As Oregonians, we share a commitment to improving our education system and the opportunities afforded to our students. We have set ambitious goals around student outcomes and have been working to build a seamless system; a system that is grounded in educational equity and supports students on their path from early childhood through higher education. The passage of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides us with additional leverage to advance this work.

Under the federal law, states have new flexibility in the design of assessment and accountability systems, which will be laid out in state plans submitted to the U.S. Department of Education later this year. Here in Oregon, we are committed to exploring all available options and avenues of flexibility afforded to us as we develop our ESSA State Plan. We are also deeply committed to ensuring the development of our State Plan is a collaborative process that elevates educator and community voices. Together, I know we can build a plan that represents our shared values, aspirations, and goals around education as well as our commitment to equity and the success of each and every one of our students.

Over the coming months, we will be reaching out to partners and stakeholders across the state to share updates on the new law, discuss educational priorities and initiatives, answer your questions, and hear about what you want for your students and schools. There will be a number of ways to engage, from online surveys and resources, to community forums.

One way to participate and share your voice and suggestions for Oregon education, is through one of four workgroups convened by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). These four workgroups are: Standards and Assessment, Accountability, Educator Effectiveness, and School and District Improvement. Each workgroup will help to inform the implementation of ESSA as they review Oregon’s current system and make recommendations regarding areas of flexibility and opportunity. We are coming to the end of the recruitment window for these workgroups, so if you are interested in participating, please click here to learn more. Applications should be submitted by Sunday, March 6.

Not everyone can, or wants to, serve on a workgroup or task force. In order to capture additional feedback and engage more broadly on this topic, I will be traveling around the state and holding around a dozen town hall style meetings in April and May. I am excited to have the opportunity to share more about this law, have an open discussion about questions and concerns, and most importantly, listen to what you have to say. I currently have meetings scheduled in Clackamas, Eugene, Salem, Pendleton, Portland, Malheur, Coos Bay, Hood River, Medford, and Bend/Redmond. Keep checking our ESSA website to be updated with information about these events and other opportunities to be engaged.

With gratitude for all you do every day,
Story Time
Stories Highlighting Educational Success, Best Practice, and Innovation Around the State

Network for Quality Teaching and Learning Update

The Network for Quality Teaching and Learning (Network) provided a focused set of opportunities over the 2013-2015 school years for districts to access professional learning opportunities and resources that supported full implementation of higher standards and the use of educator evaluations. Professional Learning Team (PLT) conferences and Educator Effectiveness/Common Core State Standards Implementation grants were two means by which Network resources were provided to districts. The teams convened for the PLTs were comprised of teachers, counselors, principals, superintendents, and other educators. They participated in three conferences each school year in one of three locations across the state. In total, the PLT conferences gathered 2,011 unique attendees - 47% teachers, 33% administrators, 10% TOSA’s, 5% Instructional Coaches, 5% other educators, and 1% mentors. At the PLTs, districts were able to highlight best practices currently in use in their districts and to learn from one another. With a focus on growth in the areas of ELA, Math, ELP, Science, and Educator Effectiveness, teams grew in their ability to implement high quality teaching strategies across content areas and roles.

186 districts and 13 ESDs applied for and received implementation funds to support additional professional learning. The majority of districts used the funds to focus on activities related to the development of standards-aligned materials and assessments as well as leveraging the use of effective instructional strategies. Districts provided support on standards implementation through professional development, job-embedded instructional coaching, professional learning communities, and/or the district’s educator evaluation and support system. Regardless of size, the majority of districts used the resources to carve out time for teachers to collaborate, develop instructional materials, and attend professional learning events.

The following are four specific examples of how districts used the funds:

• **Clatskanie School District** reported that their K-6 RTI model was greatly enhanced by the funds. In 2015, they were awarded the OregonRTI “Implementers of the Year” award. The funds allowed them to increase their understanding of how to use the data most effectively for student learning and how to increase student engagement in core reading instruction.

• **Phoenix-Talent School District** was able to provide time for their teachers to meet in teams with an outside consultant and district coach. A focal point of the meeting was to assure vertical alignment and to build trust and communication across the secondary language arts teachers. High leverage engagement strategies were practiced in the classroom and debriefed during a follow-up meeting with the consultant. Rubrics were used to score work and debriefed/enhanced during follow-up meetings.

• **Cascade School District** provided opportunities for teachers to improve instructional practice by observing and collaborating with peers. Professional Learning Communities are the venue for teachers to review and follow up on professional development, peer observations, and student data.

• **Corbett School District** used the funding to allow for time for grade level teachers to collaborate on the implementation of the Units of Study writing curriculum to enhance student achievement as related to standards in the writer’s workshop.
Steps to Success

Articles and Resources Relating to the Common Core, the Oregon Diploma, the Essential Skills, and More...

Department Office Renaming

The Oregon Department of Education is committed to continuously improving the quality of our service and support to Oregon schools and districts. One area in need of greater clarity is how the offices within ODE are referenced. We are renaming our offices to more directly reflect the portfolio of work assigned to each. The only structural change is that we are moving the Equity team into the Office of the Deputy Superintendent. This decision is an intentional one in order to expand and deepen the use of an equity lens as we work to improve outcomes for all students. Please see the information below for new office names and office leadership. To locate specific ODE contacts by subject or topic, please see our ODE Yellow Pages at: http://www.ode.state.or.us/superintendent/priorities/yellow-pages-1-2016.pdf.

Office of the Deputy Superintendent (now including the Equity team)
Deputy Superintendent, Salam Noor

Office of Teaching and Learning
Assistant Superintendent, Dawne Huckaby

Office of Assessment and Accountability
Assistant Superintendent, Derek Brown

Office of Finance and Administration
Assistant Superintendent, Rick Crager

Office of Student Services
Assistant Superintendent, Sarah Drinkwater

Office of Research and Analysis
Assistant Superintendent, Brian Reeder

Office of Information Technology
Chief Information Officer, Susie Strangfield (Interim)

ODE Now Accepting Applications for ESSA Workgroups

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) is bringing together four central workgroups to help inform the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The four ODE workgroups are: Standards and Assessment, Accountability, Educator Effectiveness, and School and District Improvement. Groups will meet in person in Salem from April to June 2016 and will explore aspects of the new law, with a particular focus on how to leverage available flexibility to ensure equitable opportunities and outcomes for all of Oregon’s students. The work groups will make recommendations to the internal ODE ESSA Leadership Team regarding policy and implementation strategies to inform Oregon's ESSA State Plan.

Individuals interested in serving on one of these workgroups will need to submit the following:

- A brief online questionnaire containing your contact information and statement of interest
- A resume or bio
- Signed documentation from your school or organization indicating support for your participation (if applicable)

To apply, simply complete the online questionnaire here. Please submit all application materials no later than Sunday, March 6, 2016. If you have any questions or issues completing the online application, please contact Jordan Heide at or 503-947-5905. To learn more about ESSA and Oregon’s implementation plan, visit our ESSA website.
Teacher Talk

Articles and Resources Relating to Curriculum, Instruction, Special Programs, and More…

Executive Numbered Memo 010-2015-16: District Continuous Improvement Plans

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) is suspending submissions of District Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP) for the 2016-2017 school year and establishing a new due date schedule for all school districts. During the coming year, ODE will engage educators statewide in identifying both opportunities and requirements in the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and will work to ensure that district planning optimizes the possibilities afforded to us at this point in time.

Please click here to view the district requirements for 2016-17. The Oregon Department of Education is committed to assisting schools and districts in the important work of self-assessment and continuous improvement planning. We will continue to review and report progress on the implementation of all districts’ CIPs and provide regional training and assistance. These training opportunities will shift from the mechanical aspects of the Indistar® tool to a focus on the use of data in plan development that addresses changes in student and/or staff needs.

Additional information about CIPs can be found on the ODE website under Continuous Improvement Planning. If you have any questions, please contact Jan McCoy at 503-947-5704.

Have Your Voice Heard: TELL Survey Open

On behalf of all of the Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) Partners sponsoring the TELL Oregon 2016 Survey, we want to thank well over 13,000 school-based teachers and administrators who have already let their voices be heard regarding teaching and learning conditions in our state. This survey will provide critical information to schools, districts, and the state about what our teachers and administrators need in order to most effectively support each Oregon student in fulfilling their full potential. In response to widespread interest, we are extending the deadline ten days to allow even more teachers and administrators to participate. Please note that the TELL survey will now be open until midnight Thursday, March 10, 2016.

If educators in your school are having trouble accessing the 2016 Survey, please clear the browser cache or go to http://www.telloregon.com/, which will direct you to the updated version of the website with the link to take the survey. Have other technical questions? Contact the TELL Help Desk at 1-800-310-2964 or visit the website and click on ‘Need Help?’ Thank you again for participating in this important survey!

Graduation Ceremonies

Please click here to review a letter from Deputy Salam Noor regarding Native American Regalia in Graduation ceremonies. If you have any questions, please contact Indian Education Advisor, April Campbell at 503-947-5810.
Student Wellness

School Health Profiles Survey

The 2016 School Health Profiles Survey was sent to a random sample of 619 schools in Oregon. The survey assesses school health policies and practices and is conducted every two years among middle and high school principals and lead health education teachers.

The School Health Profiles Survey assesses:
- School health education requirements and content
- Physical education and physical activity
- Practices related to bullying and sexual harassment
- School health policies related to tobacco-use prevention and nutrition
- School-based health services
- Family engagement and community involvement
- School health coordination

The Oregon Department of Education, Oregon Public Health Division, and school health partners use Profiles data to describe school health policies and practices; seek funding to support school health; identify professional development needs; plan and monitor programs; and support health-related policies and legislation. Funding agencies that send over a million dollars to Oregon to support our school health programs require Oregon’s participation in the Profiles survey. Please contact Jessica Duke, Manager of Adolescent and School Health, Oregon Public Health Division, at 971-673-0242 with any questions regarding this survey.

Let’s Do Breakfast, Oregon!

The Let’s Do Breakfast, Oregon! campaign is back in full gear celebrating National School Breakfast Week March 7-11, 2016! Schools are invited to participate in the “Try 5 for Breakfast Week” activity series to promote school breakfast and engagement. Theme days include Share a Success Story Day, Invite Families to Breakfast Day, and Try-Day Friday.

Participating schools will receive $200 awards and accolades upon completion of four activities throughout the week. For more information and resources to participate, please click here. For questions, please contact Marcella Miller.

School Wellness Resources

Research shows that healthy kids are better learners and healthy staff are more engaged school and community members. A school wellness policy is a great first step towards creating a healthy, supportive school environment. The Oregon Department of Education has a new School Wellness webpage with many tools to assist school districts, families, and partners in creating a culture of health in schools.

The Wellness in Schools Newsletter is brought to you by the Wellness in School Environments (WISE) group and is published twice a year – in the spring and fall. This newsletter contains current information on nutrition and physical activity opportunities around the state and focuses on helping schools, parents, and community members implement their School Wellness Policies. Click here to view the Spring 2016 issue of the Wellness in Schools Newsletter.
Upcoming Opportunities

Articles and Resources on Scholarships, Grants, Professional Development, and More…

2017 Teacher of the Year Nominations

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2017 Oregon Teacher of the Year award. Please click here to nominate an outstanding educator today! Nominating has never been easier using our improved online form on the new Teacher of the Year website. The deadline for nominations is May 13, 2016 and the award will be announced later this fall. Please contact Jenni Knaus at 503-947-5860 with any questions.

Apprenticeship Conference

Save the date for the Pacific Northwest Apprenticeship Education Conference on May 24 and 25, 2016 at the Double Tree in Portland, Oregon. The event is hosted by the Bureau of Labor and Industries, Oregon Building Congress, and Oregon Tradeswomen Inc. The biennial conference creates a platform to strengthen Registered Apprenticeship, empower the skilled trades workforce, and connect business, government, and education. The 2016 conference theme highlights Engagement, Expansion and Encouragement. Oregon businesses, policy makers, educators, career counselors, or those involved in workforce development, economic development, or government are all encouraged to attend. Click here to register and learn more.

Miranda Decision Contest

The 2016 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest is sponsored by the Ninth Circuit Courts and Community Committee and the federal courts of the western United States. The theme of the contest is the United States Supreme Court's landmark 1966 decision in Miranda v. Arizona. The contest has two components: 1) Individual students can express their thoughts and ideas in an essay of 500 to 750 words, and 2) Individual students or teams of up to three students may submit a 2-3 minute video presentation on the theme. The contest is open to sophomores, juniors, and seniors who are residents of Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, the U.S. Territory of Guam, or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The deadline for submitting essays is April 15, 2016, at 5 p.m. PT. Click here for additional contest details.

Mythos Challenge 2016

Oregon youth in grades K-12 are invited to create a digital interactive story, game, or mobile app inspired by the Portland Art Museum's special exhibition Case Work: Studies in Form, Space & Construction. Materials are age-appropriate and include free online workshops and resources for educators. Entries are due May 15, 2016, and are eligible for a total of $5,000 in monetary awards from the Youth Play Fund. Finalists’ creations will be played at the Portland Art Museum. Please contact us by email at mythoschallenge@gmail.com or on the web at http://www.mythoschallenge.com/.

Vroom Update

The Early Learning Division is excited to announce that more than 25,000 families in Oregon have been introduced to the Vroom early-learning materials since the program’s introduction last year! A special thanks to our Vroom pilot sites for their great work. Developed by a team of world-renowned brain scientists and early childhood experts, Vroom consists of more than 1,000 brain-building activities that parents can do with their young children. If you would like more information about the Vroom initiative or want suggestions on how to share it in your community, please contact Ari Wubbold, the Oregon Vroom Coordinator.