**Diversity Training For School Employees**

*This policy recommendation affects Tribes and formal Tribal Consultation must be done to honor Tribal Sovereignty and their unique political autonomy. Legislative Concepts and programs shall not be developed without proper Tribal engagement, according to the state statute ORS 182.162-168 created from Senate Bill 770 (2001). There are resources available for state-tribal government-to-government relations law, including the Legislative Commission on Indian Services (LCIS) and state agency Tribal Liaisons. Contact the OACO's Health Equity team to learn more: health.equity@oac.oregon.gov

**Related:** Toxic Culture Prevention, Trauma and Equity-Informed Community, Diversity in School Educators and Staff

**Problem:** Diversity training for school employees is essential to create a more inclusive and fair school environment, where everyone can learn and grow together, regardless of their background.

**Solution:** Regular diversity training sessions for school staff to promote cultural awareness and inclusivity, fostering an environment where all students can thrive and feel valued.

**Compelling Statistic and/or Quote:**

**Source:**
Black community members who attended the Juneteenth 2023 Celebration in Medford
BASE

"If you could fund a program in your community tomorrow, what would it be?" - Diversity training for school employees"

**Potential Costs (Investment):**

**Community Source for Idea:**

**Potential State Agency Partners:**
Oregon Department of Education (ODE) Educator Advancement Council (EAC), ODE Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC)

**Potential Community Partners:**
OSEA, Oregon Center for Public Policy (OCPP), OSU

**Additional Information/Resources:**

- Students nationally continue to struggle with mental health. Here's what support looks like at one Oregon high school - OPB
- Reports & Research | Educator Advancement Council
- Student Success Act
    - Appendix B – Oregon's Education Equity Lens
    - Oregon American Indian / Alaska Native Education State Plan 2015
    - African American/Black Student Success Plan | Oregon Department of Education
    - Latino/a/x and Indigenous* Student Success Plan Phase 1
    - June 2020 - LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Success Plan
- Oppose cuts to Student Success Act - Oregon Center for Public Policy
- Oregon Department of Education : Welcome to the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
- A Toolkit for Tribal Consultation | Oregon Department of Education
- Trauma Informed Care in the Classroom: A Resource Guide for Educators in Higher Learning
- Student Sense of Belonging in Schools: Connection to Outcomes
    - "This data brief validates previous research that has found sense of belonging, particularly the presence of a caring adult willing to work to foster relationships with students, to be key to student engagement and success in school.20,21 There was up to a 20 percentage point gap in outcomes between students

who agreed and disagreed with sense of belonging items, and there was a consistent difference for both 9 th grade on-track and regular attendance. While responses to sense of belonging items are generally moderately correlated with each other, student perception of adults who care about them was a strong predictor of credit attainment even when students reported disagreement with other sense of belonging items."

- In Their Own Words: Analysis of Student Short Answers
    - With 13% of 8 th grade students reporting recent experience of bullying, and as much as twice that rate reported by students from non-dominant cultures, it is clear that substantial work remains to be done to ensure that schools are safe for all students. ODE's anti-bullying guidance includes resources and a summary of Oregon law regarding school and district responsibilities around bullying prevention and response.
    - Students are experiencing overt acts of racism in Oregon's schools, and many students described their awareness of overt and explicit racism in their schools in great detail. While there may be training on implicit bias or professional learning about the real effects of racial microaggressions, Oregon's education leaders may be tending to important nuances without enough focus on outright racist behaviors in Oregon's schools. Students described specific slurs used against them by other students, sometimes within earshot of school staff. One student mentioned the use of a racially-specific school mascot that they found offensive. These experiences shared by students show that there remains a great deal of work to be done to ensure that our schools are safe and welcoming environments for all learners.
    - Students also expressed interest in learning more about other cultures, in order to combat racism and other bias within their schools.

> "The school is very negative, a lot of the students spew hate instead of kindness and we don't learn enough about topics such as race and racism, [N]ative [A]mericans, and other stigmatized communities."
>
> "While there is representation of people from different cultural backgrounds, I have never read any school assigned article about lgbtq+ people. In fact it has never been mentioned in any of the assignments I have done. I have read 1 book series in the school library that includes lgbtq+ people. This makes me rather frustrated as I would like to see more representation of people like me at school."
>
> "I have never been genuinely taught about Native [A]mericans and their culture. The ONE time I did...It was about the colonization, and even then schools don't go into detail about just how truly disgusting and atrocious the actions towards [N]ative [A]mericans were."

- Oregon districts and schools must implement the 2021 Social Science Standards integrated with Ethnic Studies no later than the 2026-2027 school year. The ODE Ethnic Studies website includes links to resources to support implementation. Another Oregon law, Tribal History/Shared History, requires implementation of Native American curriculum by districts and schools. The ODE Office of Indian Education has developed an Educator Toolkit to support the implementation of Tribal History/Shared History. More information, including links to lesson plans, can be found on the ODE Tribal History/Shared History website.

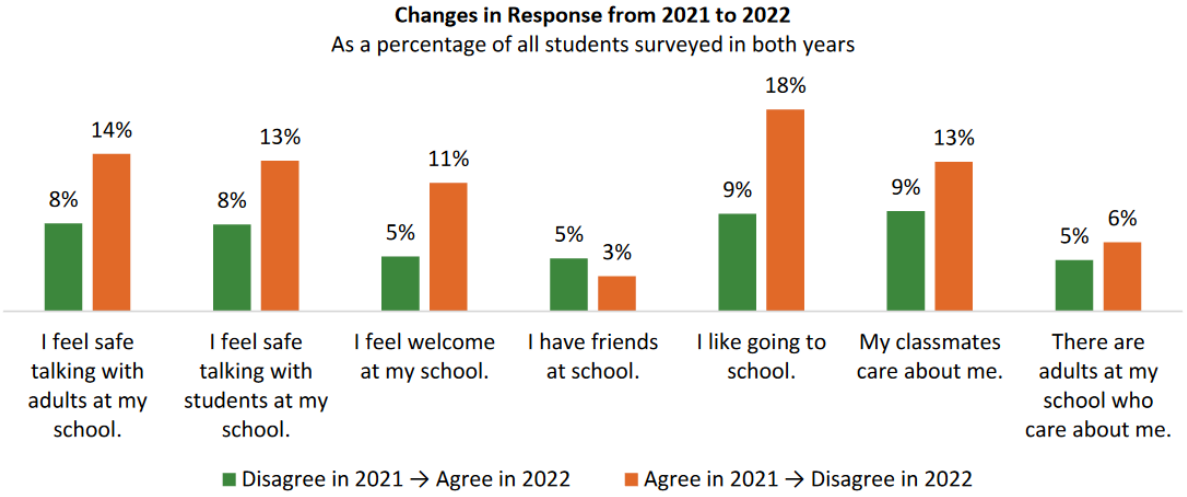
> "I feel like this school could use more acceptance of LGBT, like how some schools do where they let the students fill out a name and pronouns sheet, and if they should use the name around classmates or around parents."
>
> "[Teacher] doesn[']t respect my pronouns and somehow think this will make me listen to him. [If] he was nicer [I] would listen more, but for some reason he thinks [I] am a girl."
>
> "[S]tudents [at my school don't] respect lgbtq and gender pronouns, we NEED to learn more about that."
>
> "My school is not very safe for LGBTQ people (who face [harassment] daily with acts of physical violence, verbal [harassment], microagressions, and vandalization) and generally most people that aren't heterosexual, white, and male."

  - Recent defunding of GSAs may exacerbate this issue moving forward
  - Oregon school superintendents warn of 'education funding crisis'

        - [COVID funding is ending for schools. What will it mean for students? | NCPR News]
- [Care & Connection - Oregon Department of Education]
- [Student Sense of Belonging in Schools: Predictive Factors]
    - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that school connectedness was a protective factor for high school students' mental health during the pandemic. Connection with a school adult decreased the prevalence of poor mental health, persistent feelings of sadness/hopelessness, and having seriously considered dying by suicide.

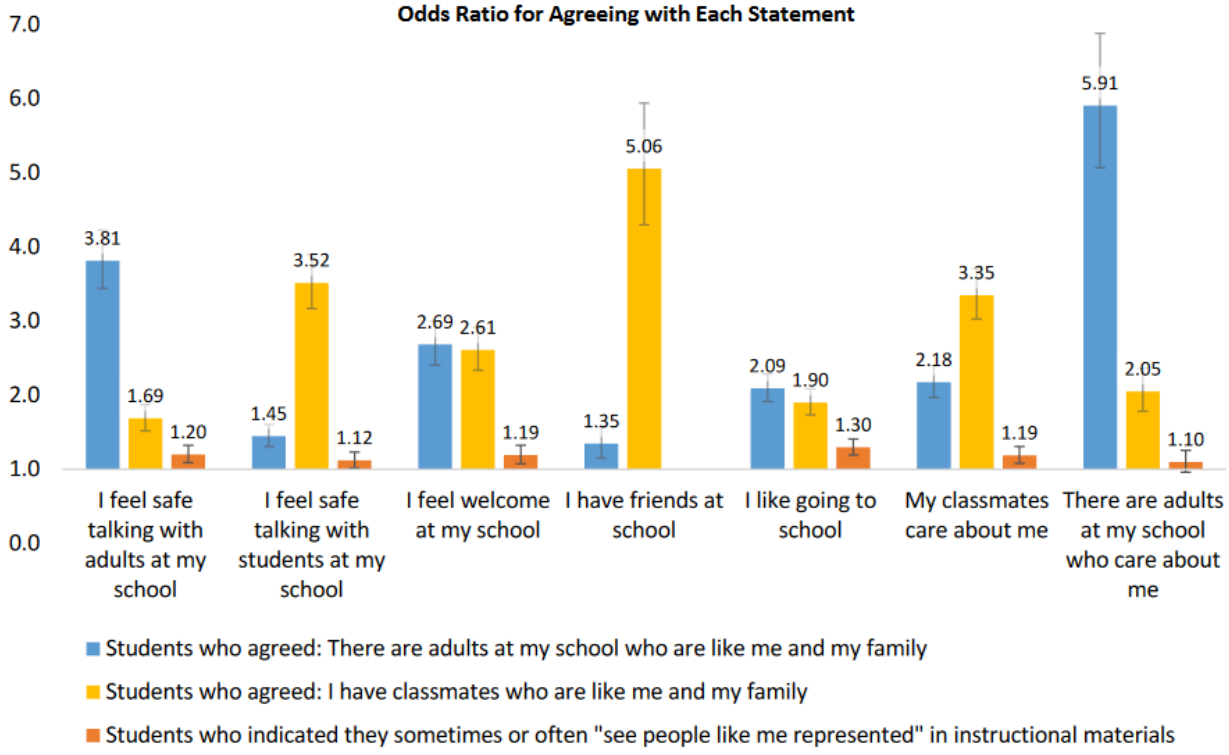
**Year over Year Changes**

Looking at the smaller set of students who participated in SEED in both this year, 2021-22, and the inaugural year, 2020-21 (~6,000 students), we see a similar trend toward less sense of belonging as students advance grades. In all categories, students were most likely to agree with the indicator in both years, but when they changed their opinions they were generally more likely to move from agreeing to disagreeing. This suggests that the effect above is longitudinal (sense of belonging declines over time) rather than cross-sectional.




    - Finally, we examine the relationships between the social identity items on SEED and the sense of belonging indicators. These have some of the strongest relationships in the dataset. Students who agreed that they have classmates or adults at school like them and their family were substantially more likely to feel safe talking with their classmates or adults at school, respectively. A similar relationship was observed between those indicators and students who agreed that classmates or adults

care about them. Agreeing that they have classmates and adults at school like them and their family was also strongly associated with feeling welcome at school, and liking school.




- We also see that students who more frequently see people like themselves or their families represented in instructional materials are more likely to agree with sense of belonging indicators related to feelings of safety and welcome at school, but are no more likely to report having friends at school, which suggests more directionality to that indicator and is a promising practice schools can pursue to increase sense of belonging. Other research has found benefits to culturally and racially inclusive education across racial and ethnic groups, both in enhancing student self-perception and in improving measures of academic achievement. One review linked participation in ethnic studies directly to engagement and increased sense of self-efficacy, both concepts closely linked to sense of belonging.
- The majority of schools with students who have responded to this survey have Student Investment Account (SIA) and/or High School Success (HSS) funds dedicated to activities designed to

support student's emotional needs and deepening connections to their school communities. These activities can be broadly categorized into six areas; creating or supporting professional learning community (PLC) teams (3 schools), hiring counselors (7), hiring social-emotional specialists or social workers (3), providing trauma-informed professional development to staff (1), engagement with community organizations designed to support students (2), establishing a wellness center (1), and training student mentors (1). Only two schools were not spending in areas specifically designed to support students in this manner, although monies from other funding streams could be doing so. Collectively, these districts spent $6.7 million of SIA and HSS funds on these activities during the 2021-23 biennium, representing 14% of their total allocations.

- Counseling services have been expanded throughout multiple districts and schools. Schools report HSS/SIA funds have had a significant impact on their ability to serve students' and families' mental health and basic needs. Having certified counselors or social workers in each school provides students with access to supports and services and partnerships have been established with community mental health providers in instances when outside referrals to additional services are necessary. Smaller districts have partnered with their ESDs to share personnel if their funds do not support establishing a full-time position, such as a family support liaison who has established a Service Integration Team consisting of district personnel, business owners, community organization leaders, and local hospital staff to support students and their families with basic needs.
- Although some schools report an increase in problematic behaviors during the 2022-23 school year41, behavior support systems funded through HSS/SIA have helped school personnel to meet students where they are and provide the support they need. Adult staff have become more trauma aware. They recognize that many students have trauma-impacted lives and this alters their behavioral patterns.

Knowing this information, and focusing on resiliency techniques, allows teachers to communicate with students in ways that maintain relationships and avoid unnecessary conflict. Counselors manage school MTSS systems and keep up to date with those students flying under the radar in many instances.

Oregon Statewide Report Card 2022-23

Key Statewide Numbers:

- 9th Grade On-Track rates rose by 0.8 percent and are approaching pre-pandemic levels. This increase represents nearly 700 more students being on-track to graduate at the end of 9th grade, compared to a year ago. It's encouraging to see the critical 9th Grade On-Track numbers continue to rise.
- There are 333 unique languages spoken by Oregon students.
- We have seen a decline in regular attendance in 2022-23, with the rate falling 2.0 percent from 2021-22. Rates of regular attendance remain significantly below pre-pandemic levels. We know that students aren't benefiting from instruction when they are not in the classroom, so this is a serious concern for Oregon's educators.
- For the fourth year in a row we've seen an increase in the number of non-binary students reported in fall membership enrollment.
- The number of women serving as principals increased by 3 percentage points to 58 percent in 2022-23 compared to 55 percent in 2021-22.

**Diverse Student Populations**

Of the 552,380 students enrolled in 2022-23, 226,280 (41 percent) were students of color. This represents over a half of a percentage point increase from the 2021-22 rate of 40.3 percent.[1]

| School Year | American Indian/ Alaska Native | Asian | Black/African American | Hispanic/Latino | Multi-Racial | Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander | White | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2018-19 | 7,280 | 23,267 | 13,301 | 136,186 | 37,136 | 4,363 | 360,197 | 581,730 |
| 2019-20 | 7,010 | 23,208 | 13,176 | 138,273 | 38,306 | 4,431 | 358,257 | 582,661 |
| 2020-21 | 6,570 | 22,733 | 13,021 | 137,101 | 38,629 | 4,335 | 338,528 | 560,917 |
| 2021-22 | 6,357 | 22,145 | 12,731 | 138,112 | 39,219 | 4,454 | 329,994 | 553,012 |
| 2022-23 | 6,532 | 22,181 | 12,982 | 139,928 | 40,024 | 4,633 | 326,100 | 552,380 |

Although overall enrollment decreased in 2022-23, Hispanic/Latino, Multi-Racial, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander student enrollment has continued to increase since 2018-19. American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, and White student enrollment has continued to decline.

| Race/Ethnicity | Percent Difference since 2018-19 |
|---|---|
| American Indian/Alaskan Native | -10.3% |
| Asian | -4.7% |
| Black/African American | -2.4% |
| Hispanic/Latino | 2.7% |
| Multi-Racial | 7.8% |
| Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 6.2% |
| White | -9.5% |

[1] See enrollment reports for more information, including breakdowns by school and district.



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The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) is committed to upholding educational equity throughout Oregon's public schools. This involves recognizing the historical and ongoing trauma inflicted specifically on Native tribes, Indigenous, Black, and Persons of Color through our nation's education systems, and responding with conscious, persistent, and collective actions rooted in equity, racial justice, and antiracism. It also requires humility, acknowledging that Oregon is part of a global movement working to educate about the harmful impacts of anti-Blackness, white supremacy, systemic discrimination, and all forms of hatred that impact our students and communities.

ODE is working in partnership with school communities to guide actionable ways of tending to the real and divisive impacts of fear, hate, bias and racialized trauma. This entails supporting school districts in educating students, staff, educators, and school community members about the nation's many ethnic cultures and histories, fostering safe and

supportive school environments for transgender students, and affirming that Black Lives Matter and Every Student Belongs. Learn more about ODE's Equity Decision Toolkit.

Quality Education Model

## Recommendations

In order to achieve lasting educational gains for all students, the QEC recommends continued progress on investing in systems that support Oregon's most marginalized students.

Oregon's students of color, English language learners, students experiencing disabilities, and students from low-income families bring a wealth of diversity and strength to Oregon's public schools. These same students face injustice and inequity inside and outside of school that impede learning, such as houselessness, poverty, discrimination, and other adverse childhood experiences. By increasing the public school system's investment in and attention to the needs of these students in particular, the overall system will improve for all students.

Additionally, the QEC recommends the following practices:

- The implementation of educational best practices informed by input from educators, parents, students, and the community;
- Dedication to the intent of Student Success Act funding for additional supports, not to backfill the State School Fund, and commitment to equityand stakeholder engagement;

- Funding for the whole education system, starting with universal pre-school so that all students have access to high-quality early learning programs all the way to post-secondary career and college success;
- Enhancing wrap-around support for students and families through community schools;
- Investing fully in supports that address student mental and behavioral health;
- Strengthening support for students and families in partnership with community-based organizations; and
- Continuation of system-wide school improvement strategies.

Aligning for Student Success: Integrated Guidance for six ODE Initiatives (2022)

- Guidance is a technical word which describes how a state agency explains, coordinates, and administers the programs that have been passed into law by the legislature or federal government and into administrative rules through the State Board of Education.

  This guidance accomplishes those aims while also aligning six separate federal and state programs that belong beside each other to the point that they could be experienced by students, educators, and communities as a single, comprehensive effort.

  What our staff at ODE has set out to do, with noted hope from the legislature and the education field, is to operationally align investments and work that can indeed bring increased success for students and lay the groundwork for us to see the full value and desired impact of the investments in the Student Success Act passed in 2019. Schools hold responsibility for student mental health and wellbeing in the ways they design and approach relationship-centered schools focused on belonging, school climate, identity, and

instruction. There should not be any separation in social, emotional, and academic learning.

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2020-21 Reference Guide - Tribal History/Shared History, Holocaust and Other Genocides, and Ethnic Studies and Inclusive Education

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