

Secretary of State Audit Report

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Education: Additional Efforts and Resources Needed to Improve Teacher Preparation and Professional Development

Summary

Teachers are critical for Oregon to meet its education goals for high student achievement. While many factors contribute to student achievement, effective teaching is fundamental to student success. Our audit objective was to determine whether state or local actions could be taken to improve preparation and professional development for beginning teachers of kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12). Our work focused on ways to strengthen student teaching practices, increase confidence in Oregon teaching colleges and their graduates, and improve the professional opportunities Oregon's school districts provide to beginning teachers.

Oregon's public teaching colleges can do more to strengthen student teaching

Teacher preparation programs at universities and colleges (teaching colleges) in Oregon are essential to ensuring student teachers are sufficiently prepared to support student achievement. Experts suggest student teaching should be the central part of teacher preparation. This type of preparation coordinates university program coursework with K-12 classroom teaching, requiring close partnerships between public teaching colleges and school districts.

Oregon's public teaching colleges are making efforts to strengthen student teaching, yet more progress is needed. Public teaching colleges vary on how well they coordinate coursework and student teaching experiences. They also vary in the partnerships they have developed with local school districts. Oregon's public teaching colleges are working with the state's school districts to strengthen student teaching, yet efforts could be expanded.

We recommend the Oregon Education Investment Board work with the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, the Oregon University System, public teaching colleges, and school districts to continue strengthening student teaching practices. See page 6 for audit results.

Performance indicators can help inform decision making

Objective information on the effectiveness of Oregon's public teaching colleges could help inform decision making for school district administrators. Performance indicators on how well graduates succeed in the workforce could provide insight into how effectively public teaching colleges prepare their graduates.

Our survey of school district administrators found that half of the respondents did not believe Oregon's public teaching colleges sufficiently prepare their graduates. However, no state agency or commission in Oregon routinely reports performance indicators relating to the effectiveness of Oregon public teaching colleges' graduates, and only three of the six public teaching colleges regularly provide any information on their graduates after they enter the workforce. Other states have begun reporting performance indicators on their teaching colleges' graduates, including:

- hiring and retention data,
- survey results from teaching college graduates and their employers,
- measures of student growth attributed to teaching college graduates, and
- summarized results from teacher evaluations conducted by graduates' principals.

We recommend the Oregon Education Investment Board identify a state entity, such as the University System or the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, to gather, analyze, and regularly report on the effectiveness of graduates to provide performance indicators for Oregon's teaching colleges. See page 16 for audit results.

Stronger licensing requirements could provide greater assurances of teacher preparedness

Oregon's teacher licensure requirements do not include an independent performance assessment to ensure that teacher candidates are adequately prepared. The Teaching Standards and Practices Commission (Commission), which is responsible for licensing Oregon's teachers, relies on recommendations from the teaching colleges to determine whether candidates are ready to teach. In contrast, Washington, Wisconsin, and New York are working to obtain independent performance assessments of candidate quality by requiring candidates to pass the Teacher Preparation Assessment tool developed by Stanford University and administered by a private contractor. We recommend the Commission consider requiring independent performance assessments of teacher candidates' performance prior to licensure to determine whether candidates are adequately prepared. See page 20 for audit results.

Further expand professional development and support for beginning K-12 teachers

Research indicates that beginning teachers need comprehensive professional development in their first three to five years for professional growth and improved student achievement. Professional development includes high quality mentoring, ongoing learning opportunities, and standards-based teacher evaluations.

While some Oregon school districts report they provide professional development and support to beginning teachers, other districts face challenges in doing so. Many school districts in Oregon do not have mentoring policies or formal plans for beginning teachers to participate in mentoring. In addition, many school districts told us that they do not set aside time for professional learning, and others are slow to create teacher evaluation systems in line with new requirements.

We recommend the Oregon Education Investment Board work with the Oregon Legislature, public teaching colleges, Oregon Department of Education, and Oregon's school districts to create and implement professional development guidelines and to provide consistent funding needed to improve professional development opportunities for beginning K-12 teachers. See page 23 for audit results.

Agency Responses

Agency responses are attached at the end of the report.

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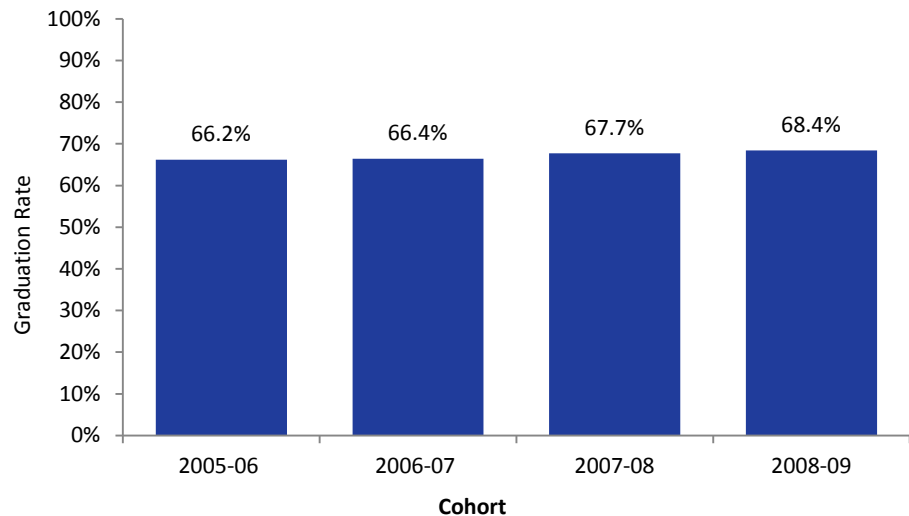
Background

Effective teaching critical to raising student achievement

It is widely accepted that one of the greatest influences on student achievement is effective teaching. While there are many factors that contribute to student achievement, research has shown that an effective teacher workforce is essential for improving student learning. Oregon aims to improve student achievement, in part by focusing its efforts on ensuring 100% of Oregonians obtain a high school diploma or equivalent by 2025.

The state has experienced slight increases in four-year high school graduation rates. See Figure 1. However, only 67.7% of the 2007-08 beginning high school cohort graduated during the 2010-11 school year, the fourth lowest rate of the 47 states that submitted data that year. Effective teaching is critical for Oregon to achieve its 100% graduation goal.

Figure 1: Statewide Trends for High School Cohorts Graduating within Four Years



Oregon's model core teaching standards

Oregon has defined effective teaching, in part, by adopting the model core teaching standards developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers in 2011. Oregon's model core teaching standards outline what teachers should know and be able to demonstrate. The standards also outline the common principles and foundations of the teaching practice that cut across all subject areas and grade levels, and that are necessary to improve student achievement. See Figure 2.

Figure 2: Oregon’s Model Core Teaching Standards

Learner Development	The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.
Learning Differences	The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.
Learning Environments	The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation.
Content Knowledge	The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.
Application of Content	The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem-solving related to authentic local and global issues.
Assessment	The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher’s and learner’s decision making.
Planning for Instruction	The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.
Instructional Strategies	The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.
Professional Learning and Ethical Practice	The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.
Leadership and Collaboration	The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

A comprehensive system to support effective teaching

National education organizations and researchers have identified the need for a comprehensive system to educate and support K-12 teachers. They stress that it is imperative that teachers are not only prepared to be highly effective, but are also provided with the experiences and support they need in order to be successful throughout all phases of their career. A comprehensive view of teacher effectiveness spans the career continuum, from pre-service training and preparation to support and development once in the classroom. Research also asserts that inadequate teacher preparation and support could result in less than optimal student achievement and increased teacher attrition.

Teacher preparation

Teachers most often obtain their training in a university or college teacher preparation program. For the purposes of this report, we will refer to universities and colleges offering preparation programs as teaching colleges. Teaching colleges provide instruction on accepted practices for

educating students and teaching experiences in implementing those practices. In addition, teaching colleges are required to meet the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission's (Commission) requirements for teacher preparation that are aligned with national teaching college accreditation and Oregon's model core teaching standards. In Oregon, the Commission, whose members are appointed by the Governor, is the state accrediting agency for all teacher preparation programs.

There are six public and 14 private teaching colleges in Oregon. The six public teaching colleges are: Eastern Oregon University (EOU), Oregon State University (OSU), Portland State University (PSU), Southern Oregon University (SOU), University of Oregon (U of O), and Western Oregon University (WOU). These universities are part of the Oregon University System. During the 2011-12 academic year, nearly half of Oregon-trained teachers that applied for state licensure completed programs provided by one of these teaching colleges.

Teaching colleges offer an undergraduate degree program that leads to licensure, a graduate degree program that leads to licensure, or both. The 4-year undergraduate program, which usually involves an education major, is common for teaching college students who are interested in becoming early childhood and elementary teachers. Undergraduate students interested in becoming a middle school or high school teacher may also need to include a second major in a content area (e.g., English, mathematics, or history). Students who attend graduate level programs most often obtain a bachelor's degree in a specific content area, and then complete a fifth year of graduate-level work in education.

Teacher licensure

Each state in the U.S. sets its own teaching standards for licensed or certified teachers to ensure they are well qualified in specified areas, including subject matter knowledge, teaching methods, and classroom management. In Oregon, the Commission is the licensing agency for all educators in the state. Teachers seeking employment in Oregon's public schools must obtain a teacher license from the Commission.

Professional development

Research suggests that beginning teachers should build on the insights, theory, and experience gained during preparation, and add skills and knowledge to increase their effectiveness in the classroom. The on-the-job support and professional development provided by school districts to beginning teachers in their first three to five years is critical to how they develop as a teacher.

K-12 education in Oregon

Local and state government roles in educating students

The Oregon public education system, which includes kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12), operates within school districts governed by locally elected school boards and school district superintendents. School districts are responsible for setting direction and providing support to their schools, and for developing budgets detailing how the district will utilize available funding. Oregon has 197 school districts that govern approximately 1,400 schools.

Nineteen education service districts in Oregon provide regional services to their component school districts, primarily in areas that the school districts alone would not be able to adequately or equitably provide. Examples of these services include supports for children with severe disabilities and professional development opportunities for K-12 teachers.

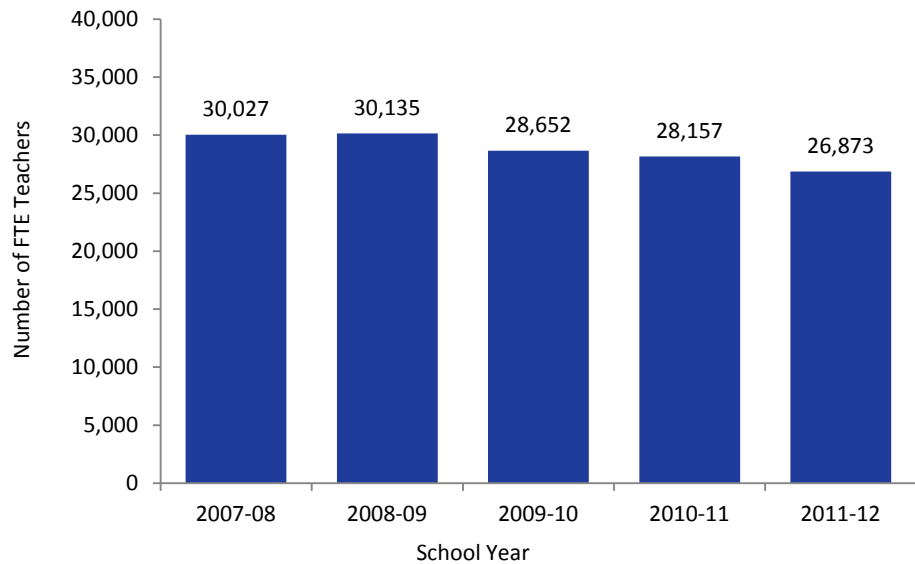
The State Board of Education, whose members are appointed by the Governor and approved by the Oregon Legislature, sets educational policies and standards for Oregon's public school districts. The Oregon Department of Education (Department) functions under the direction and control of the State Board of Education. Its mission is to increase the achievement of all students so that they can graduate with the knowledge and skills necessary for work and college. The Department is also responsible for administering state and federal funds for Oregon's school districts and ensuring all components of the educational system are interconnected to provide appropriate instruction for each student.

K-12 education funding

School districts are funded through federal, state, and local sources. The state General Fund comprised the largest share of school funding (89% in the 2011-13 biennium), with additional state funds coming from the Lottery and Other Funds revenue. The state's school funding for the 2011-13 biennium was \$5.77 billion, \$356 million less than what was spent during the 2007-09 biennium.

State funding for K-12 schools has not kept pace with the rate of inflation, further reducing actual dollars school districts have available to address rising costs. Reduced state funding and increased costs have forced Oregon's school districts and education service districts to cut expenses by reducing administrative and teaching staff, freezing pay, cutting professional development, closing schools, or cutting days from the school calendar. As shown in Figure 3, the number of K-12 teachers has fallen steadily from the 2008-09 to the 2011-12 school year.

Figure 3: Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Teachers in Oregon Schools



Recent changes to Oregon's K-12 education

In recent years, Oregon has experienced significant changes to its education system and leadership. In addition to the goal of 100% high school completion or equivalent, the Oregon Legislature set targets of at least 40% of Oregonians earning a community college associates degree or post-secondary credential and at least 40% earning a bachelor's degree or higher. The legislature also passed a bill calling for the creation of a unified system of public education from preschool through graduate school. To implement and support these changes, the legislature established the Oregon Education Investment Board and the position of Chief Education Officer. The two are also responsible for:

- coordinating the new education system,
- ensuring that all public school students achieve the state's education goals, and
- focusing state resources and data systems to support the state's student achievement goals.

Audit Objective

Our audit objective was to determine whether state or local actions could be taken to improve preparation and professional development opportunities for beginning teachers. Our work focused on actions that could strengthen student teaching practices, increase confidence in Oregon's public teaching colleges and their graduates, and improve professional support systems Oregon's school districts provide to beginning teachers. We did not review student teaching practices at Oregon's private teaching colleges or the professional development opportunities private K-12 schools provide.

Audit Results – Additional State Support Needed to Strengthen Student Teaching

The importance of student teaching

Ensuring that K-12 teachers are capable of promoting student learning is important for raising student achievement. Education experts assert that no in-school intervention has a greater impact on student learning than an effective teacher. In addition, research suggests that a newly licensed teacher who attended a teaching college with a strong student teaching component is better able to promote learning and achievement in K-12 public schools.

Student teaching, also referred to as clinical practices, occurs when the teaching college places the student teacher in a K-12 school setting to take on teacher roles and responsibilities. At the request of the teaching colleges, local school districts or school building administrators assign one of their K-12 teachers, also referred to as a coaching or cooperating teacher, to the student teacher. The student teacher is also assigned a staff person from the teaching college. The coaching teacher and staff person work together to guide the student teacher through the process.

Though student teaching mainly involves opportunities to observe and practice effective teaching, it also includes participation in other daily teacher activities, including professional development, curriculum development, lesson planning, and student assessments. These activities help to familiarize the student teacher with public school culture and responsibilities.

Experts assert changes needed in teacher preparation

In 2010, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) brought together a panel of education experts to recommend ways to restructure teacher preparation similar to a practice-based profession, such as medicine. The panel's report recommended changes in policy, practice, and the culture and norms of preparation programs and school districts.

In response to the report, Oregon joined the Alliance for Clinical Teacher Preparation, which was initiated by NCATE, committing the state to implementing the panel's recommendations. Our audit work in this area focused on the progress Oregon public teaching colleges have made in implementing the following panel recommendations:

- Teaching colleges should center teacher preparation on extended student teaching experiences that are closely coordinated with the colleges' academic coursework.

- Teacher preparation should be a partnership between the teaching colleges and the school districts, in which the parties share responsibility and work collaboratively.
- Student teachers should have trained, qualified teaching college staff and coaching teachers.
- Teaching colleges should work with school districts to develop new rewards/incentives for coaching teachers and teaching college staff.

Teacher preparation centered on extended student teaching experiences

In the past, academic coursework and student teaching were two separate and distinct components of teacher preparation. Teaching colleges would begin with coursework covering fundamentals in teaching, methods, and curriculum. They would then end preparation in the final 15 weeks by placing their students in a K-12 school to gain classroom experience.

The NCATE panel recommended student teachers be placed in a public school setting for extended time periods, ideally throughout the entire preparation program. They should also have graduated levels of responsibility, from observing their coaching teacher to leading their own classroom, as they progress through the program.

The panel also recommended that student teaching be placed at the center of teacher preparation by coordinating the teaching methods learned in the academic coursework with the teaching methods practiced in the public school setting.

Partnerships between teaching colleges and school districts

The NCATE panel asserted that the teaching college and the placement school district share responsibility for teacher preparation, as partners, and work together to optimize student teacher competency and K-12 student learning. These partnerships are needed to carry out various shared responsibilities related to student teaching practices, including:

- coordinating academic coursework content with timely classroom practice,
- sharing decision making related to student teacher placements,
- performing ongoing student teacher assessments, and
- advancing professional development opportunities in the placement school.

Teaching college personnel key to these partnerships include the teaching college faculty that provides program coursework, and college staff responsible for supporting and guiding student teachers through the student teaching process. School district personnel important to partnership development include the coaching teachers and building administrators.

A new model for training and incentives

To address concerns in training and incentives, the NCATE panel recommended a new model. First, the panel recommended that teaching college staff and coaching teachers be experienced, trained, and highly competent teachers who have the skills and knowledge to support teacher learning and student achievement. In addition, the panel suggested coaching teachers be given time to work with student teachers and college staff. Finally, the panel proposed teaching colleges and school districts change the reward structure to value and support effective student teacher supervision and guidance by teaching college staff and coaching teachers.

Co-teaching and grouping can also help strengthen student teaching practices

In addition to focusing on the NCATE recommendations, we identified leading practices teaching colleges in other states employ to improve student teaching. The most common practices we identified were co-teaching and grouping of student teachers.

Co-teaching involves the student teacher and the coaching teacher sharing teaching responsibilities, including lesson planning, lesson delivery, and student assessment. Co-teaching allows the student teacher and the coaching teacher to collaborate, and to actively engage classroom students for extended periods. It also enables coaching teachers to provide consistent, real time mentoring, and gives student teachers the time and support needed to gain skills and confidence to teach successfully.

Grouping, also referred to as clustering, involves a teaching college placing multiple student teachers in a single placement school. Student teachers grouped in the same K-12 school act as a learning community and can benefit from opportunities to collaborate and learn from one another, as well as their coaching teachers.

Public teaching colleges are strengthening student teaching practices, yet more progress is needed

We interviewed the deans and staff of Oregon's six public teaching colleges and found that they are making some progress in implementing NCATE panel recommendations and other leading practices. Specifically, they are working to focus preparation on student teaching, improve training, and strengthen partnerships with local school districts. Figure 4 illustrates the progress Oregon public teaching colleges have made.

Figure 4: Public Teaching Colleges' Progress in Strengthening Student Teaching Practices

ELEMENTS OF STRONG STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCES	Progress in Implementing					
	EOU	OSU	PSU	SOU	UO	WOU
Student teaching at the center of teacher preparation						
Extended student teaching (beginning earlier, 1+ full year)	●	◐	●	●	●	●
Student teaching coordinated with academic coursework	○	●	●	●	●	●
Partnerships between teaching colleges and placement schools						
Share decision making on selection of coaching teachers	○	◐	◐	○	○	◐
Work together creating professional development school, demo school/class	○	◐	◐	◐	○	◐
Training, time, and compensation						
Provide comprehensive training for coaching teacher	○	○	○	◐	○	◐
Provide comprehensive training for college staff	●	●	●	●	●	●
Provide incentives for coaching teachers	○	○	○	○	○	○
Co-teaching and Grouping of placements						
Co-teaching - Student teacher and coaching teacher share teaching responsibilities	○	○	◐	◐	◐	◐
Grouping - Multiple student teachers placed in a single school	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐

LEGEND	
○	Limited to no progress made
◐	Some progress made (not yet meeting leading practice criteria) in certain placements
◑	Some progress made (not yet meeting leading practice criteria) in all placements
◒	Substantial progress made (meeting leading practice criteria) in certain placements
●	Substantial progress made (meeting leading practice criteria) in all placements

Public teaching colleges are focusing preparation on extended student teaching

All of Oregon’s public teaching colleges are placing more emphasis on student teaching experiences in their teacher preparation programs. The deans at all six colleges stated their Masters preparation programs have extended the length of student teaching. Each begins student teaching experiences from the start of the program and requires the student teacher to be placed in a public school for at least one year. Three of the four

undergraduate programs have also made this change, while OSU places student teachers for two school terms rather than the full year.

Public teaching colleges provide their student teachers the opportunity to debrief after they have practiced teaching methods in the classroom. For example, SOU's student teachers practice a teaching method in the classroom and then get together with other student teachers, the public teaching college staff, and/or SOU faculty to discuss the experience and lessons learned.

All of the public teaching college deans stated the colleges are coordinating academic coursework with student teaching, including five that have more closely linked coursework content with classroom practice in a timely way to reinforce the teaching method. However, EOU efforts to link coursework to school-based practice have been hampered by the substantial distances between the EOU campus and placement schools, which are in the state's most rural area. Because several weeks can pass before a teaching method learned at EOU is practiced in the classroom, coordination of coursework and classroom practice is not timely.

Public teaching colleges are making progress in developing partnerships but more can be done

Partnerships between colleges and placement school districts, which were called for by the NCATE panel, are being developed at five of the six Oregon public teaching colleges. For example, the Salem-Keizer School District and three teaching colleges in their region are working together as a team in a newly constructed demonstration elementary school. Chavez Elementary School has eight classrooms with one-way mirrors so that teaching college faculty, student teachers, and coaching teachers can observe teachers and student teachers without disturbing classroom students.

More can be done to enhance public teaching college and school district partnerships. Although public teaching colleges and placement districts are working together to assess student teachers and coordinate academic coursework with student teaching practice, several deans explained that their programs frequently do not have a say on the selection of coaching teachers. Deans also stated that they would like more opportunities to work with districts to improve professional development for coaching teachers.

In addition, EOU's dean stated that the program has tried over time to develop good relationships with their placement school districts. While he would like to develop the full partnerships recommended by the NCATE panel, this is not possible due to the distances from the teaching college to the placement school districts and the lack of funding resources.

Some partnerships between teaching colleges and K-12 public schools are the result of efforts by The Chalkboard Project, an Oregon non-profit organization dedicated to improving the State's K-12 public schools. In 2012, the Chalkboard Project launched the TeachOregon program, which provides grant funding for school districts to strengthen partnerships with

university programs and to pilot innovative models to prepare the next generation of teachers for Oregon's K-12 classrooms.

Public teaching colleges improve training but coaching teachers need better incentives

All of Oregon's public teaching college deans stated their colleges provide formal training to their staff regarding the student teaching process and their staff's oversight roles and responsibilities. In addition, all of the public teaching colleges are making progress on providing training to coaching teachers.

Before each student teacher assignment begins, teaching college staff meets informally with each coaching teacher to provide policy documents and to discuss the roles and responsibilities. College staff also provides coaching teachers ad-hoc training throughout the student teaching assignment. However, all six of the public teaching colleges acknowledged that more can be done to provide comprehensive training for coaching teachers.

The University of Portland, one Oregon's private teaching colleges, and WOU provide examples of the comprehensive training that public teaching colleges would like to offer to coaching teachers. These programs provide weeklong courses for new and returning coaching teachers that include workshops on topics such as the coaching teacher's roles and responsibilities, strategies for guiding student teachers, and strategies for co-teaching.

Several public teaching college deans stated it is increasingly difficult to find coaches for their student teachers. One reason is that coaching teachers receive little incentive or reward for participating. Five public teaching colleges provide a small monetary stipend and/or credit vouchers for district teachers to take future college courses. In addition to credit vouchers, WOU provides Professional Development Units that can be used toward teacher license renewal. However, two deans mentioned coaching teachers are not provided time within their full time schedules to work with student teachers and college staff, and in some cases are not compensated for additional time spent mentoring student teachers. Most of the deans agreed that enhancing rewards and incentives for coaching teachers could encourage more K-12 teachers to volunteer for coaching assignments.

Public teaching colleges are implementing co-teaching and grouping

Three of the state's public teaching colleges have made more progress than the others in implementing co-teaching in their student teacher placements. PSU uses co-teaching in approximately a third of its student teacher placements. WOU utilizes co-teaching in two of its placement school districts. SOU utilizes co-teaching in all placements, although primarily during one term of the student teaching experience.

Two of the remaining three teaching colleges have made some progress implementing co-teaching, but only in certain student teacher placements.

For example, OSU is in the process of establishing co-teaching in specific classrooms. In addition, co-teaching is occurring informally in the majority of U of O elementary school placements.

EOU, however, does not utilize co-teaching. Their student and coaching teachers are encouraged to utilize certain aspects of co-teaching, such as co-planning.

All six of the public teaching colleges are working to implement grouping, which involves placing multiple student teachers in the same public schools, but three have made more progress than the others. For example, nearly a quarter of the PSU student teachers last year were assigned to student teach in a single placement school with four to eight others from their program. PSU's teaching college dean stated that the program is on track to double the number of grouped placements this year. In another example, WOU pairs up to 10 student teachers in one school. WOU also places university staff at the school to reduce transportation costs.

Barriers to better student teaching

Distance is a challenge for public teaching colleges in rural areas

Public teaching colleges in rural locations are important in Oregon, where more than 30% of the state's public schools are located. Further, many student teachers want to work in rural schools after graduation. Teachers in rural school districts need to be prepared for multiple grade levels and widely varying student capabilities in a single classroom. In addition, due to funding limitations, rural schools look to hire teachers who are licensed to teach at least two subject areas.

EOU's program leadership acknowledged the importance of putting school-based practice at the center of teacher preparation and, as a result, has extended school-based teacher preparation to a full school year and provided training for teaching college staff.

However, EOU's dean explained that distances between EOU and the local school districts limit the program's ability to strengthen student teaching practices. For example, transporting teaching college staff to and from local districts is a challenge in terms of cost, time, and scheduling. This can result in the college staff making fewer visits to the placement school, leading to less classroom observation and fewer face-to-face interactions with coaching teachers and student teachers.

The dean also explained many rural K-12 schools have few teachers because of the relatively low numbers of students they serve. As a result, EOU has few K-12 teachers to coach their student teachers.

SOU employs several strategies to respond to some of the unique challenges in one particular rural school district, including:

- using teachers from the district to teach university methods courses at the placement public school to decrease transportation time and costs;
- utilizing two-way video and audio to deliver coursework to student teachers at distant K-12 schools; and
- recording student teachers' work in the classroom and sharing these videos with fellow student teachers and college staff for constructive feedback.

SOU's teaching college dean emphasized that these methods cannot replace face-to-face interactions, observations and feedback, and that there are additional costs associated with the use of technology.

Consistent funding needed to strengthen student teaching

Strengthening student teaching requires a commitment of additional work and resources by both the public teaching colleges and the placement public schools. Public teaching colleges may need additional staff to help provide comprehensive training for coaching teachers, to communicate and work closely with the placement school and district to support culture and policy change, and to work with the school district and the coaching teacher in coordinating academic coursework with student teaching. Public teaching colleges also need funding to provide meaningful incentives for public school teachers to take on the additional responsibilities of a coaching teacher and to participate in comprehensive training.

School districts also need funding to allot time within the teacher's full time schedule to coach student teachers and work with college staff. Further, resources are needed to hire substitute teachers to enable coaching teachers to work with their student teachers and college staff outside of the classroom.

Several deans stated that more state-level funding is needed to strengthen student teaching. Without it, public teacher colleges have had to rely on limited temporary grant funding to support any innovations in student teaching. In addition, decreased state funding for education over the last several years has forced public teaching colleges to discontinue some leading practices. For example, OSU's teaching college developed a pilot program with the Beaverton School District to provide six months of co-teaching experience for their student teachers. However, the pilot was discontinued after state funding ended. Additional resources would allow the public teaching colleges to expand their efforts to strengthen student teaching.

Earlier this year, the Oregon Legislature passed a bill establishing and funding The Network of Quality Teaching and Learning, whose purpose in part is to improve recruitment, preparation, induction, career advancement opportunities and support of educators. Additionally, the Oregon University System acknowledged the need for additional funding by requesting the Legislature appropriate funding to improve student teaching at the public teaching colleges. While the Legislature did not award additional funding to the Oregon University System, the Network of Quality Teaching and Learning will include \$2 million for teacher education improvements.

Recommendations

We recommend the Oregon Education Investment Board work with the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, the Oregon University System, public teaching colleges, and public school districts to:

- continue implementing leading practices in partnerships between public teaching colleges and placement school districts,
- continue to improve training, support, and incentives for coaching teachers,
- continue to strengthen partnerships between public teaching colleges and placement school districts that result in stronger clinical practices for candidates,
- develop and implement strategies to address the challenges rural public teaching colleges and school districts face, and
- document current costs and additional funding needed for public teaching colleges and partnering school districts to implement strategies that help strengthen student teaching.

Audit Results – Performance Indicators Can Help Inform Decision Making

Performance information needed about Oregon’s public teaching colleges

Performance indicators are a method for measuring the outcome of a program or policy. Measuring the effectiveness of graduates working in the public schools and summarizing the results by the graduates’ teaching college can indicate how well teaching colleges generally prepare their graduates to succeed in the workforce. These indicators could help school districts and future teachers inform their decision-making.

Administrators often hire newly graduated and licensed teachers with little classroom experience beyond what they gained from their teaching college. Information about the effectiveness of teaching college graduates could better inform these decisions. In addition, students seeking a career in teaching could use performance information when determining which of the 20 public and private teaching colleges in Oregon would best prepare them for their first classroom assignment and beyond.

Nonetheless, research has shown that performance indicators have limitations, and should be used cautiously. For instance, performance indicators alone do not identify problems, but rather help point toward areas that may need improvement. Further, performance indicators can be affected by factors that are outside the individual’s or program’s control. For example, using student achievement as an indicator of teacher effectiveness is complicated by factors outside the teacher’s control, such as the socioeconomic status of the student’s community, or the educational resources available to the student.

Performance indicators also pose other risks when used to reward or penalize individuals or programs. Instead, research suggests that indicators are best used cautiously, as one element to inform decision-making. In this context, indicators could also help initiate on-going discussions between teaching colleges and school district administrators on how to best prepare teachers to succeed in the workforce.

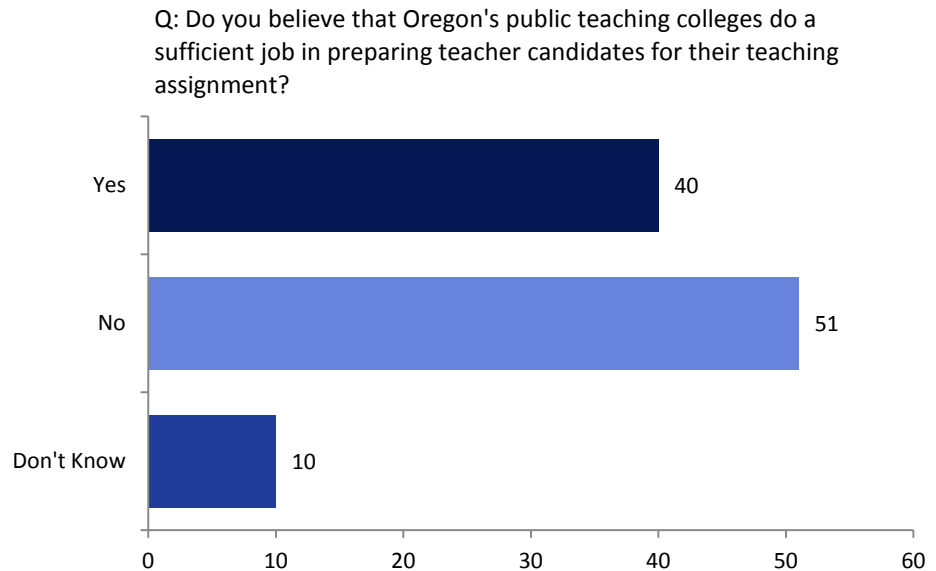
Oregon produces little information on the effectiveness of teaching graduates

No state agency or commission routinely collects or reports performance indicators on the effectiveness of graduates from the state’s public teaching colleges. The Commission has conducted a survey of Oregon’s teaching college graduates and the graduates’ employers, but does not do so regularly. In addition, only three of the six public teaching colleges report performance indicators on their graduates, and the information they provide is limited to survey results from graduates working in the field

and/or their employers. Also, results from these surveys are not easily accessible.

We surveyed all 197 school districts to obtain information about the effectiveness of public teaching colleges. We received responses from 101 administrators representing at least 90 Oregon school districts. Fifty-one of the administrators responded that they do not believe Oregon's public teaching colleges sufficiently prepare their graduates. See Figure 5.

Figure 5: Responses on Public Teaching Colleges' Effectiveness.



While this survey result indicates half of the respondents have an unfavorable view of how well the colleges prepare their students, we do not know the reasons for the administrators' dissatisfaction. More specific information, as well as objective performance indicators, could help public teaching colleges better understand the perceived shortcomings of their graduates. The administrators and the public teaching colleges could use this information to identify any areas for improvement and inform decisions when hiring new teachers.

Other states report on graduates' effectiveness

Several states are tracking and reporting performance indicators on teaching college graduates in the workforce, although individual states differ on the type and number of performance indicators they utilize. The indicators utilized by other states include:

- data on teaching college graduates' hiring and retention (graduates remaining in the teaching field over time),
- survey results from teaching colleges' graduates and their employers,
- measurements of student growth attributed to teaching college graduates, and
- results from teacher evaluations conducted by school district principals.

Ohio, Texas, and Tennessee report hiring and retention data for each of their state teaching colleges. Other states, such as Florida and New York have committed to reporting these performance indicators in the future.

California, Florida, and Kentucky are also gaining valuable information on the effectiveness of their state teaching colleges by seeking feedback from graduates in the workforce and the graduates' employers.

Louisiana, Ohio, and Tennessee attribute student growth to teaching colleges by creating "value-added" models that utilize K-12 students' state test results to measure a teacher's effectiveness. For example, Louisiana assigns a value that represents fourth through ninth-grade teacher's added effect in content areas such as math, science, and reading. The state then summarizes and reports those values by teaching college.

In 2010, Texas incorporated school principal evaluations of beginning teachers in the state's list of reported performance indicators. Texas principals are required to rate first-year teachers in areas such as managing classroom environment, teaching students with disabilities, teaching English language learners, integrating technology into instruction, and using technology with data. The Texas Education Agency aggregates the ratings of each beginning teacher by the teaching college from which they graduated.

Making performance indicators more available

Several states are utilizing internet resources to ensure that data on the performance of teaching colleges is accessible. For example, the Texas Education Agency has a webpage that includes teacher retention data and teacher evaluation results. In another example, the Boards of Regents for Louisiana and Ohio post aggregated results of their *value added* measurements on their web pages.

Recommendation

We recommend the Oregon Education Investment Board identify a state entity, such as the Oregon University System or the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, to gather, analyze, and report on the effectiveness of graduates to provide performance indicators for Oregon's public teaching colleges.

Audit Results – Stronger Teacher Licensing Requirements for Teacher Preparedness

Licenses are a requirement for Oregon’s public school teachers

The Commission, which is responsible for licensing Oregon teachers, is charged with ensuring every student in the state receives instruction from skilled and ethical teachers. To address this responsibility in part, the Commission establishes requirements and standards regarding the knowledge, skills and abilities teachers should possess.

With some exceptions, college graduates must obtain a teacher license before they can teach in public schools. Under state statutes and rules, the Commission issues initial licenses to teaching college graduates who meet the following conditions:

- are at least 18 years of age,
- obtain a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college,
- complete a teacher preparation program in Oregon or another U.S. jurisdiction,
- earn a passing score from the basic skills and subject mastery test required by the Commission, and
- receive a recommendation for licensure from their teaching college.

Other states have begun to require independent performance assessments

New York, Washington, and Wisconsin obtain independent performance assessments of their teacher candidates’ skills and knowledge by requiring them to pass the Teacher Preparation Assessment (edTPA). Stanford University created the edTPA as a tool for improving licensure processes. The tool is intended to evaluate teaching college graduates’ ability to:

- prepare and teach lesson plans to address K-12 students’ deficiencies in a content area,
- reassess students to identify growth, and
- evaluate ways to improve future lesson plans.

The edTPA includes a review of a candidate’s teaching materials and a video component, designed to document and demonstrate the candidate’s ability to effectively teach subject matter to all students. Stanford University contracted with an independent teacher testing company to review and score edTPAs the teaching candidates submit.

Initial teacher licensing can better assess candidate preparation

Oregon's teacher licensure requirements do not include an independent performance assessment to ensure initial licensure candidates are adequately prepared to meet the state's teaching standards. The Commission does not conduct a verification of this kind, nor does it require teaching colleges to obtain an independent verification themselves. Rather, the Commission relies on the teaching college that trained the licensure applicant to recommend whether the applicant can meet these standards. The absence of independent verification creates a risk that beginning teachers receiving teacher licenses may not be prepared for their first classroom assignment.

The Commission could use the work samples to confirm licensure candidates are adequately prepared

The Commission requires teaching candidates to complete at least two work samples during their time at Oregon teaching colleges. Similar to the edTPA, these work samples serve as a tool for the graduate to demonstrate their ability to plan, instruct, and assess K-12 students in a public school setting. However, Oregon work samples differ from the edTPA because an evaluator independent from the teaching college does not review them. In addition, the Commission does not require work samples to contain a video component that could be used to observe licensure candidates' classroom skills. Adding a video component and requiring an independent performance assessment would allow the Commission to use work samples as a tool for verifying that teacher candidates are adequately prepared.

Recommendations

We recommend the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission consider:

- requiring an independent performance assessment of teacher candidates' preparation as part of licensure or program completion, and
- adding a video component to the work sample requirements so that independent evaluators can observe teacher candidates' classroom skills.

In considering these recommendations, the Commission should take into account any additional costs associated with implementing and maintaining these requirements.

Audit Results – Expand Professional Development and Support for Beginning Teachers

Professional development

Research has shown that ongoing professional development contributes to a beginning teacher’s transition to the classroom and professional growth. Key elements of professional development and support for beginning teachers include:

- mentoring,
- professional learning opportunities, and
- teacher evaluations.

The State Board of Education recently adopted model core teaching standards to help determine teacher effectiveness. Beginning in July 2013, Oregon teachers will be evaluated on these expectations. Comprehensive professional development and support can help beginning teachers not only transition to the classroom, but also meet these expectations for an effective teacher.

Oregon has adopted laws and rules that acknowledge the importance of the elements of professional development – mentoring, professional learning, and teacher evaluation. Yet these statutes and rules only require school districts to perform teacher evaluations, leaving the other two elements of professional development subject to available funding.

In 2010, the Oregon Legislature established a task force to study teacher effectiveness. The task force called for high standards for professional development, and made a recommendation to the legislature to fully fund the beginning teacher mentoring program.

The Commission has also sought to enhance professional development by requiring individual teachers to complete professional development coursework or activities in order to renew their teaching license. However, such requirements are the sole responsibility of the teacher, not the school district, which does not ensure that beginning teachers receive mentoring or participate in professional learning opportunities through their school district.

Local and regional organizations have collaborated with state and local governments to improve professional development opportunities for beginning teachers. For example, the Chalkboard Project, an Oregon non-profit organization, has provided guidance and grants to school districts with a focus on increasing teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Chalkboard’s CLASS Project has challenged school districts and their teachers’ collective bargaining units to design a local strategy using four research-based components of effective teaching: expanded career paths, relevant professional development, effective performance

evaluations and new compensation models. Other groups, including the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators, regional education service districts, and the Oregon Education Association, provide professional development workshops and training to school and district administrators and teachers.

Many school districts do not offer mentoring program for beginning teachers

Mentoring program components

Mentor teachers can provide support to beginning teachers in meeting the expectations for an effective teacher. The mentoring relationship can look different from district to district, and from teacher to teacher. However, a component of any relationship should be the support and feedback the mentor teacher provides to the beginning teacher apart from the teacher's formal evaluation. For example, this can happen when the mentor teacher observes the beginning teacher in the classroom and then provides feedback.

Research suggests mentoring for beginning teachers should include key elements in order to ensure program quality, accelerate new teacher development, reduce teacher attrition, and significantly impact student learning. The New Teacher Center, a nationally-recognized organization focused on beginning teacher support, identifies the following as key elements of a high quality mentoring program for beginning teachers:

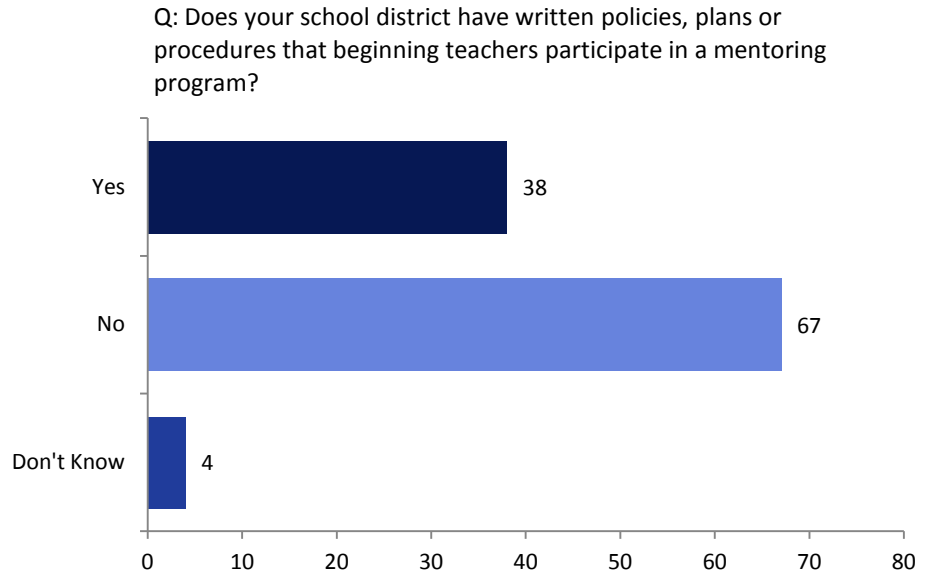
- multiyear mentor programs,
- rigorous, standards-based selection for mentor teachers,
- dedicated time for interactions between mentor teachers and beginning teachers, and
- ongoing professional development and support for mentor teachers.

The New Teacher Center also asserts mentor teachers should be effective teachers chosen through a selective process based on rigorous standards. Mentor teachers should also be trained and have ongoing support for how to be an effective mentor teacher.

Mentoring programs in Oregon

Though some school districts in Oregon offer a mentoring program for beginning teachers, most that responded to our survey reported that they do not have policies in place for mentoring. We surveyed 197 districts and received 109 responses regarding mentoring. Sixty-seven of the 109 responses indicated that their districts did not have formal plans for beginning teachers to participate in a mentoring program. See Figure 6.

Figure 6: Responses on Mentoring Programs



Oregon statutes acknowledge the importance of mentoring for beginning teachers, but they do not require that school districts provide such a program. Therefore, individual school districts decide whether to offer a mentoring program for beginning teachers, and what that program includes.

In 2007, the Oregon Legislature directed the State Board of Education to establish the Beginning Teacher and Administrator Mentorship Program (also known as the Mentorship Program). The goal of the Mentorship Program is to provide support and services for beginning teachers and administrators that result in quality instruction and leadership, student achievement, and retention of new teachers.

Salem-Keizer Public Schools, for example, stated they have used the mentorship program funding to hire six current teachers to serve as full-time mentors, allowing those teachers to devote dedicated time and offer feedback to their beginning teachers. However, some school districts report they previously had a mentoring program, but discontinued it due to limited funding. Other school districts mentioned the difficulty of finding teachers to serve as mentors, and have instead looked to local retired teachers to provide support.

For districts that do offer a mentoring program, components vary and do not always align with leading practices. For example, some programs last for only one year, some are not mandatory, some do not have selection criteria for mentors, some do not have ongoing training or support for mentors, and some do not provide dedicated time for mentors to meet with their beginning teacher.

Professional learning opportunities vary among school districts

Professional learning components

Research suggests that beginning teachers should engage in meaningful, intensive, and ongoing professional learning and collaboration for improved teaching. This should focus on creating an environment for learning and professional growth, and allowing for collaboration among teachers to identify ways to improve student achievement.

Learning Forward, a nationally recognized non-profit association of educators, has developed widely accepted standards for professional learning. These standards outline the characteristics of effective professional learning in order to increase teacher effectiveness and student results. See Figure 7.

Figure 7: Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning

Learning Communities	Professional learning occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.
Leadership	Professional learning requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.
Resources	Professional learning requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for teacher learning.
Data	Professional learning uses a variety of sources and types of student, teacher, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.
Learning Designs	Professional learning integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.
Implementation	Professional learning applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.
Outcomes	Professional learning aligns its outcomes with teacher performance and student curriculum standards.

Oregon's model core teaching standards acknowledge that professional learning is a cycle of continuous self-improvement and is enhanced by leadership, collegial support, and collaboration. Standards for professional learning, like those proposed by Learning Forward, help to ensure that time spent on professional growth is meaningful, and is focused on student achievement and professional growth.

In four states where students made significant gains in performance – Colorado, New Jersey, Missouri, and Vermont – teacher participation in professional development was high. Local school districts and school committees created and implemented professional development standards,

and monitored satisfaction levels with the professional development opportunities provided. Though each state's approach to professional development varied, all four states required mentoring programs for beginning teachers, and focused on teacher collaboration and continuous improvement in order to improve teacher capacity and student outcomes.

Professional learning opportunities in Oregon

While many schools districts in Oregon are dedicating time and resources to creating ongoing professional learning opportunities, other school districts still struggle to find the time to offer, much less plan for, professional learning.

Of the 100 survey responses we received regarding professional learning opportunities, 71 respondents reported they have embedded professional learning time into their school schedules. Many school districts also dedicate time each week for professional learning communities, allowing teachers to collaborate on curriculum, examine student performance data, create learning assessments, and share instructional practices. For example, the Bend-La Pine School District has rearranged their school calendar to dedicate one and a half hours each week for all teachers to meet together.

While the Learning Forward standards have been adopted by the State Board of Education and the Commission, many school districts still told us that they do not set aside time for professional learning. Some school district administrators do not think it is possible for them to do so. Budget cuts and furloughs have resulted in the loss of dedicated time for professional development, sometimes in order to preserve school contact days with students.

Superintendents stated that in addition to time for teacher collaboration, teachers learn best when they observe each other teach. Some school districts allow teachers to go on "learning walks" that involve watching colleagues teach in the classroom and observing their instructional strategies. Other school districts stated that while they would like to offer teachers the opportunity to observe other teachers, they might not have a sufficient number of substitute teachers to provide these opportunities.

School districts have made progress to meet new teacher evaluation requirements

New federal waiver and state requirements for teacher evaluations

Teacher evaluation systems are designed to support the professional growth of the individual teacher. Research suggests teacher evaluations should be based on a set of standards, such as Oregon's model core teaching standards, which outline what an effective teacher should know and demonstrate to help all students improve, grow, and learn. Research also suggests meaningful teacher evaluations should use multiple measures

to evaluate performance, which not only helps school districts measure teacher effectiveness, but also give teachers the direction and support needed to improve their practice.

In 2012, Oregon received a flexibility waiver from the U.S. Department of Education's Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). As part of the waiver, Oregon required all school districts to develop local teacher and administrator evaluation and support systems. A pilot for these systems is to be implemented in 2013-2014 school year, with full implementation required in the 2014-2015 school year.

In addition to the federal waiver requirements, the Oregon Legislature passed a bill requiring school districts to adopt core teaching standards and to develop or modify their evaluation systems to align with federal requirements. The state requirement for districts to develop their evaluation systems is set for July 2013, a year ahead of the federal implementation deadline.

As part of the federal waiver application, the Department helped develop guidelines for local evaluation and support systems. The state guidelines, known as the Oregon Framework for Teacher and Administrator Evaluation and Support Systems (Framework), outline the federal requirements for a teacher evaluation system, but allow school districts the flexibility in their local design and implementation.

Progress in meeting new teacher evaluation requirements

The required elements and criteria set forth in the Framework help ensure that teacher evaluation systems support student learning and the professional growth of teachers. Many school districts have already begun to align their teacher evaluation systems with the Framework requirements. As of July 2013, the Department had received assurances from most school districts that they have created an educator evaluation system in line with state requirements.

Challenges to providing professional development

Through interviews and our survey of more than 100 school district administrators, we identified three significant challenges to offering comprehensive professional development: lack of consistent funding, limited guidance from the Department on leading practices for professional development, and barriers posed by geographic location.

Many school district administrators acknowledged that they struggle to provide professional development given current resources and constraints; and struggle to find the time or funding to create a plan or strategy for how to provide professional development.

Lack of consistent funding

In response to our survey and interviews, many school district administrators cited the lack of funding as one of the main challenges to offering sufficient professional development. In Oregon, most school districts do not receive consistent funding for professional development from the state. Yet funding is often needed to hire mentors, pay for substitutes while teachers meet with mentors, observe teachers in the classroom, attend trainings, and assist with travel when professional development opportunities occur outside of the school district. With budget cuts, school district administrators said they have to weigh the need for professional development against other needs, such as hiring or retaining staff, and preserving school days.

There is some federal funding available to school districts for professional development. Through the U.S. Department of Education, grant funds are available to school districts to increase high quality teaching and support professional development for teachers. Many school districts that receive grant funds rely primarily on these funds to offer professional development. However, several administrators mentioned even with this funding source, they are challenged to find sufficient funding for professional development.

The Oregon Legislature has provided funding to improve mentoring, but it is not sufficient to serve all districts. Since the 2007-2009 biennium, the Legislature appropriated approximately \$5 million each biennium to the Mentorship Program, but the funding supports the participation of only some districts. For example, only 17 of 197 school districts participated in the Mentorship Program during the 2012-2013 school year. The recent establishment of The Network of Quality Teaching and Learning provides some additional funding for the beginning teacher and administrator Mentorship Program.

In order to offer a quality mentor program, school districts need sufficient funding. Currently, the Department estimates that providing a high quality mentor to support a beginning teacher costs a school district up to \$5,000 per teacher each year. School district administrators acknowledge that classroom observations and walkthroughs with a mentor have been shown to be effective as a learning tool. However, a school district must often pay for a substitute teacher when a beginning teacher or the mentor teacher is away from their class, something not every school district can afford.

Some school districts have used grant funding to redesign professional development for teachers. The Chalkboard Project's CLASS Project has provided grant funding to design a system focused on teacher effectiveness and, in some districts, to fund their mentoring program, professional learning, and/or teacher evaluation systems. Though funding is relatively small, one school district administrator stated that without the funding from Chalkboard, the school district would not have been able to even create a plan for professional development.

In 2009, the Oregon Legislature established the Oregon Educator Professional Development Commission to provide technical assistance to local school districts for creating professional development plans and to serve as a clearinghouse for best practice examples. While some educators were hopeful about the commission's work, the commission disbanded due to budget cuts.

Limited support and guidance from the Department

School district administrators throughout Oregon want more support from the Department in how they can offer professional development to teachers given their specific needs and resources. The Department's Office of Educational Improvement and Innovation aims to provide guidance and support to Oregon's districts and schools, but is almost entirely federally funded to administer and operate grants to local school districts. As such, it is focused primarily on compliance with federal requirements.

The Department does provide some guidance to school districts as it relates to specific grant funding. For example, through the Mentorship Program, the Department has offered training for mentor teachers in Oregon in line with the New Teacher Center standards. However, such training is required only for those few school districts receiving grant funding. Other school districts can participate in the training, but must fund the cost of travel themselves.

Other efforts within the Department provide guidance and training to school districts on specific issues, such as implementing common core state standards, providing special education services, or training teachers in the effective use of data to target instruction to the needs of individual students. However, Department administrators have expressed doubts about the Department's ability to provide sufficient support to school districts for professional development.

School district administrators stated that they would like support and guidance from the Department in the form of sharing how other school districts offer professional development opportunities. Further, 62 of 113 survey responses acknowledged that the Department has not provided them with guidance on how to offer professional development opportunities and, in some cases that the guidance that was provided was insufficient. See Figures 8 and 9.

Figure 8: Responses on Department Guidance on Professional Development

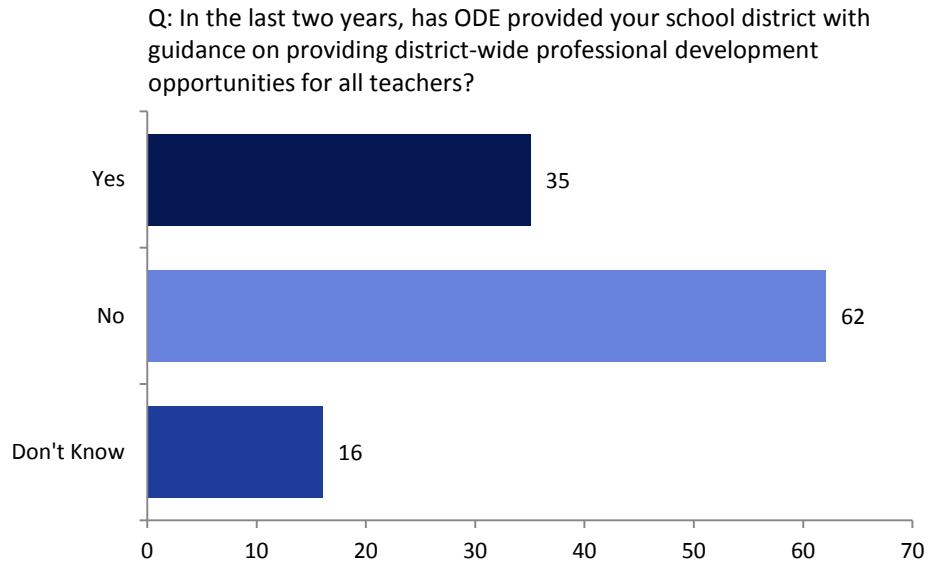
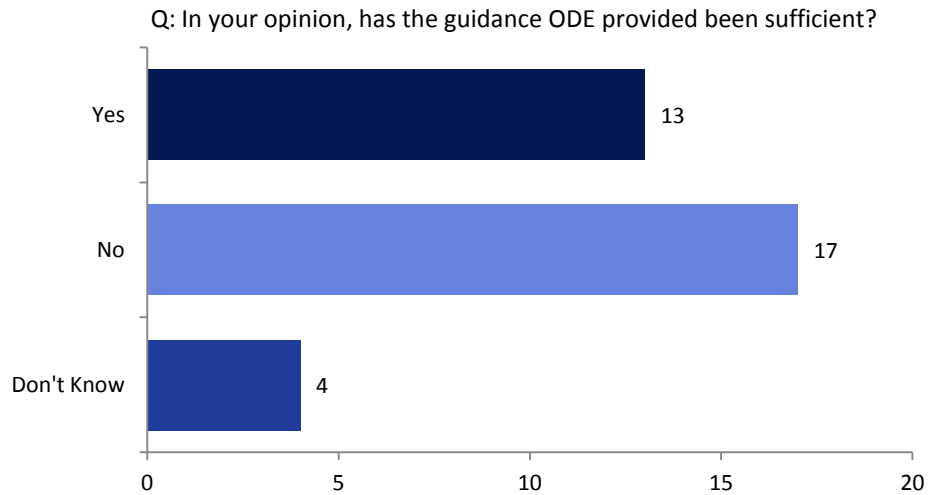


Figure 9: Responses on Department Guidance on Professional Development



The Department has offered guidance to some school districts in designing their teacher evaluation systems in response to the federal flexibility waiver from ESEA requirements, as well as state legislation. It has also provided templates and examples of successful district evaluation systems on its website. However, the guidance provided has not been timely or complete. Several school districts were previously unaware of the pending state deadline to create a local evaluation system and some districts did not meet the deadline. Department administrators said they have contacted those districts and are working with them to meet the state requirements for developing a local evaluation system.

Small and rural school districts

In rural areas of the state, school districts face additional barriers to offering training and workshops for professional development. For example, some school district administrators in southern and eastern Oregon describe difficulties finding local experts to provide training to teachers, or to serve as a mentor teacher. It is expensive for these districts to send teachers to other areas of the state, such as Salem or Portland, to receive training or observe another teacher in their subject or grade level, given travel costs and the cost of paying for a substitute while that teacher is away from the classroom. Additionally, some rural school districts report having trouble finding substitutes in their communities.

Some schools have only one teacher per subject per grade level, making it nearly impossible to form teacher collaboration teams around a common curriculum. Some school district administrators report they have difficulty providing a mentoring program for beginning teachers given the low number of teachers in their school district and the infrequency of beginning teachers.

Some administrators in rural Oregon spoke about creative ways they have encouraged mentoring, support and teacher collaboration. This includes school districts collaborating with nearby districts for training, workshops, and professional development. Other school district administrators stated they often rely on the training provided by their Education Service District to meet their professional development needs, given scarce resources.

Recommendation

We recommend the Oregon Education Investment Board:

- Work with the Oregon State Board of Education and the Oregon Department of Education to develop standards and guidelines for professional development school districts should provide to beginning K-12 teachers.
- Continue to work with the Oregon Legislature and individual school districts to address funding needs for professional development opportunities including securing consistent funding for:
 - districts to offer high quality mentoring for beginning teachers,
 - districts to develop sustainable long-term plans for identifying and offering needed professional development opportunities in line with federal, state, higher education, school district, and individual goals, and
 - more regional professional development opportunities for local school districts in geographically remote areas.

In addition, we recommend the Oregon Department of Education:

- Create a method for guiding and supporting local school districts to offer meaningful professional development aligned with Oregon's Model Core Teaching Standards. Methods could include:
 - researching standards and best practices on mentoring, and professional learning opportunities,
 - sharing in-state models from local school districts in line with those standards, and
 - encouraging the alignment of federal, state, higher education, school district, and individual goals for professional development.
- Coordinate with local school districts to develop district-specific strategies that address the necessary elements of an effective professional development system while still meeting individual district's needs.
- Continue to work with local school districts to help them create teacher evaluation systems that are in line with state and federal requirements and deadlines.

Objectives, Scope and Methodology

Our audit objective was to determine whether state or local actions could be taken to improve preparation and professional development for beginning K-12 teachers. Our work focused on actions that strengthen student teaching practices, increase confidence in Oregon teaching colleges and their graduates, and improve professional opportunities Oregon's school districts provide to K-12 teachers.

To address our audit objective, we interviewed administrators and staff from Oregon's school districts and public teaching colleges, the Oregon Department of Education, Oregon University System, Oregon Education Investment Board, Oregon Board of Education, and the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission. We also interviewed managers and staff from education stakeholder groups such as Confederation of School Administrators, Oregon School Board Association, Oregon Education Association, and Chalkboard Project. In addition, we researched leading practices regarding teacher preparation, performance indicators for teaching colleges, teacher licensing procedures, and professional development opportunities provided to K-12 teachers. We compared leading practices to practices in place in Oregon's public teaching colleges and school districts.

Further, we surveyed school district administrators a) to understand the diverse policies, guidelines, and practices that school districts across Oregon have regarding professional development and support for beginning teachers, b) to identify best practices as well as barriers that school districts face in providing professional development for beginning teachers and c) to understand concerns regarding the effectiveness of Oregon's public teaching colleges.

Through research and preliminary interviews with school district superintendents, we drafted survey questions in line with leading practices on professional development for beginning teachers possible barriers to offering professional development. We also included questions on the preparation provided by Oregon's public teaching colleges. We vetted the survey questions with representatives of Oregon Department of Education and three school districts.

We distributed an electronic survey to K-12 superintendents for Oregon's 197 school districts and received 116 responses on behalf of 90 of those districts. District respondents included superintendents, administrators of curriculum and instructional programs, Human Resources personnel, school principals and other knowledgeable district administrators and staff representing both urban and rural districts. We did not analyze the survey questions or the responses to those questions to identify survey bias or statistical significance.

We also utilized results from a 2012 survey the Department conducted to identify the progress school districts made in meeting the state and federal teacher evaluation requirements.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Response to the Oregon Secretary of State's Audit Report: Additional Efforts and Resources Needed to Improve Teacher Preparation and Professional Development

Dr. Nancy Golden, Interim Chief Education Officer

The Secretary of State's Audit Report entitled *Education: Additional Efforts and Resources Needed to Improve Teacher Preparation and Professional Development* focuses welcome attention on the resources needed to support strong preparation of future teachers. Several of the recommendations in the report closely mirror HB 3233, Oregon Education Investment Board's proposed legislation that passed during the 2013 legislative session creating a Network for Quality Teaching and Learning.

Strengthening Student Teaching

We agree with the importance of the Audit Report's first finding that calls for elevating the level of clinical experiences offered in the preparation of our new teachers and finding effective ways to better prepare, support and fund classroom teachers who serve as coaches for student teachers. That's why OEIB is partnering with Chalkboard to pilot innovative university/district clinical partnerships. The resulting best practices and supporting policies will be shared statewide to help expand high quality clinical experiences across all of the state's 19 teacher preparation programs.

OEIB is sensitive to the needs of Oregon's geographically diverse communities and is committed to addressing specific clinical experience needs unique to our rural communities. This will also entail a closer examination of best practices from teacher preparation pilots funded this biennium that can inform policy around consistent and equitable funding needed to sustain high quality clinical experiences.

Performance Indicators for Decision Making

The Audit Report rightly notes the lack of systematic and timely data on the effectiveness of graduates from our teacher preparation programs. The solution lies in close collaboration between multiple state agencies, teacher preparation programs and the district hiring offices. HB 3233 includes an initiative to help institutions better track their graduates, support timely and systematic feedback loops from employers and graduates and also create regular documentation on educator workforce demographics as well as supply and demand within the profession. As part of this work OEIB is prepared to convene a work group involving TSPC, ODE, OSPA, and OACTE to develop a more effective way to communicate the results of performance indicators to potential students and to inform the preparation programs' continuous improvement efforts.

Stronger Teacher Licensing Requirements for Teacher Preparedness

As a result of rules passed in 2011 by the Oregon TSPC, all teacher preparation programs are now being asked to meet rigorous program standards that mirror national accreditation. We applaud the alignment of TSPC's standards with Core Teaching Standards that also serve as the basis for the Oregon Framework for Teacher and Administrator Evaluation and Support Systems.

We acknowledge that Oregon has served as a national pioneer in the area of performance assessments documenting a student teacher's ability to teach in ways that link to students' learning. However, like Linda Darling Hammond, we believe that Oregon's required Teacher Work Samples must be improved to offer more valid and reliable data to inform licensing and accreditation. As Dr. Darling Hammond noted in correspondence to Governor Kitzhaber:

Fortunately, efforts are already underway [in Oregon] to revise the TWS. Modest investments in assessment refinement, validation, scoring calibration, and integration into program approval and licensing could greatly improve teacher effectiveness through a tool that leverages ongoing system improvements.

That's why HB 3233 includes funding to support development of a common evaluation rubric and statewide process featuring blind scoring of a stratified sample of candidate work samples to ensure fidelity and an independent evaluation of candidate performance. This initial funding provided by the Network will help defray the start up costs for a state system that can then be collectively sustained by the teacher preparation programs in Oregon. OEIB looks forward to working closely with TSPC to identify policy and supports that help Oregon's teacher preparation programs adopt a more effective approach to instrument and implementation fidelity and to integrate either an observation tool or video component within the Teacher Work Sample.

Expand Professional Development and Support for Beginning Teachers

We recognize that high quality teacher preparation must be accompanied by support for newly hired teachers during their early career years. Working in partnership with both public and private partners, OEIB and ODE staff already have issued an RFP that in essence doubles the funding from the previous biennium to implement high quality mentoring programs for new teachers and principals. We look forward to reporting on the results of this investment on the support and retention of highly effective new teachers.

The Network for Quality Teaching and Learning resulting from HB 3233 creates a comprehensive system of support for educators and supports a culture of leadership, professionalism, continuous improvement and excellence for teachers and leaders. Using nationally recognized standards for professional development as guideposts, ODE

is beginning to issue RFPs and contracts that support districts' professional development needs including:

- Full implementation of an Educator Evaluation and Support System in every school district
- Access to instructional resources and embedded time for teachers to collaborate and share high leverage practices aligned with the common core and closing the achievement gap
- Alignment of the necessary elements of an effective professional development system that address individual district needs
- Expanded design and implementation of District Collaboration Grants in more districts that promote
 - Career pathways for teachers and administrators;
 - Evaluation processes for teachers and administrators;
 - Compensation models for teachers and administrators; and
 - Enhanced professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators.
- An interactive portal system that provides anywhere/anytime access to instructional resources and creates professional development networks that support educators' continued professional development

In summary, the timing of the Secretary of State's Audit Report follows on the heels of a strategic effort this year by legislators, K-20 institutions, professional associations, and non-profit foundations within Oregon to take state and local actions to improve preparation and professional development for beginning teachers of kindergarten through twelfth grade. It is heartening to see this level of attention focused on our educators from so many sectors, as we know that teachers represent the key to help us achieve Oregon's 40/40/20 goal. With support from the Oregon Education Investment Board and our partners, we are poised to make significant strides in all of the areas identified in the Secretary of State's Audit Report and ultimately to make a difference for Oregon's K-12 students.



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August 15, 2013

Gary Blackmer
Oregon Audits Division
Public Service Building, Ste 500
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Mr. Blackmer:

The Oregon University System would like to extend our appreciation to the Secretary of State Audit Division for their detailed work and for highlighting the need to continually strengthen educator preparation in Oregon. We appreciate your balanced assessment of the public Educator Preparation programs in Oregon, pointing out strengths and progress while also noting areas for possible improvement. The recommendations hit upon significant points that have promise for improving teacher quality in the state, both new teachers and current professionals. These recommendations provide a basis for serious discussion about legislative and agency actions, including actions by school districts and teaching colleges. The recommendations are in line with the direction that the public Educator Preparation programs are moving, although some recommendations may be expensive or difficult to address. Below we comment on two areas, not specifically addressed to the Oregon University System, but that will impact Educator Preparation programs in OUS institutions: Performance Indicators and Teacher Work Samples/EdTPA. We end with a response to the recommendations directed to the Oregon University System.

Performance Indicators

We especially appreciate your balanced discussion of performance indicators, acknowledging both the strengths and the problems. Performance indicators are useful provided that they are of high enough quality that they reflect some reality that informs teacher preparation programs. Many contextual variables wash out teacher preparation effects very quickly that to link from, for example, student achievement scores back through to preparation programs, may be a bridge too far to provide useful information back to the teacher preparation programs. A caution to consider unintended outcomes; for instance, some performance indicator systems may inadvertently punish programs for preparing teachers to work in tough school settings. This is by no means meant to suggest that we do not believe in the potential benefits of using performance indicators; rather, we want to underscore that they are of the highest quality possible and constructed in ways to provide meaningful and usable data back to educator preparation programs.

The Oregon Associate of Colleges of Teacher Education (OACTE) recently released a Request for Proposals seeking an agency to manage a statewide employer satisfaction survey. The design will ensure that Educator Preparation Programs will be provided state averages and their own average for each item to be used for program improvement. This work is undertaken by both the public and private Schools and Colleges of Education.

Teacher Work Samples/EdTPA

We are grateful that in the report you acknowledge the good points of teacher work samples, the limitations, and the potential of the EdTPA. The report highlights the *independence* characteristic of the EdTPA; we believe that independence is not the most important criteria when evaluating teacher performance assessments. Rather, a valid and reliable assessment that is able to take into account the context in which the work is performed is as important as independence of scorer.

A strength of the teacher work sample process is the program improvement value obtained through scoring candidates performance assessments from your own programs. Programs learn enormous amounts about what candidates can and cannot do well. Further, ongoing supervisor observations of a candidate can provide a more rigorous and valid measure of student performance than a short video. A sub-group of OACTE, in partnership with TSPC, recently released a technical assistance RFP seeking help in strengthening the teacher work sample. We are committed to continuing work with our partners at TSPC to develop a valid and reliable teacher performance assessment system.

Important limitations of the edTPA that were not raised in the report include:

1. Independent evaluation necessarily takes substantial time to complete, and does not provide immediate or timely feedback to candidates like college supervisors can do.
2. High stakes independent evaluation means that the candidate has no opportunity to revise their work sample. Once it is submitted, it is a pass or fail situation. When a student fails, there is no timely recourse, which could result in serious career setbacks for candidates and grievance situations for colleges.
3. There are significant logistical difficulties involved with sharing digital work samples and videos with independent evaluators, including: obtaining sharing permissions, capturing high-enough quality video, video editing, uploading to external website.

Finally, emerging evidence from those experienced with the edTPA indicates that it transforms educator preparation programs into focusing on passing the test (Madeloni & Gorlewski, 2013). Evidence also indicates that edTPA standardizes teacher education. Among the results of this standardizing of a “value-free” approach is an undermining of a social justice approach to education (Au, 2013). Some OUS institutions pilot tested the edTPA and came away with concerns about its validity.

Recommendations Addressed to the Oregon University System

We recommend the Oregon Education Investment Board work with the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, the Oregon University System, public teaching colleges, and public school districts to:

- continue implementing leading practices in partnerships between public teaching colleges and placement school districts,

OUS Response: We agree with this recommendation and we continue to study leading practices to strengthen partnerships between teaching colleges and placement school districts. Through our involvement in national associations specific to educator preparation, such as the American Association of Teacher Education (AACTE), and national associations that emphasize educator preparation, such as the State Higher Education Executive Organization (SHEEO) and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), we are always on the lookout for new practices to improve partnerships.

- continue to improve training, support, and incentives for coaching teachers,

OUS Response: We agree that coaching teachers are a key component of a high quality clinical experience. As the audit report highlights, OUS Schools and Colleges of Education can do more to provide comprehensive training and incentives for coaching teachers. Training and incentives come at a cost, however. It will be incumbent upon the OUS Schools and Colleges of Education to work together with the OEIB and the Oregon Department of Education to identify sources of consistent funding to support the training and incentives for coaching teachers.

- continue to strengthen partnerships between public teaching colleges and placement school districts that result in stronger clinical practices for candidates,

OUS Response: We agree and we will continue to strengthen partnerships between public teaching colleges and placement school districts. Three OUS Schools/Colleges of Education were recent recipients of Chalkboard TeachOregon awards, designed to bring together school districts and universities to strengthen teacher preparation. Again, we point out that it will be incumbent upon the OUS Schools and Colleges of Education to work together with the OEIB and the Department of Education to identify sources of consistent funding to support partnerships between school districts and universities.

- develop and implement strategies to address the challenges rural public teaching colleges and school districts face, and

OUS Response: We agree with this recommendation. During the 2013-2014 academic year we will work with the public teaching colleges at Eastern Oregon University and Southern Oregon University, the OEIB, the Department of Education, and TSPC to develop strategies to address the challenges faced by rural public teaching colleges and school districts. We anticipate beginning to implement strategies in the 2014-2015 academic year.

- document current costs and additional funding needed for public teaching colleges and partnering school districts to implement strategies that help strengthen student teaching.

OUS Response: We agree with this recommendation. The OUS Schools and Colleges of Education can document current costs for carrying out student teaching, in partnership with school districts. Further, the Schools and Colleges of Education can map out the additional funding needed to strengthen these partnerships. The Deans continue to work together to share information and best practices related to compensation and training for cooperating teachers and the support necessary to maintain and grow partnerships with school districts.

In closing, we thank you for all your Division's work and insights, which will be considered carefully as we work with OEIB, TSPC, and the Oregon Department of Education to strengthen educator preparation in the state of Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Marrongelle".

Karen Marrongelle, Ph.D.
Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Strategies
Oregon University System



Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

Teacher Standards and Practices Commission

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August 15, 2013

Sheronne Blasi
Audit Manager
Oregon Audits Division
255 Capitol Street NE, Suite 500
Salem OR 97310

RE: Educating and Supporting Beginning Teachers Audit Report

Dear Ms. Blasi:

It is the mission and responsibility of the Teachers Standards and Practices Commission to monitor the quality of Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs). This includes establishing standards for curriculum, clinical practices and accountability measures.

The Commission is committed to working with the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB), EPPs and districts partners on strengthening the clinical practice for pre-service teachers.

The Commission is committed to adopting a comprehensive, valid, reliable and fair teacher performance assessment designed to evaluate a pre-service teacher's readiness to teach. The assessment will also provide evidence guiding program renewal, strengthen accreditation and evaluation of program effectiveness, and serve as a requirement for program completion.

The Commission takes responsibility for development of statewide performance measures for EPPs and commits to providing regular reports to the OEIB.

Sincerely,

Victoria Chamberlain
Executive Director



About the Secretary of State Audits Division

The Oregon Constitution provides that the Secretary of State shall be, by virtue of her office, Auditor of Public Accounts. The Audits Division exists to carry out this duty. The division reports to the elected Secretary of State and is independent of the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches of Oregon government. The division audits all state officers, agencies, boards, and commissions and oversees audits and financial reporting for local governments.

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This report, a public record, is intended to promote the best possible management of public resources. Copies may be obtained from:

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The courtesies and cooperation extended by officials and employees of the Oregon University System, the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, and the Oregon Department of Education during the course of this audit were commendable and sincerely appreciated.