

# Fact Sheet

## OAESD's Consortium to Reduce Chronic Absenteeism

The Oregon Association of Education Service Districts (OAESD), as part of a statewide effort to improve attendance, oversees a consortium of educators working to identify and replicate successful practices by region.

### Project Timeline

- June 28, 2018** - Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and OAESD enter a contract to address chronic absenteeism: ODE will coach and support school districts with the highest rate of chronic absenteeism (27 school districts). OAESD will coach and support the next tier of districts (60 school districts). Both agencies will also deliver sweeping services. ODE will run a statewide marketing campaign to educate schools and families. OAESD will hire a statewide coordinator and eight regional coordinators to facilitate regional planning and training for school staff.
- July 13, 2018** - OAESD hires Paul Verstraete as statewide coordinator.
- August 8, 2018** - Verstraete and ODE cohost a kickoff summit for the consortium and other key players, including the deputy superintendent of public instruction.
- September 9, 2018** - The first of eight regional plans is submitted.
- October 5, 2018** - The first of about 30 expected "Regional Communities of Practice" meetings takes place, providing training to school staff and elevating successful practices in the region.
- November 5, 2018** - Implementation begins on the first of about 60 plans from OAESD-supported school districts. Implementation is expected on the remainders by January 2019.

### What's Next

Now that the consortium has laid the groundwork, they will focus on aggressively using data to raise awareness about attendance problems; build capacity for communities to fund innovative services and technical assistance; and replicate best practices within their regions, such as those presented in "What's Working So Far."

### What's Working So Far

Reducing chronic absenteeism requires all of us to do our part. Schools need to welcome and engage students, families must understand the importance of attendance, and every community needs to look at local barriers that can impact student attendance.

*Goal: Reduce chronic absenteeism by 1.9%, meaning 10,000 more students attend school regularly\**

OAESD's regional plans emphasize these three paths to better attendance, and coordinators are already reporting success:

#### Students are welcomed and engaged

In the Willamette Valley, an attendance coordinator ran a booth at a career fair where he engaged students in a pledge to attend school. Of that group, most of those who were chronically absent last year are currently on track to be regular attenders.

#### Families understand the importance of attendance

Attendance often dips in November with the first extended break. Families may prioritize vacation or have trouble keeping their routine.

One Clackamas County high school, using resources provided by an OAESD coordinator, sent a letter home to families emphasizing the importance of attendance. The following day, about 30 more students attended school than in previous weeks. At 93.25% attendance, the school saw the highest rate of attendance since the second week of school. Several families also responded to the message and opened up about struggles getting their children to school. Not only did the letter improve the attendance rate, it started important conversations. The school principal and counselor can now work with these families toward solutions.

#### Communities understand and address local barriers

Using data, a regional coordinator in Eastern Oregon identified five high schools whose attendance was significantly impacted around winter break by stu-

dents in the migrant education program. The coordinator, migrant program staff, and support staff collaborated to survey students, identify possible absences, and create a plan. The program increased their inventory of Chromebooks so students could keep up with coursework while away.

*"You've been a valuable resource and have improved my effectiveness. These absences are deeply cultural and with proactive planning, students won't be at such a disadvantage academically. Your work is now embedded into mine."*  
-Kris Mulvihill, Migrant Coordinator

\*Goal based on 2016-17 attendance data.