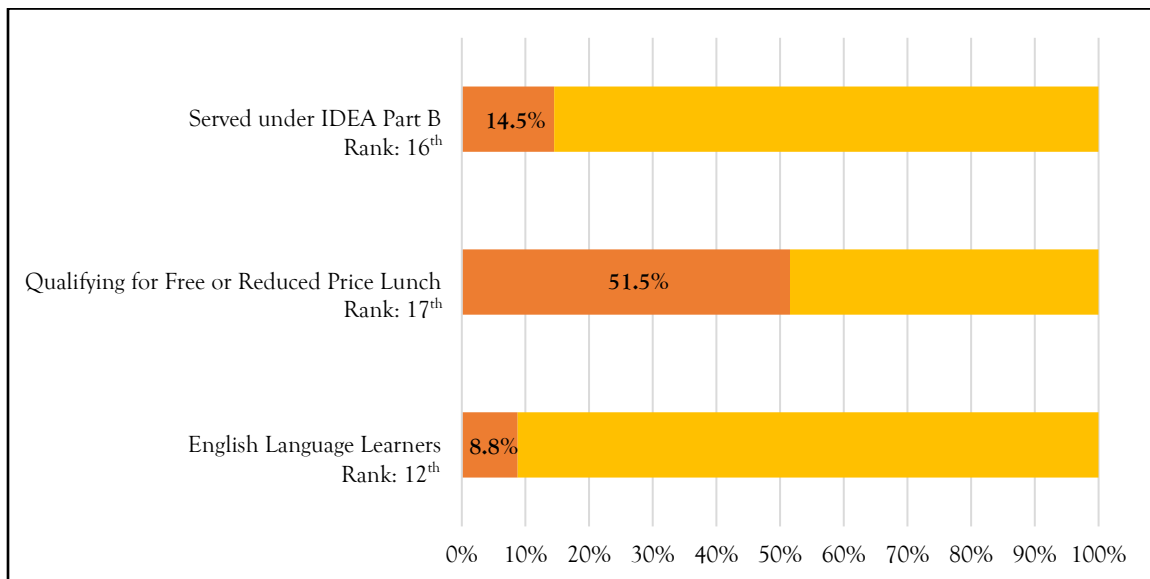
#### STAFF CONTACT

---

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, Table 209.30

**Figure 1: Oregon's Student Population, by Ethnicity, 2014-2015**

Source: LPRO; Data from the Oregon Department of Education, Oregon Statewide Report Card

**Figure 2: Students Qualifying for Specific Programs, 2014-2015**

Source: LPRO; Data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics

## OREGON'S GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND HISTORY

### Current Structure

Currently, the Governor serves as Oregon's Superintendent of Public Instruction. The State Board of Education (SBE) sets educational policies and standards for the state and adopts administrative rules for the implementation of state law. The SBE has seven members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Five members represent each of Oregon's congressional districts, and two members represent the entire state. Members serve four-year terms and elect their own chair.

The Governor-appointed Deputy Superintendent, who serves as the state's Chief State School Officer, heads the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). ODE performs administrative functions for the SBE relating to supervision, management, and control of schools not conferred by law on another agency. Funding for local school districts is funneled through ODE, and ODE is responsible for meeting all federal statewide data reporting requirements.

The Chief Education Office was established to coordinate with education stakeholders to establish a unified public education system that ensures that all public-school students reach the state's educational goals. Its duties are to coordinate with stakeholders, establish a longitudinal data system, identify best practices, review the state's educational goals, and monitor and report on the state's progress toward its goals.

Oregon has 19 Education Service Districts (ESDs), which are regional shared-management service organizations that provide services to their school districts such as speech, physical, and occupational therapy for disabled students; career and technical education; curriculum services; professional development; special education; technology; early learning; financial and other administrative services; legal services; substitute services; and migrant education.

Oregon has 197 school districts, each with a locally elected board and a board-appointed superintendent. School districts choose curricular materials from the SBE's approved list. Other local education agencies (LEAs) within the state include juvenile detention programs, youth corrections programs, and Head Start.

### History

The Superintendent of Public Instruction was established as a statewide office in Oregon's constitution. From 1859, when the constitution became effective, until 1872, the Governor served as superintendent. In 1872, the legislature enacted legislation providing for an elected superintendent. In 2011, the legislature enacted legislation allowing the Governor to serve as superintendent when the then-superintendent's term came to an end. In 2012, the elected superintendent stepped down, leaving the Governor as superintendent. The suite of reforms enacted in 2011 also created the Oregon Education Investment Board, which was renamed the Chief Education Office in 2015 with changes to its duties.

### Constitutional Requirements

In Article 8, Section 1, the Oregon Constitution requires that the Superintendent of Public Instruction be either the Governor or an independently elected official. The constitution also requires that legislatively created officers be limited to four-year terms, and that the legislature provide by law for the establishment of a uniform and general system of common schools. Article 8,

Section 8 requires the legislature to appropriate a sum of money sufficient to ensure that the public education system meets quality goals established by law, and publish a report either demonstrating its sufficiency or identifying reasons for the insufficiency and its impact. This section also requires the establishment of a system of Equalization Grants to eligible districts.

## STATE POLICIES

Brief overviews of several key areas of state education policy are included below.

### Instructional Time

Table 1 lists the hourly requirements for school districts in Oregon. Requirements in Oregon are set by the State Board of Education (SBE) and listed in Oregon Administrative Rule 581-022-1620. Requirements are listed as a stated number of hours. For the purpose of comparison to other states, days are calculated assuming a six-hour school day.

**Table 1: Hourly Requirements for Oregon School Districts**

Grade Range	Requirement
Kindergarten	450 hours (half day) 900 hours (full day)
Grades 1-8	900 hours (150 days)
Grades 9-11	990 hours (165 days)
Grade 12	966 hours (161 days)

Source: LPRO; Data from the Oregon  
Department of Education

According to the U.S. Department of Education, as of 2015, only Colorado (grades 9-11 only), Montana (grades 1-3 only), and South Dakota require fewer educational hours than Oregon. Idaho and Pennsylvania have requirements roughly equivalent to those of Oregon. Thirty states require 180 days or more, while eight states require between 170 and 179 school days.<sup>2</sup>

The SBE received parental complaints in 2014 that although districts were offering the required minimum number of hours, students were in fact being scheduled for fewer than the minimum as a cost-saving measure. The SBE adopted new rules in 2015 specifying that students must be scheduled for the minimum number of hours, and allowed districts to phase in the new requirements gradually. For the 2017-2018 school year, 90 percent of students must be scheduled to receive the required annual minimum hours of instructional time. In 2018-2019, the SBE's goal is for 92 percent of all students in each district and 80 percent of students at each school to be scheduled to receive the minimum required number of hours.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, Table 234.20

<sup>3</sup> Oregon Administrative Rules 581-022-1620 and 581-022-0102 (30)

SBE rules define instructional time and include a list of specific activities that can be counted as instructional time. Students must be engaged in regularly scheduled instruction, learning activities, or assessments, and must be working under the direction and supervision of a licensed or registered teacher, instructor, practitioner, or educational assistant. Additionally, breakfast, recess, professional development (up to 30 hours), parent-teacher conferences, study hall, and advisory periods may count as instructional time.

### **Compulsory School Attendance**

Oregon requires school attendance for children between ages 6 and 18.<sup>4</sup> According to the U.S. Department of Education, as of 2014, thirty-five states require school attendance beginning at age five or six, thirteen states begin compulsory school attendance at age seven, and two begin requiring school attendance at age eight.<sup>5</sup>

The Education Commission of the States (ECS) reports that thirteen states, including Oregon, require districts to offer full-day kindergarten. Sixteen states have compulsory kindergarten attendance.

### **High School Graduation Requirements**

Oregon Administrative Rule 581-022-2000 requires 24 total credits for a standard diploma. According to the 2013 *Digest of Education Statistics* published by the U.S. Department of Education, this standard, shared by 12 other states, is among the most stringent in the nation. Only Texas requires more total credits, with 26. Three states require 23 credits, ten states require 22, five states require 21, eight states require 20, and seven states require 19 or less. Colorado, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts do not have a statewide graduation requirement, while Nebraska bases its requirement on a different scale.<sup>6</sup>

### **Statewide Content Standards**

Oregon adopted the Common Core State Standards for mathematics and English language arts in 2010. The standards were created by the National Governors' Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers with input provided by educators around the country. Forty-two states have adopted the Common Core State Standards. Oregon has adopted its own standards in many other subjects, such as the arts, social sciences, science, world languages, physical education, library/media education, and English language proficiency.

---

<sup>4</sup> ORS 339.010

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2014 *Digest of Education Statistics*, Table 234.10

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2013 *Digest of Education Statistics*, Table 234.30

**Accountability Measures**

State law requires the SBE or its designee to assess the effectiveness of each public school, charter school, and school district. These reports are shared with the school or school district within six months.

Schools and districts are also required to conduct self-evaluations and periodically update their continuous improvement plans.

State law also requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to collect data and produce annual school and district performance reports and provide that information to parents. The Superintendent must also design and implement a system of progressive interventions for schools and school districts that do not demonstrate improvement and provide technical assistance to those schools.<sup>7</sup> Due to changes in federal law, ODE no longer assigns overall numerical scores on school report cards.

Additionally, the Superintendent is required to issue an annual [Oregon Report Card](#) including federally required information and any information deemed worthy of inclusion by the Superintendent.<sup>8</sup>

Although there is no clear way to rank states' accountability systems, in 2014, ECS conducted a [study](#) comparing the report cards issued to schools and districts by all 50 states. Oregon's report cards were not among the top performers as selected by ECS researchers.<sup>9</sup>

**State Plan**

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law in December 2015. ESSA requires each state to engage stakeholders in the creation of a plan for submission to the U.S. Department of Education (ED). [Oregon's state plan](#) was approved by the SBE on April 27, 2017, signed by Governor Brown on May 1, 2017, and submitted on May 3, 2017.<sup>10</sup> The ED approved Oregon's state plan on August 30, 2017.

---

<sup>7</sup> ORS 329.085, *et seq*

<sup>8</sup> Oregon Department of Education, Statewide Report Card, 2015-2016. Available online at <<http://www.oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/reportcards/Documents/rptcard2016.pdf>>.

<sup>9</sup> Education Commission of the States, "Rating States, Grading Schools." Available online at <<https://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/12/53/11253.pdf>>.

<sup>10</sup> Oregon Department of Education, "Oregon's Consolidated State Plan under the Every Student Succeeds Act." Available online at <[http://www.oregon.gov/ode/rules-and-policies/Documents/OR\\_consolidatedStateplan.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/ode/rules-and-policies/Documents/OR_consolidatedStateplan.pdf)>.

## EDUCATIONAL RESULTS

### National Assessment of Educational Progress

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a test in math and reading given every other year to a representative sample of fourth and eighth graders in each state, as well as twelfth graders in certain states. NAEP is a congressionally mandated project administered by the National Center for Education Statistics in the U.S. Department of Education. Results are shown in an average scale score that ranges from 0 to 500. Table 2 shows Oregon's recent results on the NAEP as compared to other states.

**Table 2: National Assessment of Educational Progress Oregon Results and Rankings**

Test	Average Scale Score	Rank Compared to Other States
Grade 4 Mathematics	238	35
Grade 4 Reading	220	35
Grade 8 Mathematics	283	27
Grade 8 Reading	268	20

Source: LPRO; Data from the U.S. Department of Education, Nation's Report Card

### College Entrance Exams

In 2014-2015, 47 percent of Oregon's high school graduates took the College Board's SAT. This places Oregon 24<sup>th</sup> among states and is a decrease from 55 percent in 2005-2006. On average, Oregon students scored 521 in math, ranking the state 29<sup>th</sup>. Oregon students scored 523 in critical reading, ranking the state 27<sup>th</sup>. Oregon students scored 502 in writing, ranking the state 29<sup>th</sup>.<sup>11</sup>

According to ACT officials, 39 percent of Oregon's high school graduates took the ACT in 2016, earning an average composite score of 21.7. Overlap is likely between students taking both the SAT and ACT. While 67 percent of ACT test-takers in Oregon met benchmarks for English, 51 percent met the benchmarks for reading, 49 percent met the benchmarks for math, and 42 percent met the benchmarks for science.

The Education Commission of the States (ECS) reports that 21 states, not including Oregon, require and pay for all eleventh graders to take a college entrance exam. For many of those states, the college entrance exam substitutes for the high school summative assessment required by federal law.

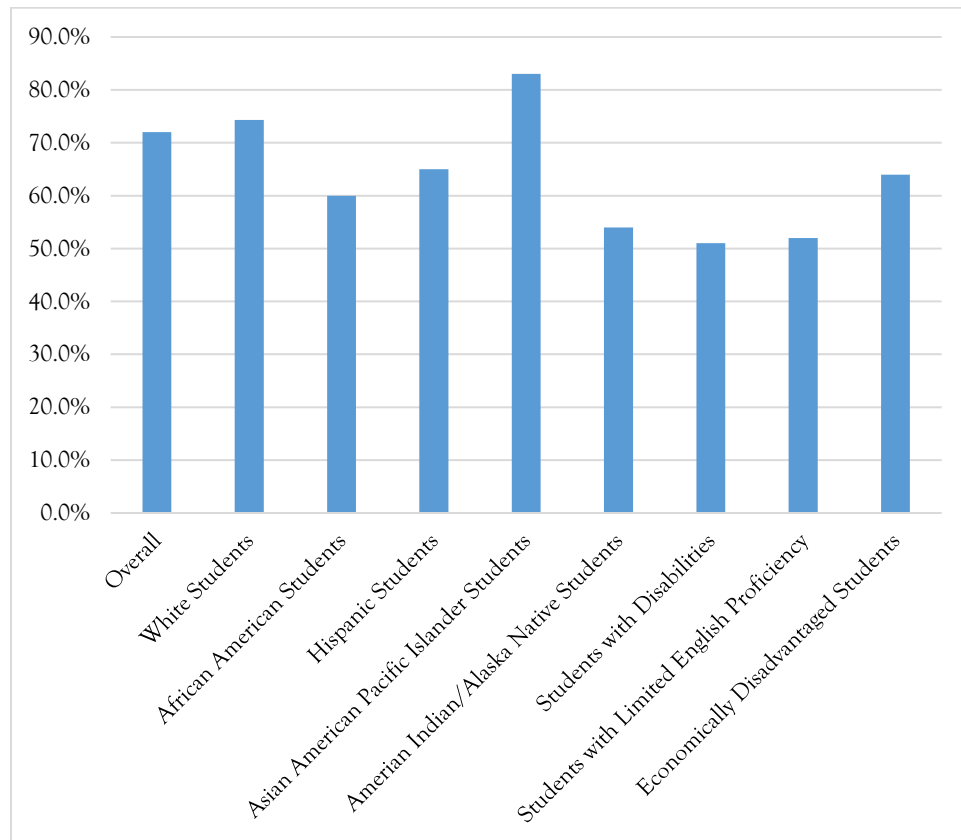
### Graduation Rate

In 2013-2014, Oregon's adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) was 72 percent, placing it 47<sup>th</sup> in the nation. The states with lower graduation rates were Alaska, Nevada, New Mexico, and the District of Columbia. To calculate the ACGR, states identify the cohort of first-time ninth graders in a school year and adjust this number by adding students who transfer in and subtracting those

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, Table 226.40

who transfer out. The ACGR is the percentage of students in the adjusted cohort who graduate within four years of starting ninth grade. Oregon ranks last for the ACGR of white students, graduating only 74 percent within four years.<sup>12</sup> Oregon's rates for specific groups are listed in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate by Disaggregated Student Group, 2013-2014**



Source: LPRO; Data from the U.S. Department of Education, 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, Table 219.46

### High School Dropout Rate

For 2014-2015, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) reported an overall dropout rate of 4.3 percent. This rate is calculated by dividing the number of dropouts in grades 9-12 by the October 1 enrollment count for those grades. This rate represents an increase of 0.3 percent over the 2013-2014 rate. Unlike the ACGR, the dropout rate includes all high school students who drop out in a specific school year regardless of what grade they were in. Dropout rates are generally higher for male students.

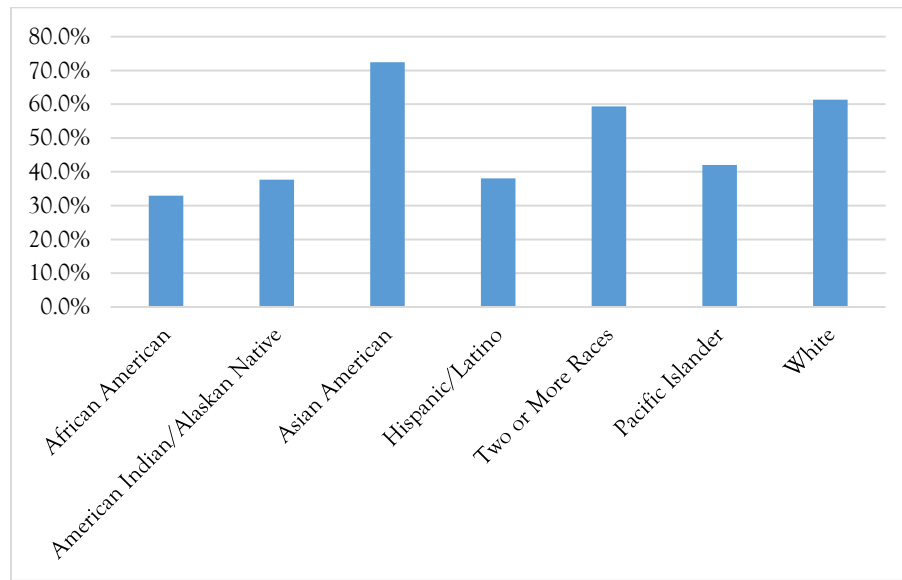
### Achievement Gaps

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, Table 219.46



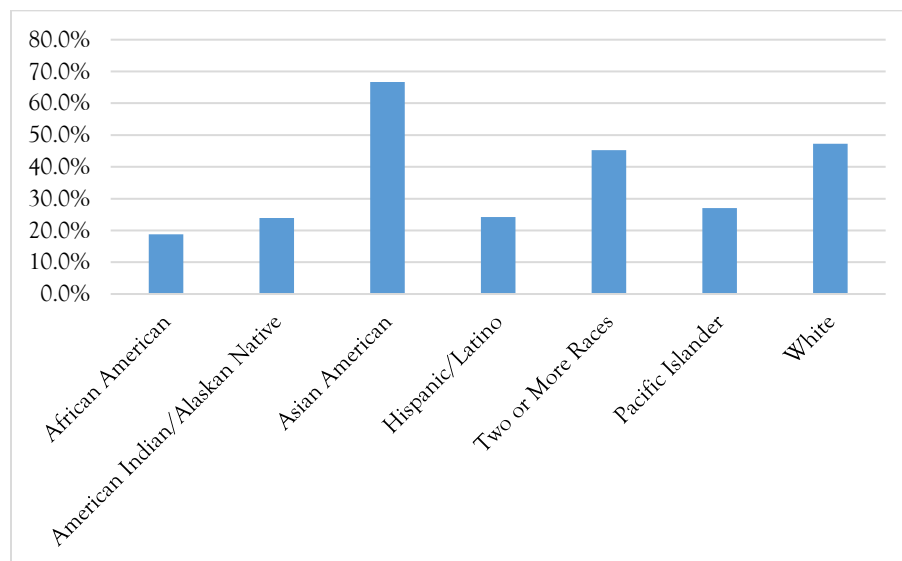
Data from statewide summative assessments shows significant achievement gaps among disaggregated groups of students. Figures 4 and 5 illustrate the percentage of students, disaggregated by ethnicity, who achieved a level three or four on the statewide summative assessments in English language arts and mathematics. Students scoring a level three or four met or exceeded grade level expectations.

**Figure 4: Proficiency in English Language Arts, by Disaggregated Ethnic Group, 2015-2016**



Source: LPRO; Data from the Oregon Department of Education

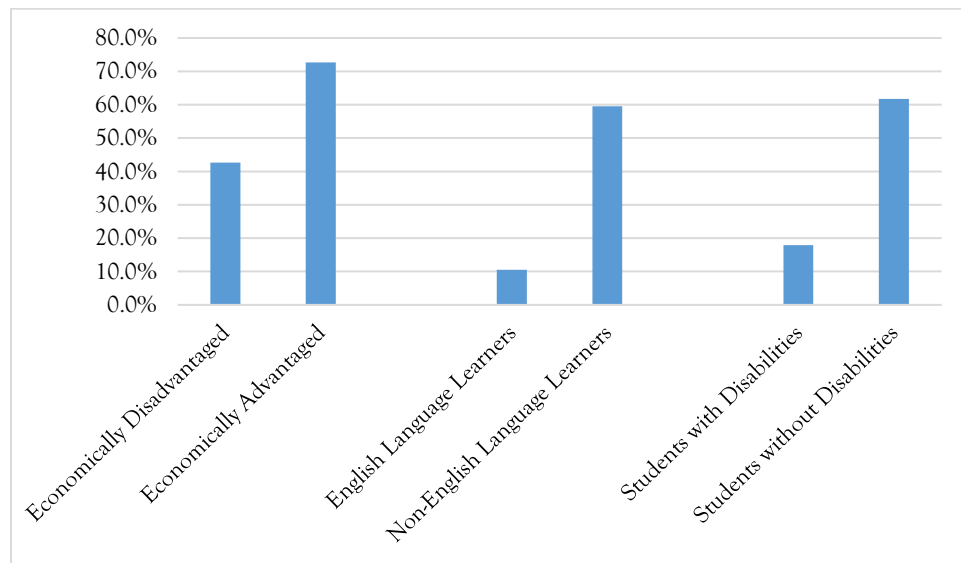
**Figure 5: Proficiency in Mathematics, by Disaggregated Ethnic Group, 2015-2016**



Source: LPRO; Data from the Oregon Department of Education

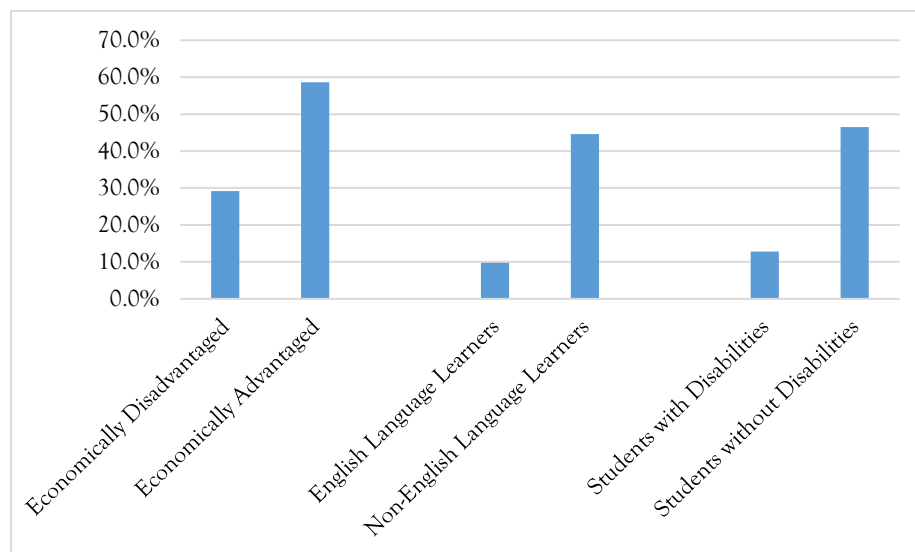
Figures 6 and 7 show the percentage of students enrolled in specific programs who achieved a level three or four on the statewide summative assessments, alongside the percentage of students not enrolled in those programs who achieved proficiency. Economically disadvantaged students are those eligible for free or reduced-price meals. English language learners are those who participated in an English language development program. Students with disabilities are those who had an individualized education program under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) at any time during the school year.

**Figure 6: Proficiency in English Language Arts by Enrollment Status in Special Programs, 2015-2016**



Source: LPRO; Data from the Oregon Department of Education

**Figure 7: Proficiency in Mathematics by Enrollment Status in Special Programs, 2015-2016**



Source: LPRO; Data from the Oregon Department of Education

### Chronic Absenteeism

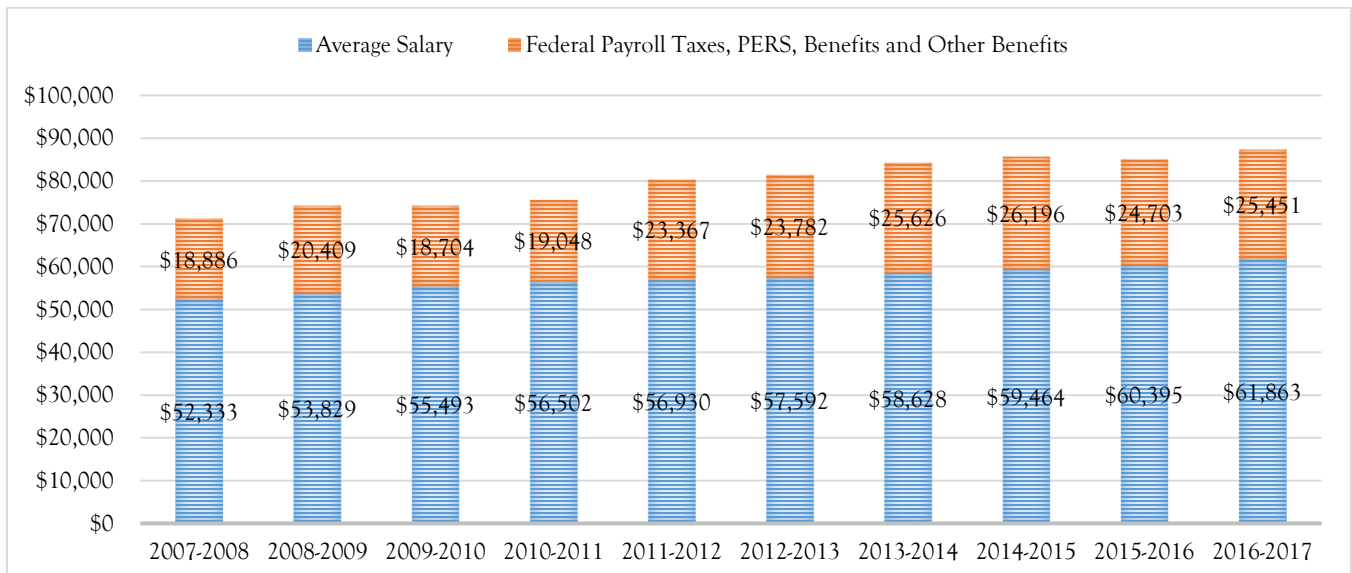
The U.S. Department of Education (ED) defines students as chronically absent when they miss 15 or more days in any school year, while the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) defines it as missing 10 percent or more of school days. Oregon ranks third among states with the most chronically absent students, according to data collected by the ED and compiled by researchers at Johns Hopkins University. Using the federal definition, 22.7 percent of Oregon's students were chronically absent during the 2013-2014 school year. The states with higher percentages of chronically absent students that year were Washington and Alaska. The three best-performing states were South Carolina, with a rate of 8.4 percent, Indiana, with a rate of 9.7 percent, and North Dakota, with a rate of 9.8 percent.

## TEACHING WORKFORCE

### Salary and Total Compensation

According to the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), in the 2016-2017 school year, the average salary for teachers in Oregon was \$61,863. Total compensation, including federal payroll taxes, Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) contributions, and other benefits added an additional \$25,451 to this average. Average salaries and total compensation over the past 10 years are reflected in Figure 8. Over 10 years, this reflects an increase of 18.2 percent in average salary and an increase of 22.6 percent in average total compensation.

**Figure 8: Average Salary and Total Compensation of Oregon Teachers, 2007-2017**



Source: LPRO; Data from the Oregon Department of Education

Data from the National Education Association (NEA) ranks Oregon 13<sup>th</sup> on average teacher salary for the 2014-2015 school year, with an average salary 4.2 percent above the national average. NEA

computations do not reflect total compensation; they include average salary plus a six percent employer contribution for retirement benefits.

### **General Workforce Issues**

Oregon's educator organizations report concerns about many issues confronting the education workforce. Among these issues are the following:

- potential for large numbers of retirements;
- shortages of educators in math, science, foreign languages, bilingual education, and special education;
- shortages of educators in rural areas;
- shortages of specialists such as school psychologists, school nurses, and school social workers;
- large class sizes;
- classroom safety due to student behavior;
- loss of prestige and appreciation for education professionals and para-professionals;
- loss of instructional time due to testing;
- the hiring of part-time aides in order to avoid PERS obligations;
- access to unemployment insurance;
- access to and cost of health care;
- outsourcing; and
- education funding.

## **FUNDING**

### **General**

Oregon's school finance system combines state, local, and federal revenues to support its school districts and education service districts. Funds are distributed via the School Funding Formula, which allocates both state resources appropriated to the State School Fund and local revenues through a statutory equalization formula, and via grants-in-aid funded with state and federal resources for specific purposes.

State revenues for education are generally drawn from income taxes out of the General Fund, and from lottery receipts. Local revenues comprise approximately 33 percent of school formula support and are drawn primarily from property taxes raised from a permanent property tax rate. In 1999, the legislature granted school districts the ability to ask voters to levy additional taxes, which may be fixed dollar amounts or rate-based levies. However, the maximum amount of the tax raised is limited to minimize inequities among districts.

**Per Pupil Revenue**

In 2013-2014, Oregon's total per-pupil revenue was \$11,679, placing the state 30<sup>th</sup>. The state received \$957 per pupil in federal revenue, placing it 38<sup>th</sup>. State revenues per pupil were \$5,983, placing Oregon 24<sup>th</sup>. Local revenues per pupil were \$4,738, placing the state 26<sup>th</sup>.<sup>13</sup>

**Per Pupil Expenditure**

In 2013-2014, Oregon's total per-pupil expenditures for public elementary and secondary education were \$9,959, according to the U.S. Department of Education. This placed Oregon 30<sup>th</sup>. Oregon's instructional expenditures per-pupil were \$5,787, placing the state 31<sup>st</sup>. Oregon's support services expenditures per pupil were \$3,790, placing it 26<sup>th</sup>.<sup>14</sup>

**SCHOOL SAFETY**

Oregon no longer participates in the national Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and prevention, so a comparison of school climate between Oregon and other states is not possible. The Oregon Health Authority does conduct a biennial Healthy Teens Survey. In 2015, nearly 30 percent of eighth graders and 20 percent of eleventh graders reported being bullied at school during the previous 30 days. Over 15 percent of eighth graders and 11 percent of eleventh graders reported being bullied by individuals using social media, cellular telephones, or video games.

In the 2013-2014 school year, Oregon had a rate of discipline incidents of 2,547 per 100,000 students, placing the state 24<sup>th</sup>. The rates of disciplinary incidents in Oregon are highest for violent incidents. The total numbers of disciplinary incidents for the 2013-2014 school year are outlined in Table 3.

**Table 3: Disciplinary Incidents in Oregon, 2013-2014**

Offense Type	Number of Discipline Incidents
Alcohol	379
Illicit Drugs	2850
Violent Incidents	11,332
Weapons Possession	543

*Source: LPRO; Data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, Table 233.45.*

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Elementary and Secondary Information System

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Elementary and Secondary Information System

**STAFF CONTACT**

Lisa Gezelter, Analyst  
Legislative Policy and Research Office  
900 Court St NE, Room 453  
Salem, OR 97301  
(503) 986-1664  
[lisa.gezelter@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:lisa.gezelter@oregonlegislature.gov)

*Please note that the Legislative Policy and Research Office provides centralized, nonpartisan research and issue analysis for Oregon's legislative branch. The Legislative Policy and Research Office does not provide legal advice. Background Briefs contain general information that is current as of the date of publication. Subsequent action by the legislative, executive or judicial branches may affect accuracy.*