



# Oregon's Kitchen Table – Community Engagement on Oregon's High School Graduation Requirements

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In summer 2021, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 744, which directed the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to review high school graduation rates with the goal of ensuring that every student in Oregon is on track to graduate. As part of that work, the legislature also directed ODE to engage with communities throughout the state and particularly to engage with students from communities who have not been well served by education systems.

During the winter and spring of 2021-2022, ODE worked with Oregon's Kitchen Table (OKT), to conduct a public engagement process to hear from people throughout Oregon about what they think high school students should know and be able to do in order to graduate from high school. The following executive summary provides an overview of the engagement process as well as high level findings. The attached report contains nine sections:

- Project goals and design
- Commonly held beliefs about what an Oregon diploma means
- Ideas about how Oregon's graduation requirements could be more equitable
- Skills and knowledge people think are important to help prepare students for success after high school
- Approaches to assessing Oregon students' readiness to graduate
- Input from specific communities
- Recommendations for future community engagement on this topic
- Brief conclusion

- Appendices including annotated survey results, guides for community conversations, and community connector interview questions

## ABOUT OREGON'S KITCHEN TABLE

Oregon's Kitchen Table is a program of the National Policy Consensus Center in the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University, which was created by a group of non-partisan, non-profit community organizations dedicated to helping Oregonians have a voice in public decision-making. Oregon's Kitchen Table creates public consultations to allow Oregonians to weigh in on policy questions posed by elected officials and public managers. OKT has been used at the state, local and regional levels to gather feedback from a wide variety of Oregonians using both our online surveying tool to solicit input from thousands of participants and in-person community gatherings of various sizes and formats.

We are committed to engaging community members from all walks of life – particularly communities that typically have not been represented or engaged in public processes - to achieve deep engagement. Using culturally specific and targeted outreach, Oregon's Kitchen Table has a particular focus on hearing from Oregonians who have been left out of traditional engagement processes. We work with organizers, translators, and interpreters so materials and online and in-person consultations are available for Oregonians who speak a wide variety of languages and learn in a variety of ways. We recognize that people bring all different levels of knowledge and familiarity regarding issues / policies. We use approaches to ensure those who may not have as in-depth knowledge can still respond and share what they believe and have experienced.

The online surveying tool is not intended to be a scientific study; rather it is one way among many to allow the public to share ideas, beliefs, and values with decision-makers.

## OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

The purpose of this engagement effort was to hear from people across the state about what is most important to them regarding Oregon's high school graduation requirements. The state legislature also directed ODE to conduct focused engagement with specific communities and groups in Oregon, including:

- Racial or ethnic groups that have historically experienced academic disparities
- Tribal members and citizens

- Migrants, immigrants, and refugees
- Students experiencing disabilities
- English language learners

In order to reach communities across the state and ensure that the voices of particular communities were heard throughout the process, Oregon’s Kitchen Table and ODE created a variety of ways for Oregonians to provide input in multiple languages over several weeks in Winter and Spring 2022. OKT conducted approximately 25 interviews with community connectors from a variety of communities, held 19 virtual community conversations (one in each of the state’s Educational Service Districts (ESDs)), worked with community organizers and partners to hold 19 additional community and culturally specific conversations in multiple languages, hosted an online survey in 7 languages, and worked with community organizers and partners to support community members in responding to paper surveys in 7 languages. ODE also conducted engagement activities – including online surveys and discussions – with educators, post-secondary educational institutions, and business and industry partners throughout the state.

ODE, OKT, and multiple partners conducted outreach, primarily through online channels such as social media and emails and digital fliers. Community organizers also connected with people through phone calls, text messages, and in-person outreach. OKT and ODE staff also attended a variety of education-related conferences held for administrators, educators, and student leaders.

### **FINDINGS: COMMONLY HELD VALUES AND BELIEFS**

Across all forms of engagement, the following commonly held values and beliefs emerged:

- Flexibility is a shared value among many Oregonians.
- It is important to acknowledge that inequities in educational outcomes are caused by many factors beyond high school graduation requirements themselves.
- People recognize and appreciate students’ individual strengths, different learning styles, and the variety of environments that students are in, both in school and outside of school. This was especially true in discussions with families with students experiencing disabilities, students who are English learners, students who are from immigrant and refugee communities, and students who change schools or are in a variety of systems such as foster care or juvenile justice.

- Culturally appropriate supports throughout school environments are key for helping students meet graduation requirements, particularly for families who identify as Black, Indigenous or Native and for families from immigrant and refugee communities. LGBTQ2SIA+ students also pointed to supports like affinity groups and school social workers as critical to helping them meet requirements.
- While people generally view subjects like math, reading, and writing as core to learning, there is a desire to further explore how Oregon currently considers both the required credits in those subjects as well as how proficiency in those subjects is assessed.
- Many people viewed math requirements in particular as a barrier for students and are interested in seeing math requirements for graduation reflect students' interests as well as have direct, practical application for careers, education, and other paths in life after graduation.
- There is also interest in further examining whether Oregon's current system of multiple diploma options is serving students well, particularly students experiencing disabilities. In addition, clear and early communications in multiple languages about what these options are and their implications beyond high school is very important to families.
- There are particular skills and knowledge that many people would like to see students attain in order to be successful after high school. The ones that came up most frequently are: financial literacy, critical thinking, civics, and various types of communication, workplace, social, and interpersonal skills.

## **FINDINGS: AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT**

There were, however, some areas where people held different values and beliefs. We saw differences particularly regarding assessments required for graduation as well as in whether people thought there should be a role for the state in assessments. Many people, in fact, expressed personal ambivalence about this and could argue the point both ways. There are also differences in opinion about whether required credits and assessment are too focused on preparing students for post-secondary education.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ENGAGEMENT

As the process of examining Oregon’s high school graduation requirements continues, both through ODE as well as in the state legislature and the state board of education, there are additional opportunities for engagement, particularly in the following circumstances:

- Decisions related to changes that will directly impact specific populations of students, such as regarding diploma options and students experiencing disabilities
- Implementing any changes that might be made, with a particular focus on ensuring that schools have the capacity and resources to support students in meeting the new requirements.

## SECTION 1: PROJECT GOALS AND DESIGN

### ENGAGEMENT GOALS

The goals of this project were multi-fold: 1. to hear from people, including families and youth, from communities that have not been well-served by education systems; 2. to hear from as many people as possible from regions across Oregon; 3. to learn what experiences people have had with Oregon’s current high school graduation requirements; 4. to understand what skills and knowledge people think are critical for students to have in order to graduate; 5. to learn what people think are the appropriate ways to assess whether students are ready to graduate; and 6. to identify any changes to high school graduation requirements that people think would improve education outcomes for all students.

Because this engagement is intended for the general public, it assumes that respondents bring all different levels of knowledge and familiarity regarding high school and education policy. It is our goal to ensure that those who may not have as in-depth knowledge can still respond and share what they believe and have experienced.

### ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, and particularly with the emergence of the Omicron variant in the midst of the public engagement period, engagement activities primarily took place either virtually through an online survey, Zoom discussions, phone interviews, or through paper surveys

distributed by community organizers and partners. Some interviews and communication conversations were able to occur in-person in some settings. OKT and partners conducted the following engagement activities from February to April:

- 25 interviews with community leaders and connectors (a range of individuals who are respected and trusted within particular communities and have relationships both inside and outside their own communities))
- 19 Zoom community conversations, one in each of the Educational Service Districts (ESDs). OKT and ODE primarily worked with the ESDs and to conduct outreach through their school districts to invite people in each of their regions to join the Zoom conversation.
- 19 additional community conversations with families, parents, and youth from amongst the focused community groups the state legislature identified. OKT worked directly with community organizers from several different communities as well as with community-based organizations directly serving families to do culturally specific outreach and engagement.
- 3,114 survey responses (available in 7 languages), including approximately 300 paper surveys

ODE also conducted an additional 5 community conversations with groups of educators, including school administrators and counselors as well as teachers. ODE and other partners also engaged with post-secondary educational institutions and employers through business and industry groups via additional surveys. ODE's Office of Indian Education also conducted government-to-government engagement with Oregon's 9 federally recognized tribes.

## **PARTICIPATION**

Over 3,500 people participated in the various engagement opportunities from December 2021 to April 2022. 3,114 participants responded to the survey – either online or by paper. Approximately 350 people participated in 43 different community conversations, including both culturally specific and educator specific conversations as well as the 19 regional conversations. Another 50 people participated through individual and / or small group interviews.

In terms of how people are connected to Oregon high schools, 33% of survey participants identified as parents or guardians of Oregon high school graduates and 22% identified as working

in or having worked in an Oregon school. 18% identified as being a parent of a student who will be in high school in the next few years and 11% identified as either current or recent high school graduates. Other common responses include: retired college teacher, academic tutor, foster parent, grandparent of current students or recent graduates, volunteer in schools, healthcare provider for youth, mental or behavioral health provider, CASA advocate, school or ESD board member, work for an organization that supports school age youth, youth outreach worker, former or retired employer, and taxpayer.

Just over half of survey participants said that they are between the ages of 35 – 54 years old (53%) and 19% said they are under the age of 35.

In terms of race and / or ethnicity, people identified in the following categories:

- 4% American Indian or Alaska Native
- 4% Asian
- 4% Black or African American
- 10% Hispanic or Latino, Latina, Latinx
- 7% Multi-racial
- 1% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- 70% White, Caucasian

Over half of the participants in the survey (56%) identified as either belonging themselves or having a student who belongs to at least one of the following communities:

- Tribal member
- LGBTQ2SIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, 2 Spirit, Intersex, Asexual, plus other non-heterosexual orientations or genders)
- English learner
- Experience a disability
- Have been or am without a house
- Immigrant or refugee
- Migrant worker or student
- Child in foster care
- Student who has changed high schools

The vast majority of community conversations were with members of the communities identified in SB 744. About half of the community conversations were conducted in a language other than English (Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Somali, and Russian). 93% of survey participants said they prefer to receive information in English with 3% selecting Spanish, about 2% selecting “other” and 1% selecting Russian. All 36 of Oregon’s counties were represented to varying degrees across the different forms of engagement. Just over half (54%) of survey participants came from Clackamas County, Multnomah County, and Washington County.

## **ENGAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS DUE TO COVID**

The unique circumstances of the ongoing pandemic and the impacts on schools, educators, families, and students infused almost every conversation about high school graduation requirements. Several people used the words “sustain” and “survive” to describe where they and their community currently were. We heard this from families, students, culturally-specific community-based organizations, and, in particular, from people working in educational settings.

Many people shared that while they care about Oregon’s high school graduation requirements, the pressing needs they feel on a day-to-day basis are foremost on their minds and occupy much of their time, attention, and energy. We know many people want to be actively engaged and involved in discussions on this topic; however, the timeline for engagement that Senate Bill 744 called for was a barrier for many communities to be able to engage. This is particularly true for many people from racial and ethnic groups that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID. Because of both timing and other pressures, follow up and continued engagement will be particularly necessary to make sure the voices of the communities identified in SB 744 are heard.

We want to note that the impacts of virtual learning and learning disruptions due to the pandemic were also foremost in many people’s minds when talking about high school graduation requirements and education in general. Several people shared their concerns about both the immediate and long-term impacts on students’ learning for high school as well as for whatever path they might take after high school.



## SECTION 2: BELIEFS ABOUT WHAT AN OREGON DIPLOMA SHOULD MEAN

Many people shared both a recognition and appreciation for different students' strengths and interests, as well as different learning styles and the different environments that students are in. More people (61%) believe that "Earning an Oregon diploma should mean that all students' strengths and interests are recognized, even if they are different from each other." On the other hand, 39% think that "Earning an Oregon diploma should mean that all students know and are able to do basically the same things."

There is also a strong desire to see students graduate from high school with a long-term love of learning as well as a sense of confidence in themselves and the skills and knowledge they have gained and are able to gain in the future. One person shared that their hope for Oregon high school graduates is, "I want graduates to be endlessly curious, able to solve problems, able to discuss ideas, and smart consumers of information"

During discussions as well as in open-ended responses to survey questions, people hold different views about how best to prepare students for life after high school. The following are some of the more common viewpoints:

- There is a desire to make sure that no matter what the skills or knowledge, students understand how the subject matter is relevant to their lives or future or how it could be applied in real-world situations. We heard this from families, students, and educators. Several people mentioned this specifically in reference to math or science requirements for students who aren't interested in pursuing post-secondary education or careers in fields like engineering.
- Some people shared that they think there is currently too much focus on preparing students for a college or university path. People who hold this view often said they feel like the strong focus on college preparedness didn't provide them with the ability to learn some life skills or the subjects that they were most passionate about and that they thought would be important for them once they had finished high school.

- Other people shared that college preparedness was a high priority for them or their student. We especially heard this from families who are from immigrant and refugee communities. They wanted to see schools offer both rigorous courses, as well as support in applying to colleges or for scholarships to colleges.
- We also heard from some people, particularly educators, that they are seeing more and more students who left school during COVID to get jobs and not return to the classroom. One educator said, “Pandemic taught some students and families that they don’t really need to be in school. School seems optional now.”

*These are a selection of some of the comments we heard through online and paper surveys. The full set of comments are provided in a separate file to ODE. Comments submitted through surveys are not altered or edited by Oregon’s Kitchen Table. These are presented as written by participants. For comments submitted in languages other than English, we have provided a rough translation.*

### Excerpted Comments

A Basic education from a public school should prepare our students for real life. When they are done they should be able to decide to enter the workforce, College, have a trade, or go into the military. Oregon's education is centered around a perfect student going to college. And that is not reality. The results are starting to show how out of touch our government is with reality. I really hope that they are serious about changing our education system. REMEMBER don't lower the bar, just change the curriculum to better suite this world we live in.

Keep in mind that the purpose of graduation requirements is to demonstrate knowledge and ability. Ideally, the requirements demonstrate knowledge and ability that can be applied in a wide variety of individually rewarding ways and also prepare students to be engaged and constructive members of society.

Muchos alumnos aprende diferente y aues ocupan mas ayuda a otros por como aprende y se ocupan mas saber de la materia o se les llegan mas facil.(Rough translation: Many students learn differently and even need more help because of how they learn and for others they take more care of knowing the subject or it comes to them more easily.)

Я думаю что ученик должен попробовать набратся опытом в различных облостях чтобы, к таму времени когда он уходит со школы он знал что ему нравиться делать. (Rough translation: I think that a student should try to gain experience in various fields so that by the time they leave school they know what they like to do.)

Please ensure that there is enough rigor in the instruction and evaluation to make Oregon high school diplomas mean something of value.

### Excerpted Comments (continued)

Que sean basados a ccada Estudiante en cuanto a que carrera y due requisitos tener para lo a se desee estudiar. y no a sean generales no todos apprenden igual ni desean estudiar o tener la misma carrera (Rough translation: That they be based on each student in terms of what career they want or what they want to study. And not to be general. Not all learn the same nor do they want to study or have the same career)

The concept of a one-size-fits-all graduation is out of date. Students should be able to get the fundamentals of reading and writing and civic education (especially local government) by the end of 9th grade. Then they should have different paths for learning a variety of trades or preparing for college, depending on their aptitude and interest.

All students need basic reading, writing, and math skills before graduation. If a student lacks these, then they don't deserve a high school diploma. They can get a certification of completion or something else. But a diploma should mean something. It should not just mean the student has attended school for 13 years and is 18 years old. If a student needs to take remedial CC or college classes, then they shouldn't have received a high school diploma.

## **SECTION 3: WORKING TOWARDS MORE EQUITABLE GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

When people were asked how they thought graduation requirements could be more fair, many people shared that they had a general sense that current graduation requirements may not be fair for all students. They also were curious to learn more and understand in more detail how current graduation requirements may not be fair. In many conversations, families, educators, and students shared their experiences and specific details, particularly for students who experience disabilities, who are English learners, immigrants, and refugees, and who change schools or move frequently.

Many people shared that they thought even if changes are made to graduation requirements to make them more equitable for students, they are concerned that students still face other barriers in their education that will continue to make meeting graduation requirements challenging. People felt that there are many different aspects of education starting at the very earliest levels that need to be examined for equity in order to achieve more equitable education outcomes in graduation.

We also heard from community members in smaller school districts that in addition to a lack of resources, they see either high educator turnover or unfilled positions as creating a barrier for both schools' ability to provide educational offerings as well as for students to then be able to gain the skills or knowledge that they need. One post-secondary administrator said, "We see a lot of turn around and not a lot of continuity in really small districts. That leads to a skills gap for students." Another student noted that in their three years in his small, rural high school, they hadn't been able learn a second language due to a lack of teachers in the area. In addition, they shared the frequent changes in administration had often been accompanied by what seems to be yearly shifts in local graduation requirements, which had led to a lot of confusion for them and their classmates. Others in smaller, more rural districts also shared stories of how challenging it has been to fill open positions, particularly for Special Education positions.

## SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Students and families also emphasized how critical it is for them to be in educational environments where their identities are reflected in their educators, welcomed and embraced, and supported. We heard this most in conversations with students and families who identified as Black, Indigenous or Native, and LGBTQ2SIA+ community members. One parent who identified as Black and an immigrant said, "When people feel appreciated and comfortable in school, they will meet the benchmarks. Engage the whole child, you'll get what you want."

## OPTIONS

One of the most frequent themes in regards to more equitable graduation requirements was a desire to make sure students had options, both in terms of credits as well as in assessment. We heard this in nearly every single conversation, and many people mentioned it in open-ended responses to the survey questions. Even when people said they thought that some basic set of skills or requirements are important for all students, people frequently acknowledged that it is important to them that students be provided different ways of learning and then demonstrating those skills or knowledge. People often said they recognize that students learn and also demonstrate what they've learned differently and that they want to see graduation requirements reflect and allow for those differences. People also indicated a desire to have

multiple ways of checking students' proficiency due to potential bias in both standardized testing as well as in grading or evaluations by teachers.

## **TIME**

As with other topics, people also expressed wanting to see more flexibility around time requirements. For some people, this meant wanting to allow students to earn credits or complete learning outside of school hours. For other people, this was directly reflected in timed assessments of student learning (see Section 6). A group of parents who are migrant workers shared that for them as parents, it more important to measure student's progress over time than focus only on one test at one time.

In several conversations people also wondered whether using four years as a basic measuring point for graduation completion continues to be useful. This was particularly true for students who experienced disruptions in their education either before entering or during high school in Oregon. We heard this from immigrant and refugee communities, English learners, and students who change high schools due to a variety of reasons. Other people shared stories of their students completing many requirements in three years and then losing interest or motivation to complete a fourth year. One person said, "Learning is a constant and time is the variable. We need a system that gives students the time they need to achieve their learning. The system could do better by kids if time was the variable."

## **LANGUAGE ACCESSIBILITY**

When talking with families and educators who serve students from immigrants and refugee communities and English learners, people often asked about availability of assessments, such as standardized tests, in a students' home or first language. There is a desire to understand what might already be currently available for assessment in different languages as well as how to make sure schools are providing those options to students. (See section 4).

## **EXPECTATIONS AND NARRATIVES ABOUT EXPECTATIONS**

We also heard from families that expectations from educators, schools, and communities around their students' ability to successfully meet graduation requirements serves as a barrier.

particularly for students of color. One person shared, “if my kids repeatedly hear the message that students like them won’t do well on standardized tests even before they take the test, they’re already set up to not do well.” We heard this from families who identified as Black as well as from families with students who were immigrants or refugees and families whose students experienced a disability.

## ONLINE ACCESS / OPPORTUNITIES

Several people mentioned that one promising outcome of the pandemic was the expansion of some online tools and approaches that could be helpful in making high school graduation requirements more accessible for students. These included allowing more students to complete credits online, be able to stay connected to classes, teachers, and assignments online even if there were disruptions in education in some circumstances, and the potential to be able to create online samples of student work that could move with a student should they move high schools. At the same time, people shared concerns about a lack of access to online learning opportunities. One parents in rural Oregon said, “We really saw during the pandemic that students don’t have the technical infrastructure (like computers and broadband).”

### Excerpted Comments

Unconscious bias plays a role on test scores and resources. There is not cultural representation that some students can identify with.

There should be culturally responsive teaching. Put the material in cultural context that makes sense.

Give students an opportunity to try again or prove that they have learned something in another way.

### Excerpted Comments (continued)

Se que hay o hubo una clase que se llama AVA es para ayudar a los niños de secundaria en enfocarse en metas escolares e incluso en su rutina diaria, esa clase tenía entendido que solo era para jóvenes avanzados aquí mi opinión es que pudieran tener este tipo de clases para todos los jovenes no sólo avanzados Y eso es de lo que hablaba que ellos puedan llegar ala meta del diploma con ayuda desde secundaria y también nosotros como padres estar al pendiente de sus clases de cada trimestres para poder ayudarlos. (Rough translation: “I know that there is or was a class called AVA to help high school children focus on school goals and even in their daily routine. That class was understood to be only for advanced young people here. My opinion is that they could have this type of classes for all young people, not just advanced This would help them get their diploma with help from secondary school and it would help us as parents to be aware of their classes every trimester to be able to help them.”)

More flexible credit requirements for each subject to meet the student's strengths and weaknesses.

Educational standards seem to keep eroding over the decades and this feels really scary. The standards need to be higher and everyone needs to be given the tools/resources that they need to meet those standards. Some students will need more tools, that's what equity is, making sure that everyone has what they need to meet the same level of success. Lowering the standards does not solve the problem. Allowing students to graduate without showing that they have achieved the same high level of competence is actually doing them a disservice. Rigorous academics built on the foundation of good mental spiritual, social and emotional health will allow children to flourish and be successful.

## **SECTION 4: INPUT SPECIFIC TO PARTICULAR COMMUNITIES**

While many of the same themes emerged across interviews, community conversations, and survey responses, we also heard some specific input, particularly around Oregon’s multiple diploma options as well as for students who are English learners and are from immigrant or refugee communities. (Some of these findings are also included above in Section 3: Working towards More Equitable Graduation Requirements.)

## STUDENTS FROM IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE COMMUNITIES

For immigrant and refugee families who are unfamiliar with the United States education system in general, high school graduation requirements are often complex, unclear, and not well understood. Some people said they would like to have more cultural liaisons between families and schools to help schools understand where families were coming from as well as to help families understand how the school system works. In several conversations families shared that they would like to have more structured ways to ensure that they receive information and are kept regularly informed about the progress their student is making towards graduation. For some people, this means more cultural liaisons working with both the families and the schools. For others, they want to see established groups for families from the same immigrant and refugee communities. One community organizer working with families who are English learners and from immigrant communities noted that even though they spoke fluent English, it was a challenge to convey basic information about high school graduation requirements to community members because the information is not provided in easily understandable English.

## STUDENTS WHO ARE ENGLISH LEARNERS

In conversations with educators working with English learners as well as with families who have students who are English learners, people often pointed to the following common barriers for their students and high school graduation requirements:

- For schools that “pull students out” for classes for English learners, students may not be able to access other courses or electives due to schedules. Students then might not be able to meet high school graduation requirements or might lose motivation to continue on.
- Challenge of trying to meeting all graduation requirements in four years while also learning English, particularly if a student enters high school in Oregon mid-way through high school
- Assessment materials, such as tests or work samples, are not also available in their first or home languages or in a format that would allow them to demonstrate their knowledge, such as orally.

We also heard several stories about the intersection of students who are English learners and who were placed in special education classes but who were not, in fact, experiencing a disability.



People pointed to the importance of using multiple forms of assessment in multiple languages early on to distinguish whether a student’s performance on an assessment might be impacted by language acquisition or by a disability. Other people from immigrant and refugee communities shared stories about their students who were born in Oregon or another part of the United States and could speak English being placed in ESL because the parents either did not speak English or spoke languages other than English at home. In these discussions, parents pointed to school intake forms and the way questions are phrased and the information then interpreted as a barrier in properly placing their students.

## STUDENTS EXPERIENCING DISABILITIES

Approximately 500 people participated in various forms of engagement who identified as having a student experiencing a disability, experiencing a disability themselves, or working with students experiencing a disability. Much of the conversations with this community focused on the different diploma options that Oregon offers. We heard different viewpoints on the multiple diploma options from families whose student either received or is on track to receive a modified diploma or alternative certificate. Some people view the modified diploma as providing a path for their student to achieve a diploma when it might not otherwise be possible; others shared that they have concerns about how post-secondary institutions as well as potential employers might view or accept different diplomas. Some people said the modified diploma their student received was a barrier to further education, particularly since it meant they were not eligible for financial aid. Families whose students received an alternative certificate shared stories of their students’ inability to get a job, due to a lack of a high school diploma.

### Excerpted Comments

I am receiving a modified diploma due to 6 classes being modified for me. I wish COVID didn't happen because I missed out on so much.

I felt like I graduated but not really because I had gotten a modified high school diploma. Even this I was left alone and asked for the help I still did not get it because that teacher was too busy with other students. I felt like I could not go to college because of this diploma. It is hard to go to any college with what I had heard from my counselor.

I had one student that received a modified diploma and for him that is exactly what he needed and what he could achieve. I appreciated that the staff at his high school made him feel like everyone else.

### Excerpted Comments (continued)

I have 1 child on a modified diploma. His anxiety is reduced because teacher expectations are more realistic for him. However, he worries greatly about his ability to get and keep a job with a modified diploma in the future.

I have worked with many families who have a child with a hearing loss. The school district has been rather quick in pushing a modified diploma instead of ensuring the students had access to general ed and a standard diploma.

I would have welcomed being given the option of something different than the standard diploma for our child experiencing disabilities. When I became aware of it in his junior year, I was told I was too late to change to a modified diploma since we didn't start there in his freshman year. He nearly gave up on education all together while we forced a standard education upon him.

It is frustrating that if a student chooses the modified diploma, they lose out on the through-age-21 educational services. Many students with disabilities would benefit from the extended educational years but are capable of receiving a modified diploma (and thus being eligible for things like community college enrollment later in life).

mi hijo le quieren dar una diploma modificado Pero no me han dejado tener la informacion suficiente de lo que significa que barreros ba a tener mi hijo al resivir ese - certificado, que obciones le bas a pemitir estudiando (Rough translation: They want to give my son a modified diploma but they haven't given me enough information about what it means and that my son will have barriers if he receives the certificate or what will he be allowed to study)

My daughter will receive a modified diploma. Our experience with that was good, but mostly because I had known about this option since elementary school and was prepared to address credit needs with her IEP team from the transition into high school through all four years. It is an important diploma to know about, and I'm not sure that all students who COULD work towards a modified or extended diploma get to have those conversations with their teams early enough in the high school career to get full credits applied.

Families who have or those who work with a student with disabilities shared that one of the main concerns regarding high school graduation requirements was that families often didn't understand at an early enough point what path their student was on to earn a certain type of diploma. Many people shared that they thought the following would be helpful:

- Begin discussions with families about high school graduation requirements as early as possible (even in elementary school) but definitely by 8<sup>th</sup> grade forecasting.

- Require a high school graduation planning meeting with families and students earlier than 16 years old. People shared that the discussion didn't happen until their child was 16 as per state law on IEPs. By then, many felt it was too late to make adjustments that might lead to either a modified or a standard diploma for their student.
- Be clear about what decisions lead to which diploma and who gets to make those decisions at each stage.
- Offer information in multiple languages for families with students who experience a disability and are English learners. Several people were looking to the state for the information in addition to or instead of their district but said they were unable to find it in their language or in a way that they understood.
- Make sure information is in plain language. One person who works closely with parents with disabilities stressed how important it is to provide communication and information in plain language to their families so youth experiencing some disabilities could be involved in their own decision-making.

## SECTION 5: SKILLS OR KNOWLEDGE PEOPLE FEEL OREGON HIGH SCHOOLS NEED TO GRADUATE

Many people view subjects like math, reading, and writing as core subjects. While people didn't explicitly name these as the three Essential Skills that are assessed or should be assessed for graduation, we heard that people want to see Oregon high school students attain a "basic level of reading, writing and math." Across those three subject areas, people also talked about what "basic level" meant to them, particularly regarding math. Several people said that algebra I or geometry rather than algebra 2 would be sufficient for students. Some people said they think it is important for any skills that fall into those three subject areas to be clearly relevant for students and applicable outside the classroom.

There were several other skills and types of knowledge that people said they would like to see required for students to graduate. The ones that were most frequently mentioned across different forms of engagement are:

## FINANCIAL LITERACY

We heard variations on what might fall under the category “financial literacy” or “personal finance.” This ranged from understanding how to create a budget to understanding credit and applying for a mortgage. Some people suggested that instead of creating a new requirement, we might consider how to incorporate a subject like financial literacy into existing requirements, such as math. When asked what skills or knowledge people wish they are learning or had learned in high school, “financial literacy” came up often. Sometimes people grouped in financial literacy with life skills, but it was the most frequent subject that people – across all groups, including youth - said they want to see or wish they themselves had.

## LIFE SKILLS

We heard a variety of different types of skills that some people referred to as “life skills.” These included: applying for jobs, voting, paying taxes, getting an apartment, and cooking meals. Several people who have or work with students experiencing a disability said they thought the classes their students have to take around life skills should be required for all students. We also heard from different groups of students that they felt like they are missing learning these skills.

## LANGUAGES

Many different groups talked about requirements around language proficiency, whether that is in English for English language learners or requirements that students learn and know multiple languages. We also heard a desire to expand what the state and districts consider language arts. A group of Tribal citizens shared wanting to see indigenous languages included as options in language arts. Another set of parents whose students experience disabilities wanted to see more access to American Sign Language so their students could meet language arts requirements through ASL. Another group of parents whose students experience disabilities shared concerns that requiring students be fluent in more than one language would create additional barriers for their students in meeting high school graduation requirements.

## TRADES

Some people said they wanted to see a return to teaching students trades in high school. We heard many people – not just those who emphasized trades – say that they think we have been focusing too much over the past decade or so on preparing students for college and that our requirements focus too much on what a student might need to go on to post-secondary education.

## COMMUNICATION, INTERPERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

People also shared that they want to see students gain specific communication skills as well as interpersonal or emotional skills like flexibility, resiliency, and empathy. For some people, this included specific types of writing, such as, as one student said, “How should I write a formal email when I’m communicating with a boss or a professor?” For other people, communication skills meant how to talk to people who might think differently than they do on political topics or the ability to engage with people of different backgrounds. Beyond communication, people also wanted to see students learn problem solving, collaboration and group dynamics. These different skills came up particularly in conversations with current high school students.

## OTHER SKILLS OR KNOWLEDGE FREQUENTLY MENTIONED

- Critical thinking, including being able to discern whether information is reliable or not.
- Technology or computer skills. Sometimes people pointed to computer programming or coding skills while other people pointed to an ability to use particular word or data processing software.
- Civics or an understanding of how democracy and government work at different levels

### Excerpted Comments

High school graduation requirements should include the basic skills needed to successfully enter adulthood. They need to know how to read, write, spell and have basic personal finance and hygiene so that they can live on their own, obtain and hold employment, pay their bills without going into debt, and contribute to society.

### Excerpted Comments (continued)

Life skills and actual experience in the workforce are so helpful and important to get students going in the right direction after high school. The hands-on experiences are invaluable!

Although I agree with most requirements currently in place (English, science, history) one of my large concerns is around math. As a math tutor and someone who has worked in Oregon high schools, I know math is a big struggle for a lot of students. I also think a lot of high school math as is currently done is not applicable to future life, depending on the goals of the student. Other math topics, such as budgeting, making large purchases (house, car), credit, and other financial literacy are much more applicable to most students than their ability to solve quadratic functions or the Pythagorean theorem.

Basic reading, writing and math skills will be needed for any career as well as financial and computer literacy. Learning experiences in the workforce can provide students a chance to test their interest and abilities for possible career paths. Having clear plans for after high school will determine the path to credential or CTE programs or the need for completing financial aid applications. Each student needs different kinds of supports.

Critical thinking skills and the ability to judge the veracity of media that they come in contact with are critical. Reading, writing, and basic math skills are also critical for success.

Employers, like myself use the proof of diploma as verification that the student can read, write, and do math. Personal finance should be required to graduate as most students leave not even knowing how to do their taxes. They also need to know how to run computer software, as very few jobs do not use a computer. All of these should be required to graduate.

I am pleased to see financial literacy listed in #13. If the purpose of high school is to prepare students for the real world, we should not skip the very basics like personal finance and independent life skills.

Students need to leave high school with the relational skills to collaborate and learn in groups. They also need to understand basic finance & home economics - which have real life applications immediately, making for strong home-school connections. K-12 education needs to be transformative, preparing children to become cooperative members of their communities.

## SECTION 6: ASSESSING OREGON STUDENTS' READINESS TO GRADUATE

Over the course of the community engagement period, we heard many differing viewpoints on how we should assess high school students' readiness to graduate. There were mixed opinions about the value of requiring students pass a standardized statewide test in subjects like writing, reading, and math. When asked how student proficiency should be checked in order to graduate, survey participants preferred "Samples of student work" (38%) and "Teacher evaluation" (33%) to "Statewide test" (20%). Slightly more than half the survey respondents (53%) preferred "it is enough to have the needed credits and grades" versus "Most students should be tested the same way in reading, writing, and math, and in other subjects" (47%).

There was less agreement when it came to distinguishing the state's role in assessing whether students are ready for high school graduation. 49% of participants said they thought that "Teachers should be the ones to decide if their students are ready to graduate" while 51% said "Teachers should decide if students are ready to graduate, and the state also needs to test whether students are ready to graduate."

We often heard people express that they hold conflicting values themselves around standardized tests. One student told us, "Even though I have a lot of test anxiety and I worry about everything coming down to one test, I still think we should have to pass a test to graduate. It's just all I know." Other people shared that while they think teachers are in the best position to assess whether a student is proficient in subjects, they are also concerned about bias in grading and in the classroom.

The main theme that emerged from discussions around how to assess students' readiness to graduate was a desire to see options and flexibility, no matter what the forms of assessment. People often gave some variation of the idea that students learn differently and so should then have options for demonstrating what they've learned. In addition, across different forms of engagement, people tended to gravitate towards wanting to see samples of student work and teacher evaluation used as assessment approaches.

## STATEWIDE TESTS

We heard a wide number of opinions, ranging from a belief that tests are often biased and lead to disparities in graduation rates to the belief that tests are necessary for accountability.

Other people said that their main concerns with using standardized tests to assess whether students are ready to graduate is using a measure of one moment in time to make that assessment. Some students and parents shared using a statewide test to determine whether or not they could graduate creates a lot of pressures and that the pause on the test has been a relief and allows students to focus on learning and meeting other requirements. Other people said that they think their students will lose motivation if there is no test to work towards; they pointed to what they observed during COVID when they felt like their students weren't working as hard.

## EVALUATIONS BY TEACHERS

As with statewide tests, we heard differing opinions from people about the role of teacher evaluations in assessing students' readiness to graduate. Some people shared that they feel like teachers were in the best position to assess whether students had learned skills and knowledge needed to graduate, since they are in a position to assess progress over time as well as students' demonstrating their abilities in a variety of ways.

Some people said that they also had concerns that teacher evaluations of students' proficiency could be biased as well. We particularly heard this from some families of students who were immigrants, refugees, English learners, and students with disabilities as well as from parents or youth who identified as Black. People also frequently said they want to see a statewide test in place because there were so many variations from teacher-to-teacher, school-to-school, and district-to-district in grading.

## EXAMPLES OF STUDENT WORK

For people who want to see some collection of student work used to evaluate whether students have learned what we want them to learn, this was important to them because they felt it showed students' learning over time versus one moment in time as a test might.



Some people shared that while they believed that assessments and evaluations of different types had value, but that individual assessment is resource intensive, and districts do not have the budget to implement such a plan. One example of this we heard from a couple people was a requirement to have students submit a portfolio of work that would be independently analyzed outside of a student's district.

### **ADDITIONAL TYPES OF ASSESSMENTS PEOPLE WANTED TO SEE**

- Hands on demonstrations
- Application of learning through performance (such as in a job interview)
- Capstone or senior project
- Student self-assessment or evaluation
- Other modes beyond paper / computer such as verbal or via video
- Collaborative panels, including teachers, counselors, and parents

#### Excerpted Comments

Potential differences between teachers and between schools should be balanced by a system-wide "check" of some sort. But if a student doesn't pass a statewide assessment, there should be ways to appeal/present other evidence of graduation worth accomplishment.

Teachers should not be put in the position to be pressured to pass someone on who is not capable.

老师的决定未必完全客观，需要用考试来协助证明学生的表现 (Rough Translation: Teachers' decisions may not be completely objective, and exams are needed to help demonstrate student performance)

Чем больше людей будут работать над к окончанию школы то по моему мнению лучше будет результат. (The more people who work on it by the end of school, in my opinion, the result will be better.)

The component missing in these two approaches is the student's assessment of his/her readiness to graduate. While this should not be the final decision point, the student should be included as part of evidence of self-awareness and self-knowledge.

### Excerpted Comments (continued)

Có một vài giáo viên có thể sẽ thiên vị một vài học sinh. Giáo viên không tiếp xúc, không lắng nghe, hoặc không có một chương trình giảng dạy cho phép họ đánh giá chính xác học sinh của mình, dựa trên những hoàn cảnh khác nhau mà học sinh của họ có thể có (ví dụ như: rào cản ngôn ngữ, cách tiếp thu/học của từng học sinh,...)  
(Rough Translation: Some teachers may be biased towards some students. Teachers don't get, don't listen, or don't have a curriculum that allows them to accurately assess their students based on the different circumstances their students may have (eg: language barriers, each student's way of acquiring/learning,...))

While I am not completely against standardized testing, I feel way too much weight is put on it. Teachers know students best and should be the ones to determine whether students have met the requirements needed to graduate. State testing is a tool that can be used to gather general statistics and show trends, but it does little to help individual students, and I wouldn't want too much class time used for testing. I don't think there should be a test required for graduation.

ellos han estado con nuestros hijos por los 4 años y saben mejor que nadie quien es capaz de seguir y quien puede tener la capacidad de lograr cumplir con los requisitos y quien está listo para graduarse (Rough Translation: They have been with our children for 4 years and know better than anyone who is capable of going on and who may have the ability to make it through the requirements and who is ready to graduate)

I believe a panel of teachers and counselors should collaboratively decide if students are ready to graduate. This would allow for them to look at the whole student rather than the potentially narrow focus that one teacher may have of a student. It also would allow the panel to be able to provide feedback and information to the student about next steps making graduation not just the end of their public education but a transition into their next stage of life.

Waxay noqonaysac arin laba meel lasa hubiyeye, macalinkii iyo imtixaankii gobolke  
(Rough Translation: It will be a double check, the teacher and the state test)

I think grades are not enough. Many schools are looking at equitable grading and we are not there yet. We need a robust discussion on how students can share their knowledge, e.g. portfolios.

Los maestros conocen más la Capacidades de sus alumnos que un simple examen del estado, los estudiantes tienen exámenes regulares y los maestros deberían saber el nivel de aprovechamiento y que son capaces de lograr sus alumnos (Rough Translation: Teachers know more about abilities of their students than a simple state exam, students have regular exams and teachers should know the level of achievement and what their students are capable of achieving)

## SECTION 7: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As ODE moves forward with developing recommendations and the state legislature considers the future of high school graduation requirements, there will need to be ongoing engagement opportunities, particularly regarding decisions that directly impact specific student communities. For instance, any changes related to the diploma options will require additional engagement with families and students experiencing disabilities, as well as educators who work directly with and support those students.

There are opportunities for further engagement, particularly with communities and groups of students who have been the least well served by education systems. This is especially true as schools continue to resume community events and programs that serve those students continue to increase the number of in-person events they're able to provide. For example, many of the ESDs' Migrant Education Programs will hold in-person orientations for families in students for the first time in a couple of years beginning June 2022. Culturally specific community organizations will continue to have more in-person contact with families and students, creating more opportunities for engagement.

Should the state legislature and the board of education decide on any changes to the high school graduation requirements, implementing those requirements will all require continued and ongoing engagement with districts, educators, families, and students. This is especially true given the wide range of resources across districts as well as across schools within a district. Even as people voiced their hopes for what they wanted to see regarding requirements and skills and knowledge students need to success after high school, they often followed up those hopes with concerns about resources and capacity.

### Excerpted Comments

I'd love for young people (recent graduates in the last 10 years) to be actively engaged to inform the design of the next steps...whatever they are.

If a greater reliance on teachers (in deciding who should graduate and when) is involved in new/revised requirements, ensure that adequate training and accountability are built into that plan. Failing to do so will/can result in inequitable outcomes (for students) and a general disintegration of the quality of our incoming workforce and collegebound students.

We need to all be pulling in the same direction. This is difficult, because there is so much variability district to district, school to school, and even educator to educator on what they think is important to focus on teaching in the classroom.

The students were very interested and happy to provide honest feedback and were eager to have more spaces in which they could do so. I'm very hopeful for the change it is going to create.

## SECTION 8: CONCLUSION

Throughout this community engagement effort on our state's high school graduation requirements, people demonstrated incredible generosity with their time, personal experiences, and care for students. Even in the midst of major challenges for our schools and larger communities, people were willing to take a few minutes or even a couple of hours to participate and share. One thing that stands out from the different community conversations that Oregon's Kitchen Table hosted was a strong desire to hear from each other and learn together with the goal of supporting Oregon students. When participants posed questions or wondered about different views or possibilities, there was almost always someone – a parent, a student, an educator, or a fellow community member – who was ready to voice their or their student's experience. This spirit of inquiry and community will be a benefit to Oregon's future work on high school graduation requirements.

## Appendix A. Annotated Survey Results

Note: Total percentages of responses may not add up to 100% due to rounding

### 1. What has your experience been with high school in Oregon? Please select all that apply.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=4311
I recently went to an Oregon high school or go to an Oregon high school now.	11%
I am the parent or guardian of a student who went or now goes to an Oregon high school.	33%
I am the parent or guardian of a student who will be an Oregon high school student in the next few years.	18%
I work in or have worked in an Oregon school.	26%
None of the above	6%
Other (please describe)	7%

### 2. Please think about your own experiences or your students' from Kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. What parts of that experience do you think matter most for life after high school?

Responses available upon request to Oregon's Kitchen Table.

### 3. If students are required to show what they know and can do, how do you think they should be checked? Select all that apply.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=6270
Statewide test	20%
Samples of student work	38%
Teacher evaluation	33%
None of these	1%
Other (please describe)	8%

### 4. If students are required to show what they know and can do, what are your concerns? Select all that apply

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=5890
Class, credit, and personal learning requirements are enough.	19%
Teachers are experts about what students know and can do.	16%
Standardized tests can be biased.	29%
They can result in graduation outcomes that are not equitable.	20%
None of these.	8%
Other (please describe)	9%

5. People have different opinions about how uniform high school graduation requirements should be. Below are some statements. Please select the one that you agree with the most - even if you don't fully agree with either.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=3075
Earning an Oregon diploma should mean that all students know and are able to do basically the same things.	39%
Earning an Oregon diploma should mean that all students' strengths and interests are recognized, even if they are different from each other.	61%

6. If you are a recent graduate, how prepared do you feel you are to pursue your goals after high school?

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=2716
Very Prepared	2%
Prepared	6%
Not prepared at all	4%
I'm not sure or I don't know	1%
This question does not apply to me.	86%

7. If you have a recent graduate in your household, how prepared do you feel they are to pursue their goals after high school?

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=2845
Very Prepared	8%
Prepared	19%
Not prepared at all	12%
I'm not sure or I don't know	2%
This question does not apply to me.	58%

8. Is there anything you'd like to share with us about why you chose the answers in questions 6 or 7?

*Responses available upon request to Oregon's Kitchen Table.*

9. Below are two statements. Please select the one that you agree with the most - even if you don't fully agree with either.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=3067
Most students should be tested the same way in reading, writing, and math, and in other subjects.	47%
Most students should not be tested in reading, writing, and math through a statewide test. Instead, it is enough to have the needed credits and grades.	53%

**10. Oregon also offers alternative diplomas. This type of diploma is a document of high school completion. It is for students who did not get a standard high school diploma. If you or your student have an alternative diploma, will you please share what your experience was like?**

*Responses available upon request to Oregon's Kitchen Table.*

**11. What do you think the State of Oregon's role should be in deciding whether students are ready to graduate from high school? Please select the statement that you agree with the most - even if you don't fully agree with either.**

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=3040
Teachers should be the ones to decide if their students are ready to graduate.	49%
Teachers should decide if students are ready to graduate, and the state also needs to test whether students are ready to graduate.	51%

**12. Can you please share more about why you chose your answer above?**

*Responses available upon request to Oregon's Kitchen Table.*

**13. Below is a list that could help prepare students for their lives after high school. These may be most helpful to support students who have not been well served by education systems. Please rate which you think would be the most helpful to prepare students for life after high school. Start with 1 being the one that you are most interested in out of all of these. Number all the way down to 8, with 8 being the one that is of least interest to you. Only use each number one time.**

RESPONSE CATEGORY	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8
N=	2874	2861	2871	2853	2845	2821	2809	2820
Earn an industry recognized credential (such as a Certified Nursing Assistant certification) or complete a career and technical education (CTE) program.	23%	14%	11%	10%	11%	11%	10%	9%
Have a learning experience in the workforce.	17%	24%	16%	14%	10%	8%	6%	4%
Complete a financial aid application like FAFSA or ORSAA.	3%	5%	10%	11%	14%	18%	21%	19%
Write a resume.	5%	13%	19%	19%	16%	13%	10%	5%
Be fluent in at least two languages.	3%	4%	6%	8%	11%	13%	19%	35%
Pass a course in financial literacy.	19%	22%	17%	14%	11%	9%	5%	2%
Pass a course in computer science.	3%	7%	10%	13%	16%	18%	19%	14%
Have a clear plan for next steps after high school.	27%	11%	10%	10%	10%	11%	11%	11%

**14. Is there anything else you'd like to share with us about Oregon's high school graduation requirements?**

*Responses available upon request to Oregon's Kitchen Table.*

**15. How old are you?**

<b>RESPONSE CATEGORY</b>	<b>N=3098</b>
under 18 years old	6%
18 to 24 years old	5%
25 to 34 years old	8%
35 to 44 years old	24%
45 to 54 years old	29%
55 to 64 years old	13%
65 to 74 years old	10%
75 to 84 years old	4%
85 years or older	<1%
I prefer not to answer	2%

**16. Which races and ethnicities do you consider yourself to be? These categories come from the federal government. Please mark all that apply.**

<b>RESPONSE CATEGORY</b>	<b>N=3235</b>
American Indian or Alaska Native	4%
Asian	4%
Black or African American	4%
Hispanic or Latino, Latina, Latinx	10%
Multi-racial	7%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1%
White, Caucasian	71%

**17. What language do you prefer to get information in?**

<b>RESPONSE CATEGORY</b>	<b>N=3030</b>
English	93%
Mandarin	<1%
Russian	1%
Somali	<1%
Spanish	3%



Vietnamese	<1%
Other language not listed here (please write the language)	2%

**18. How would you describe your current role? Please select all that apply.**

<b>RESPONSE CATEGORY</b>	<b>N=6144</b>
I live in Oregon	45%
I am a parent or guardian of a student in a Kindergarten to 12th grade school.	22%
I am a high school student	4%
I am a student in a community college, university, or training school.	3%
I work in a Kindergarten to 12th grade school district.	13%
I work in a community college, university, or training school.	3%
I am an employer in Oregon	5%
Other (please describe)	6%

**19. Which county in Oregon do you live in?**

<b>RESPONSE CATEGORY</b>	<b>N=2957</b>
Baker County	1%
Benton County	2%
Clackamas County	10%
Clatsop County	1%
Columbia County	1%
Coos County	1%
Crook County	<1%
Curry County	1%
Deschutes County	3%
Douglas County	2%
Gilliam County	<1%
Grant County	<1%
Harney County	<1%
Hood River County	1%
Jackson County	4%
Jefferson County	1%
Josephine County	1%
Klamath County	1%
Lake County	<1%

Lane County	6%
Lincoln County	2%
Linn County	2%
Malheur County	1%
Marion County	6%
Morrow County	<1%
Multnomah County	28%
Polk County	2%
Sherman County	<1%
Tillamook County	1%
Umatilla County	1%
Union County	2%
Wallowa County	<1%
Wasco County	2%
Washington County	16%
Wheeler County	<1%
Yamhill County	2%
Other	<1%

**20. Do you or your student identify with any of the following communities? Check all that apply.**

<b>RESPONSE CATEGORY</b>	<b>N=3501</b>
Tribal member	3%
LGBTQ2SIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, 2 Spirit, Intersex, Asexual, plus other non-heterosexual orientations or genders)	13%
English learner	5%
Experience a disability	14%
Have been or am without a house	4%
Immigrant or refugee	5%
Migrant worker or student	2%
Child in foster care	2%
Student who has changed high schools	9%
None of these	44%

## Appendix B. Community Connector Interview Questions

### BACKGROUND

- During the 2021 session, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 744 (SB 744). SB744 requires ODE to:
  - review current high school graduation requirements
  - make recommendations to reduce disparities and ensure rigor, so every student is on track to earn a high school diploma
- As part of that legislation, ODE will:
  - Use a transparent process that is equitable, accessible and inclusive
  - Enable and encourage meaningful engagement with representatives from historically underserved students, including:
    - students who have a disability
    - are from an immigrant or refugee population
    - are from racial or ethnic groups that have historically experienced academic disparities
    - are English language learners; or
    - are from a federally recognized Indian tribe of this state
  - Also engage youth-led organizations that engage and empower youth and communities from across this state
  - Engage businesses, employers and secondary education institutions
- This review will help determine:
  - the expectations of employers and post-secondary institutions of education related to the skills and knowledge of persons who earn high school diplomas;
  - whether current graduation requirements meet those expectations; and
  - whether high school graduation requirements have been applied inequitably to different student populations.
- ODE is working with Oregon’s Kitchen Table (OKT) to help develop an engagement plan with a particular focus on historically underserved communities, youth, and communities across the state.
- OKT will be conducting some initial interviews with various community connectors from different communities to help develop that engagement plan.
- From Mid-February to Mid-April, people across the state will be able to share what they think through a variety of formats, from Zoom conversations in all 19 ESDs to an online statewide survey to community-specific activities and opportunities.

### CONTENT QUESTIONS

- Have you been involved in discussions around high school graduation requirements in Oregon? In what ways?

- What do you think are the appropriate ways to measure the skills that students will need to be successful after high school for college, work, and life?
- What do you think the challenges are to measure those skills?
- What do you think the challenges are in achieving those skills? What about challenges to measuring those skills?
- Is there anything we should be aware of about high school graduation for people you know / in your community?
- Who should we be talking to who we might not have thought of? How might we reach them?

### **OUTREACH / ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONS**

- What are the best ways to communicate (and ways to avoid - eg. modes that no one in your community will see or open)? Email / phone / face-to-face?
- What does your community gather around? Activities? Important events? Especially during COVID.
- Are there any specific dates we should avoid planning around, if you are willing to be a part of the process? When do people in your community tend to NOT be available? (February - March is timeframe for engagement)
- What needs are you aware of that members of your community have in order to be able to participate? (childcare, food, setting, meeting set-up, materials, etc.) Any we should know regarding Covid restrictions / uncertainties?
- Who might be the best person to ask or invite you or your community to engage on this topic?

***THANK YOU FOR SHARING WITH US!*** Let them know what next steps are and thank them for their time, insight, and perspective. And we intend to build engagement activities and outreach efforts based on what they've shared in the coming months.

## Appendix C. Community Conversations Guide

### Oregon High School Graduation Requirements Guide for Community Gatherings / Discussions

Below are some suggestions for hosting a group discussion on Oregon’s high school graduation requirements. Please feel free to host your gathering in-person, on Zoom, or whatever platform you prefer.

#### WELCOME:

Please use whatever activity or welcome you and your group prefers. You could ask people to move from person to person to share or if you are on Zoom, you could have people also share in the Chat.

*Example:* Let us know your first name and a memorable experience from high school (a teacher, a class, a book, an activity, a classmate).

*Example:* Let us know your first name and one word, phrase or image that comes to mind when you hear the phrase “high school graduation.”

#### INTRODUCTION:

Please share the following background with the group about the purpose of the meeting and background about the topic:

In 2021, the Oregon state legislature passed [Senate Bill 744](#). This Bill is to explore how to make graduation requirements more equitable for all students in Oregon. It directs the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to review state high school graduation requirements. As part of this review, ODE is partnering with Oregon’s Kitchen Table to get input from people across the state about this topic. Oregon’s Kitchen Table is a Program of Portland State University that creates ways for people in Oregon to share what they think about important public decisions.

Your voice counts! You can help make high school graduation requirements work better for future high school grads. What you have to share about your ideas and experiences will help ODE to create a report and recommendations about future high school graduation requirements. They will give this report and recommendations to the state legislature in September 2022.

People in Oregon can share what they think in a number of ways: individual and small group interviews, community conversations, and an online survey or paper in 7 languages. All responses will be collected by Oregon’s Kitchen Table. OKT will provide a summary report to ODE.

#### **Make sure to let people know that their responses will be confidential!**

None of the responses will be tied to your name or anything else that identifies you.

## QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION

Here are some questions for the conversation. We know that a conversation will take its own course, but **Questions 2, 3, 4, and 5** are necessary to ask people since these are questions focused on parts of graduation requirements that the state legislature has asked ODE to review.

### 1. What's your connection or relation to high school in Oregon now?

You could set this up as a poll in Zoom, if you want, or ask people to share aloud or in the Chat. If you set it up as a poll, here are options:

- I recently went to an Oregon high school or go to an Oregon high school now.
- I am the parent/guardian or family member of a student who went or now goes to an Oregon high school.
- I am the parent/guardian or family member of a student who will be an Oregon high school student in the next few years.
- I work in or have worked in an Oregon school.
- Interested community member

### 2. What is something you learned or wish you had learned in school that you use all the time or use often in your life after high school?

You could also use this question as the warm up or introduction question when people share their name.

### 3. What do you think Oregon high school students need to know or be able to do in order to graduate?

### 4. How do you think we should check knowledge and skills for Oregon high school students so we know they've learned what we wanted them to learn? Why is that important to you?

### 5. How could we make graduation requirements more fair for all Oregon students?

### 6. What is one hope or desire you have for students in Oregon so they are prepared and ready to succeed in life after graduating from high school?

## CLOSING THE DISCUSSION

- Thank everyone for sharing today.
- Let them know that their input will be sent to Oregon's Kitchen Table to combine with other input from community gatherings, survey responses, and interviews. OKT will give a summary report of all of the input to ODE this spring.
- Also, let people know to invite their family, friends, neighbors to contribute their thoughts through the online survey.