

Issue Brief

Fostering K-12 Student Success: Out-of-School Time Programming

Some projections indicate that by 2020, 60 percent of Oregon's jobs will require a college credential.ⁱ Currently, only 31% of Oregon's college-age young people are attending college, and this drops to 18% in rural communities.ⁱⁱ In addition, Oregon ranks 47th of all states in number of high school graduates going to college and for the first time in history, the younger generation is less educated than the generation before.ⁱⁱⁱ Minority populations have even lower levels of educational attainment with only 29% of African Americans, 16% of Hispanics, and 20% of Native Americans in Oregon having at least an associate's degree.^{iv} While 68% of all Oregon high school students graduate, the graduation rate is only 51% for Native Americans, 53% for African Americans, and 60% for Hispanic students.^v

The Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB) has identified key benchmarks for Oregon's educational success, spanning early childhood education through post-secondary attainment. Achieving success on several of the OEIB benchmarks, including ninth grade attendance and post-secondary enrollment, will necessitate interventions starting as early as middle-school. Increasing ninth grade attendance and course passing rates are the most important levers for increasing graduation rates. Intervening with students in middle school and supporting programs that are serving the most at-risk students is necessary in order to ensure success on these benchmarks.

Benefits of Out-of-School Time Programming

Quality out-of-school time programs can increase engagement with school (youth participating in engaging after school programming are more likely to come to school) and boost academic performance, both of which are associated with the key educational benchmarks of 9th grade attendance and post-secondary enrollment. In order to succeed in school, children also need positive relationships with caring adults. Family involvement can help prepare middle and high school youth for college. And when a parental relationship is strained or unhealthy, many children benefit from having positive relationships with other adults either to supplement – or to substitute – a parent relationship.

Thirty six percent of Oregon's K-12 children have working parents and have no adult supervision after school.^{vi} Studies show that most juvenile crime is committed between the hours of 3pm and 6pm – including alcohol and drug experimentation.^{vii} These risk factors are known to contribute to academic failure and school absences. After-school programs can offer academic enrichment tailored to student needs in a more flexible way than curriculum offered during the traditional school day. Quality afterschool curriculum reflects a diversity of enrichment topics, ranging from sorely lacking arts activities, to science and reading programs that supplement what children learn during the school day. Out-of-school time programs have been proven to be most effective with traditionally underserved youth - ethnic minorities and lower-income youth - populations with much lower graduation rates than the national average.^{viii} Further, quality out-of-school time is also positively associated with soft-skills such as student confidence and a sense of leadership and ownership, and these programs can provide positive adult role models to at-risk youth.

In addition to after school time programming, providing quality summer programs is also an important component of fostering academic success and closing the achievement gap. Low-income students lose

approximately two months of reading achievement over the summer, while their higher-income peers often gain ground.^{ix} This summer learning loss is cumulative and over time can contribute significantly to the achievement gap. Quality programs blend academic learning and enrichment activities and allow for innovative approaches to learning that may not be available during the school year. Evaluations of robust summer learning programs have shown that they mitigate summer learning loss and can even lead to 2 to 5 months of achievement gains in math and reading. Moreover, positive effects can last for at least 2 years after the student engages in a summer program.

Quality out of school time programming should include family engagement and mentoring components. Family involvement can help prepare middle and high school youth for college. Parents who monitor academic and social activities have adolescents with lower rates of absenteeism and delinquency and higher rates of social competence and academic growth.^x In addition, youth are most likely to graduate from high school and pursue post-secondary education when their parents are aware of college preparation requirements and are engaged in the application process. Family involvement has been shown to benefit children from diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds. For example, low-income African American children whose families have high levels of involvement in elementary school are more likely to complete high school. However, when a parental relationship is strained or unhealthy, many children benefit from having positive relationships with other adults either to supplement – or to substitute – a parent relationship. Mentoring programs provide a promising approach to promoting positive youth outcomes. The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation’s evaluation of high-quality mentoring programs shows that participating youth have fewer unexcused absences from school than do similar youth not participating in mentoring programs.^{xi} Mentored youth also had better attitudes and behaviors at school, and had better chances of attending college. Youth in mentoring programs also have less drug and alcohol use (especially among minority youth) and, in some studies, fewer delinquent behaviors.

ⁱ The Alliance for Science and Technology Research in America. (2011). Oregon’s K-12 STEM ed report card 2011. Retrieved from

<http://www.nmarion.k12.or.us/cms/lib05/OR01000613/Centricity/Domain/31/STEMEdOregon2011.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ Oregon University System. (2010). Institutional Research.

ⁱⁱⁱ Office of the Chief Operating Officer. (2012, April). 10 year plan for Oregon project: Education policy vision. Retrieved from <http://www.oregon.gov/COO/Ten/docs/EducationOutcome.pdf>.

^{iv} U.S. Census Bureau. (2011). 2011 American community survey 1-year estimates.

^v Oregon Department of Education. (2012). Summary of 2011-12 four-year cohort graduation rates. Retrieved from <http://www.ode.state.or.us/wma/data/schoolanddistrict/students/docs/summarycohortgrad1112.pdf>.

^{vi} OregonASK. (n.d.). Oregon’s vision for supporting student success through expanded learning opportunities. Retrieved from http://www.oregonask.org/external_files/ask.S3.Official%20Final..pdf.

^{vii} Afterschool Alliance. (2012). Afterschool essentials: Research and polling. Retrieved from http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/2012/Essentials_4_20_12_FINAL.pdf

^{viii} Redd, Z., Boccanfuso, C., Walker, K., Princiotta, D., Knewstubb, D., and Moore, K. (2012, August). Expanding time for learning both inside and outside the classroom: A review of the evidence base. Retrieved from http://www.childtrends.org/files/Child_Trends-2012_08_16_RB_TimeForLearning.pdf

^{ix} McCombs, J.S., Augustine, C.H., Schwartz, H.L., Bodilly, S.J., McInnis, B., Lichter, D.S., and Cross, A.B. (2011). Making summer count: How summer programs can boost children’s learning. Retrieved from: http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2011/RAND_MG1120.pdf

^x Harvard Family Research Project. (2006). Family involvement makes a difference in school success. Retrieved from <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/family-involvement-makes-a-difference-in-school-success>.

^{xi} Jekielek, S., Moore, K.A., and Hair, E.C., (2002, January). Mentoring programs and youth development: A synthesis. Retrieved from <http://www.childtrends.org/files/MentoringSynthesisFINAL2.6.02Jan.pdf>.