

## 2017 Quality Education Commission's Best Practices Panel Findings

### Background:

The Quality Education Commission (QEC) finds significant differences in educational practices between Oregon's most diverse high schools with improved graduation and college enrollment rates and high schools with similar demographics but little if any improvement in those same rates. Successful, diverse high schools exhibit specific practices that help staff ensure students are thriving and on-track to graduate prepared for further education and careers.

### Teachers, Administrators and Staff in Oregon's Most Successful and Diverse Schools and Districts:

1. ***Dedicate resources to support regular collaboration time for teams of teachers.*** Teachers consult with team members to analyze student progress, diagnose individual student learning needs and make sure their teaching strategies put students on track to graduate prepared for further education and careers.
2. ***Implement an ongoing school improvement process that is developed and owned by staff and has not been mandated, imposed or appropriated by outside forces.*** This grassroots process is responsive to local concerns and guided by teachers who passionately believe in and pursue equitable outcomes for all students.
3. ***Take charge of their professional development and work continuously to become more effective.*** Teachers tap into each other's expertise in planning teaching strategies and solving teaching challenges to increase their capacity to meet the needs of their students. When teachers need additional help, they seek outside resources like instructional coaching and data analysis training to help them develop their individual and collective skills.
4. ***Persist in fostering a culture of trust and support that gradually extends to whole system reform.*** Administrators collaborate with their entire staff in making operational improvements to the system (daily schedule, attendance/discipline policies, freshman academies). This practice ensures students have supportive adults in the school who will not let them "fall through the cracks." Students in these schools report that they feel strongly connected to their teachers, fostering a culture of trust, respect, collaboration and full engagement in learning at the school.
5. ***Develop an increasingly sophisticated skill set that can be readily observed in their collaborative teams.*** This skill set includes but is not limited to:
  - Small group facilitation
  - Accurate analysis of a wide range of individual student achievement data/evidence
  - Strategic planning to counteract the root causes of student underachievement in their school and community
  - Expansion of social capital by successfully collaborating across classrooms, departments, and the local community to develop a stronger support network for the school's continuous improvement agenda

## Notes on Organization of the 2018 QEM Report

- 1) The past few QEM reports were structured similarly in their content, with sections about the structure of the QEM, the state of school funding, the state of student achievement, reports from the best practices panel and the cost panel, and results of the research for the topic on which the commission focused. Although the structures were similar in each report, the reports varied in what the sections were called and the order in which they were presented.

There may be value settling on a structure that is the same each year so there is consistency over time. We can highlight the research topic for each report so that it stands out.

- 2) The Preface and Executive Summary work well. The Preface provides a succinct introduction to the QEC and the QEM, and the Executive Summary does a good job as a stand-alone piece. It currently is just over 5 pages long, and I think that is a pretty good length. Some graphics to support the key points in the narrative could improve it.
- 3) The Introduction focuses on the charge to the Commission and on Oregon's education goals. That works well but it needs a better transition to the next section, which talks about the current environment in public education in Oregon.
- 4) The section called The Current Environment in Public Education in Oregon provides good background and context. It could be improved by focusing less on the graphics and improving the narrative—the graphics should be used to support the narrative rather than dominating the section. Consider adding a discussion on education cost drivers. This section also needs to have a review of high school graduation and other key measures. The separate section on high school graduation will then go into greater depth.
- 5) The High School Graduation section can do three things: give a detailed review of where we are with HS graduation; provide a forecast of where we are headed based on some early indicators (e.g., early grade test scores, middle school absenteeism rates, etc.), and go a bit more in depth on a specific aspect of graduation rates (e.g., CTE students graduate a high rates).
- 6) The Best Practices section provides a summary of prior best practices recommendations by the Commission and a summary of the current work of the Best Practices Panel. That seems OK, but it seems too long. The section should be a succinct review of current work and an introduction to the next section, which presents the results of the research done for this round of the Commission.
- 7) Section for the research done for this round of the Commission

- 8) Add a new section for Recommendations that follow from the Best Practices panel work and the focused research.
- 9) Rename the section from the 2016 report called "The Quality Education Model" to something like "Funding Required to Meet Oregon's Educational Goals". In the 2016 report we did a pretty good job of making this section primarily about how the model can be used to inform policy decisions about funding levels. For the 2018 report we can build on that.
- 10) Appendices: We put the more detailed and technical description of the QEM in appendices in the 2016 report. I propose that we do that again so that the main report is focused on key issues rather than on the nuts and bolts of the model calculations.