

Executive Summary

For the reporting year, please provide a summary of your State's (1) accomplishments, (2) lessons learned, (3) challenges, and (4) strategies you will implement to address those challenges.

Oregon continues to strive for success and excellence in developing a world class education system that starts early and achieves results. In 2010, the state adopted the 40-40-20 goal: by 2025, 40% of adult Oregonians will earn a bachelor's degree or higher, 40% will earn an associate's degree or post-secondary credential, and 20% will earn a high school diploma or equivalent.

Achieving this goal requires a systemic transformation in how our early learning and childhood systems operate. Under the vision and leadership of former Governor John Kitzhaber, the Oregon legislature, and the governor-appointed Early Learning Council, Oregon has made and continues to make great strides towards ensuring that children are ready for kindergarten, raised in healthy, stable and attached families, and are supported through coordinated, aligned and family-centered systems. So invested is our state in achieving these goals, the 2015-17 Governor's Requested Budget includes a \$135 million increase in investments in early childhood programs. These investments, which intentionally build off the infrastructure and quality-supports that Oregon has developed under the Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge Grant (RTT-ELCG), will significantly expand access to quality early learning programs.

The RTT-ELCG contributes to these efforts by helping to lay a solid foundation for systems transformation that will support the state in reaching ambitious and achievable goals.

The 2014 Annual Performance Report provides an overview of Oregon RTT-ELCG activities for year two of the grant, highlighting continued strides towards building a robust, high quality learning system for our youngest children:

1. The establishment of Oregon's Early Learning Hubs, community-based and community-owned coordinators of early learning services, creates a strong local infrastructure to accomplish our RTT-ELCG goals.
2. Oregon's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) is creating a defined pathway for quality improvement that is critical for systems transformation. A focus on highly qualified staff, strong educational components, developmentally appropriate environments, and quality family supports is guided by the accepted standards of the TQRIS.
3. The statewide implementation of the kindergarten assessment in all 197 of Oregon's school districts is an important catalyst for establishing a measurable, concrete link between early learning and K-12. These data is used to identify gaps, assist in decisions on how to allocate resources, and monitor statewide progress.
4. The confluence of transformations occurring in Oregon in the areas of health, human services, early learning, and K-12 education has created opportunities for alignment, coordination and shared accountability across systems.
5. The creation and adoption of the Equity Lens developed by the Oregon Education Investment Board is driving changes in how early learning programs address the myriad needs of diverse children across the state. An intentional focus on equity as both a guiding principle and standard is essential to meeting our early learning system goals and assuring accountability to our most vulnerable populations.

Our 2014 early learning developments, accomplishments, and challenges are organized through the lens of the five key areas of reform defined by the federal RTT-ELCG competition:

Establishing Successful State Systems

The mission of the early learning system is to support Oregon's children to enter kindergarten ready to succeed; ensure children are raised in healthy, stable and attached families and integrate resources and services statewide into a coordinated system for parents and families.

In 2012, the Oregon Legislature passed and the Governor signed legislation establishing the Early Learning Council (ELC) as the single body charged with guiding early learning and development programs in Oregon.

In 2013, further legislation created the Early Learning Division within the Oregon Department of Education, streamlining Early Learning and Development Programs under one agency and codifying the transformation of the delivery system through the establishment of Early Learning Hubs.

Oregon has launched a new system of community-based and community-owned coordinators of early learning services called Early Learning Hubs. Hubs are responsible for bringing together partners from early childhood, K-12 education, health, human services, and the business sectors around a common vision and shared measurable outcomes for children and families. There are currently twelve Hubs, with four more to be added before June 2015. At that point, there will be sixteen Early Learning Hubs covering the entire territory of the state. The Early Learning Hubs are directed by statute to accomplish three specific goals: (1) create an early childhood system that is aligned, coordinated and family-centered; (2) ensure that children arrive at school ready to succeed; and (3) ensure that Oregon's young children live in families that are healthy, stable and attached.

While communities have the flexibility to design their own operational model and set of strategies - acknowledging that a "one size fits all" approach to transformation doesn't work - each Hub shares the following responsibilities:

- Identify children at risk of arriving at kindergarten unprepared for school;
- Work with families to identify specific needs;
- Connect families to the supports or services that most meet their needs;
- Work across traditional silos; and
- Account for outcomes collectively and cost effectively.

Early Learning Hubs are a key, foundational strategy for system redesign that will move our state from a "scattershot" of well-intentioned but isolated programs to a coordinated system, aligned at the community and state level, dedicated to the needs of children and their families, and focused on results.

Oregon's accomplishments are highlighted below:

- The Early Learning Council and Oregon Health Policy Board have teamed to create a joint subcommittee to work together to ensure all children in Oregon are healthy and ready to succeed in Kindergarten. By integrating health care and early learning policies, sharing resources, and aligning goals, the joint subcommittee is helping children in Oregon get the health care and the education they need to thrive and be healthy.

- Since the launch in 2013 the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System has reached 25% of licensed child care programs and 67% of Head Start programs in the state within two years. This rapid penetration rate has resulted with increased attainment of professional development credentials and has laid a strong foundation to impact the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs (ELDP) serving Oregon's children.
- The Early Learning Council's Equity Subcommittee created a report outlining recommendations to operationalize the Equity Lens within Oregon's early learning policy, programs, and systems transformation. The report includes recommendations and tools in three categories: culturally responsive practice, early learning operating systems, and data and resource allocation.
- The Early Learning Division continues to build upon a solid relationship with the Oregon Health Authority's Transformation Center, a key partner in developmental screening efforts.

While significant progress was made in years one and two of the RTT-ELCG, we continue to address challenges to ensure rapid adjustment occurs while establishing successful state systems. While the Early Learning Division has hired key staff, as a new Division made up of an amalgamation of programs from multiple state structures, ELD is actively working to establish consistent operational processes that will support efforts to meet timelines and targets within our State Plan.

Defining High-Quality, Accountable Programs

Oregon has identified the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS), by helping to expand the supply and access to high-quality ELDP, as a key strategy for ensuring kindergarten readiness. The common language created through the establishment of the TQRIS will help to bridge understanding among parents, ELDP, and policy makers. Ongoing engagement with programs and the workforce is critical to communicating the benefits of being a part of the TQRIS. Since moving from field test to statewide rollout of the TQRIS, Oregon has begun linking the TQRIS to other initiatives, such as the Early Learning Hubs. Early Learning Hub accountability metrics include participation rates in the TQRIS by ELDP in their community.

Oregon's accomplishments are highlighted below:

- Following a limited pilot in eight targeted counties, the TQRIS expanded its field test statewide in March 2014 and ELDP across the state are now encouraged and incentivized to participate. In this short time period, 25% of Oregon's licensed child care and 67% of Head Start programs are engaged with the TQRIS and participation continues to expand.
- The coaching model to support ELDP was refined to target participation in TQRIS by ELDP serving Children with High Needs. Oregon has developed coaches for ELDP serving teen parents, parent substance abuse programs, and children with disabilities.
- Focused Child Care Networks in six Early Learning Hubs were launched in 2014 to support building a supply of ELDP in underserved communities. Additional Focused Child Care Networks will be launched in partnership with the Early Learning Hubs to ensure Children with High Needs have access to high quality early learning experiences.

Oregon is taking time to assess equity within the TQRIS and ensure that racially, ethnically and linguistically diverse child care providers, children and families are prioritized and supported. The Early Learning Division has developed a plan to address specific equity concerns and ensure that equity is at the heart of the work in the

future. Addressing equity within the TQRIS will entail deepening community engagement around quality early learning experiences, inviting greater representation from underserved communities into TQRIS decision-making bodies, and evaluating TQRIS standards with a focus on cultural responsiveness. Oregon will be implementing this plan over the remainder of the grant.

Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

Oregon has made significant progress to collectively impact positive outcomes for children. Utilizing a cross system approach with clear shared goals to ensure children are ready for kindergarten, raised in healthy, stable and attached families, and are supported through coordinated, aligned and family-centered systems. These goals have brought together health care, human services, higher education, and the K-12 public school system to work together across systems and funding streams to achieve these goals.

- The Early Learning Council launched strategic investments through an Early Learning Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation Fund, Early Literacy Grants, and a statewide reading campaign. The Partnership and Innovation Fund has been instrumental in building strong collaboration at the local level between elementary schools and ELDP. These grants have focused on areas where schools and ELDP can work directly together, such as shared professional development and the transition to kindergarten.
- The Early Learning Hubs were launched across the state. In addition to Hubs bringing together partners from across early learning, k12, health, human services and business, each Hub also set specific targets for metrics, including school readiness as measured by the Kindergarten Assessment. The Early Learning Council, working in collaboration with the Hubs and other partners, led a process to revise the Hub accountability metrics in order to promote an even stronger focus on outcomes and cross-systems collaboration.
- The adoption of “kindergarten readiness” as a goal of Oregon's transforming health care system.
- The Early Learning Council's Childhood Care and Education Workgroup developed a definition of quality child care that could be applied across settings and help articulate the role of all child care in promoting early learning and development.
- Additional joint efforts to identify shared measures between Early Learning Hubs and the health system (Coordinated Care Organizations - CCOs) and local human service districts, including developmental screening rates and enrollment in Patient-Centered Primary Care Homes (medical home). This cooperation will bring new levels of awareness to our core ideal that healthy children result in successful students. The Early Learning Hub Metrics Committee identified additional metrics that are either shared by other systems, such as health, or that will create stronger incentives for cross-system collaboration.
- The Early Learning Council adopted the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) as the statewide instrument for developmental screening by the early learning system. ASQ will also be the primary screening tool used by Oregon's health care system.
- The Oregon Education Investment Board and Early Learning Council adopted an Equity Lens to guide policy recommendations and community engagement as we build a system that supports each and every student. More than 60 organizations and individuals throughout the state, including high school students, vetted the tool. Feedback from the organizations added clarity and guided the development of

core equity beliefs. The Equity Lens is currently being operationalized across the Early Learning Division, and the Early Learning Council is developing a “toolkit” to assist local programs in addressing equity.

Promoting cross-system, cross-sector alignment through shared outcomes is deeply complex, as there are multiple transformations occurring in Oregon (e.g. CCOs, home visiting system change supported through MIECHV, P-20 educational alignment). In partnership with the Governor's office, the Early Learning Division leadership continues to be listening and in dialogue with communities to support their alignment of transformations that leverage cross system outcomes.

Supporting A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

Oregon has a well-established professional development system with a Career Lattice Registry that connects with state licensing data and tracks ongoing training requirements and degree attainment. Oregon is on track with the RTT-ELCG workforce targets and continues to build strategies to achieve 40-40-20 goals.

Oregon's accomplishments are highlighted below:

- As of 2012, the Career Lattice Registry provides workforce data on 100% of practitioners in regulated facilities with data collection linked to licensing and the TQRIS. The Career Lattice Registry also tracks and reports on license-exempt providers who have taken additional training and are receiving a child care subsidy. It also provides aggregate data to policy makers to better inform workforce and quality improvement investments.
- Oregon continues to see tremendous growth, with 5,029 Career Lattice applications received over the last year. This is a 150.1% increase from 2013.
- The TQRIS continues to offer Education Awards to individuals who work in programs that achieve a star rating. Education Awards are financial incentives designed to encourage ongoing provider education. The award is provided to individuals and supervisors who are working at least 20 hours a week with children under the age of 13. The award amount ranges from \$100-\$500 and is based on the professional development milestone an individual achieves on the Registry. In 2014, Oregon awarded 3,020 Education Awards, of which 644 were secondary Education Awards to individuals working in a star rated program.
- Oregon continues to offer statewide scholarships through philanthropic support and has launched a supplemental Race To the Top Scholarship Program designed to leverage existing resources and provide additional support for providers to achieve their Associates Degree. Intentional recruitment and selection criteria were added to support underrepresented communities. There were a total of 72 recipients. Six of the recipients' primary language is not English and 22% of the recipients reported being non-white. Over 300 college credits have been supported in 2014.
- Oregon's community colleges continue to work on aligning course work to the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies and are working with the Oregon Center for Career Development on the revision of the Core Body of Knowledge. Oregon has exceeded the targeted number of trainers who offer trainings aligned with the Core Body of Knowledge, having increased our cross sector trainer pool to 644 (target was 598).

Creating professional development opportunities that meet the needs of the Early Childhood Education workforce is critical to the continued professionalization of the field of practitioners who support the goal of ensuring that children are ready for success in kindergarten. Oregon continues to be challenged by the varying

levels of readiness for professional development and career advancement opportunities in the Early Childhood Education workforce.

As Oregon works towards the 40-40-20 goal, we will need to operationalize the Equity Lens for adult learners and create portable and stackable pathways toward degree attainment that meet and support the needs of this diverse workforce. Oregon is mapping professional development efforts across the state and establishing a strategic plan to further support its developing workforce. The RTT-ELCG funded scholarships and Focused Child Care Networks support this work and build upon public and private investments that support the professional pathways for the Early Childhood Education workforce.

Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The Early Learning Council Chair appointed a Hub Metrics Committee in August of 2014, and charged them with developing a set of recommended revisions to the accountability metrics for Early Learning Hubs. An initial set of metrics was established by the Council as a placeholder during the initial stages of system development. A primary task of this Committee was to identify metrics that are shared across sectors and that create incentives for greater cross-sector collaboration. The Hub Metrics Committee completed its work in December 2014.

Oregon's accomplishments are highlighted below:

- 2013-2014 was the first year Oregon implemented a statewide Kindergarten Assessment. The second administration of the statewide Kindergarten Assessment was completed in 2014-2015 and statewide data was released in January 2015. A challenge and high priority for the state is to ensure effective and sensitive communication about the kindergarten assessment. Equally important is appropriate interpretation of data and application of results. A Kindergarten Content and Assessment Advisory Committee has been formed to reflect on the 2014-2015 data, make recommendations on the content of future iterations of the Kindergarten Assessment and develop guidelines for Kindergarten Assessment reporting and interpretation. This broad and diverse group of stakeholders has identified one important area, in particular, for improvement for the 2014-2015 school year --additional guidance on successful kindergarten assessment practices for Spanish-speaking English Language Learners. Additionally Oregon seeks to streamline mechanisms for data entry and reporting. As an ongoing strategy, the state will continue to engage experts and researchers to ensure communication is appropriate and effective.
- Realizing the critical importance of a robust data capture and analysis to drive change and improvement, we have initiated a number of strategies including: the creation of an early learning data system steering committee to provide recommendations to the Early Learning Council, the development of aggregated data reports related to the Early Learning Hubs, and coordination with the Oregon Education Investment Board for the development of a data system business case for the Statewide Longitudinal Data System.

In closing, RTT-ELCG funding has been instrumental in launching a new phase of systems change and strategic activities aimed at not only expanding our reach but improving the quality and availability of appropriate resources to support Oregon's children and families. While we continue to be challenged by concurrent efforts to design, build, and fly major systems changes, we are fortunate to have a strong and committed cross disciplinary team leading the way. The foundational work launched by RTT-ELCG to establish coordinated and efficient systems on state, regional and local levels as well as efforts to develop metrics for longitudinal tracking and accountability, has set us on the trajectory towards success at meeting the state's 40-40-20 goal.