

# Graduation Pathways 2020

## Talking Points



### Key Messages:

- Our mission is to assure students' futures even during this challenge.
- The Graduation Pathways 2020 guidance ensures that the 12 years and 7 months of dedication and learning our students have accomplished are not impacted or diminished by an unprecedented closure during the last two months of their final school year.
- Our Graduation Pathways 2020 guidance empowers students to graduate from high school and move on to the next step in their life.
- Our seniors may miss time honored celebrations of their time in our public schools; however, we want to be sure their future is not impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### What are the key components of the guidance?

- Maintains Oregon's rigorous credit requirements while providing a clear path to graduation for seniors who were on-track to graduate prior to the statewide school closure.
- Ensures that schools focus their resources to first support students who need to complete additional credits to graduate and then prepare all graduates, especially historically underserved students, for their next steps in life.
- Suspends Essential Skills and Personalized Learning Requirements.

### What are the differences?

- Oregon, through a waiver with the U.S. Department of Education has suspended its statewide summative assessment. This assessment is the primary means for students to demonstrate proficiency on essential skills, therefore, these requirements are also suspended.

### What are the principles that guided these decisions?

- Equity, access and the health and well being of our students and families.
- Our job is to make sure young people's accomplishments are not diminished and their future is not impacted amidst a global pandemic.
- The pathway to graduation in Oregon is clear, rigorous and practical.

### What do you think of the Governor closing schools for the year?

- Its the right decision.
- This decision gives schools, students and families certainty in uncertain times. Our children's well-being is our first responsibility.

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**What do you say to people who say this isn't a real Oregon Diploma, these kids haven't really earned graduation from high school?**

- Respect our students and their accomplishments. The fact is that our students have successfully completed 12 years and 7 months of school. The last 2 months of school represents less than 2% of students' K-12 learning time.
- Our job is to make sure young people's future is not impacted amidst a global pandemic. We're honoring the 12 years and seven months that students have put into this moment.
- Even with these minor modifications, Oregon's diploma remains one of the most rigorous in the nation.

**Is Oregon alone in this approach? Isn't this different than what other states are doing?**

Oregon's approach mirrors other states.

- Arizona does not penalize graduating seniors solely on the effects of COVID-19 school closures.
- In Arkansas, seniors who are on track to graduate and in good standing as of the 3rd nine weeks reporting period will be considered "as meeting the graduation requirements."
- In North Carolina, students will receive a Pass or Withdrawal based on their learning as of March 13 for spring courses. If the student has an F as of March 13 for graduation requirements, districts/schools shall provide remote learning opportunities for the student to improve to a passing grade.
- In Ohio students who were on track to graduate at the time of the ordered school-building closure will be permitted to graduate on time in the Spring of 2020.

**Why release it now?**

- We vetted this guidance with educators, administrators, culturally specific community-based organizations, and the education community over the last few weeks.
- Our seniors deserve the very best pathway to their future and we're thankful to have had the time to develop this pathway for them.

**What's next? What will you release after this?**

- We will be releasing guidance on equitably providing evaluative feedback and credit to students in 9th - 11th grade that are also earning credit toward a future diploma.
- We will continue to develop social-emotional and mental health supports.
- We will be releasing new guidance on emergency child care this week.

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### How will you track if people are meeting this April 30 deadline?

- Local school districts will track these deadlines.
- April 30 is a helpful reference point for administrators.

### How will this impact students' preparedness and ability to get into their college of choice?

- The class of 2020 is resilient and ready to take on the rigors of college.
- The new 2020 Oregon Diploma requirements include all 24 credits and remain more rigorous than many other states. Oregon has one of the most rigorous diplomas in the country. Seniors were on-track to graduate and missing less than 2% of their K-12 career will not impact their readiness for college in significant or lasting ways.
- Students apply to 4-year colleges in the fall and winter of their senior year. They are accepted in the spring. The colleges will expect them to complete their diplomas, that is exactly what we are allowing them to do.
- The Oregon public universities are committed to ensuring that new students who intend to enroll at our institutions are considered fairly in light of the educational interruption they have endured. No student admitted to our institutions for fall 2020 will have their admission rescinded due to changes in grading policy or the inability to complete their coursework, so long as they still graduate.
- Students who apply to our institutions are still subject to a review process that focuses on one's ability to succeed in college, but now recognizes that some situations are beyond their control. We look forward to supporting students and high schools through this challenging time, both now and with future graduating classes impacted by the pandemic.

### Can Districts add their own requirements?

- Graduations Pathways 2020 creates the requirements for an Oregon Diploma for the class of 2020.
- This Diploma honors the tremendous learning and accomplishments of students' during their time in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade prior to the statewide closure, due to COVID-19 mitigation efforts in Oregon. No district shall apply additional requirements for a diploma for the class of 2020.
- Districts may recognize student accomplishments including, but not limited to: Additional credits earned, outstanding academic performance or improvement, other academic honors, etc. However, districts should review such recognitions under an equity lens related to current circumstances that may have prevented some students from receiving such recognition due to any unintentional lack of access to school or learning during the closure period.

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### What about NCAA eligibility?

- The NCAA has a phone number for high school administrators, OSAA officials, and ODE to answer any questions at 1-877-622-2321. The NCAA Eligibility Center also has a phone line for students and parents at 1-877-262-1492.
- Current guidance from the NCAA is that each high school needs to contact them to share how they will be handling “End of Term” course work for students who are registered in the NCAA Clearinghouse (those seniors getting ready to go to college and compete or those who are registered and hoping to attend/apply/be recruited for NCAA schools in the future). ODE and HECC will engage with the NCAA to see if we can also support a more universal solution, but for now this is the best guidance we can offer.

### Is this watered down? Does this mean less than normal, less than credible graduation diploma?

- No. The fact is that our students have successfully completed 12 years and 7 months of school. The last 2 months of school represents less than 2% of students’ K-12 learning time.
- We’re honoring the 12 years and roughly seven months that students have put into this moment. Our job is to make sure young people’s future is not impacted amidst a global pandemic.
- And, districts are working hard to maintain contact and provide continued instruction and opportunity to earn credit during the closure towards high school graduation. Oregon’s diploma remains rigorous and has more challenging requirements than those in many other states (see table below).

### Credit Total Graduation Requirements:

| Number of States         | Requirements              |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 12 states (including OR) | 24 credits to graduate    |
| 3 states                 | 23 credits to graduate    |
| 1 state                  | 22.5 credits to graduate  |
| 10 states                | 22 credits to graduate    |
| 1 state                  | 21.5 credits to graduate  |
| 5 states                 | 21 credits to graduate    |
| 7 states                 | 20 credits to graduate    |
| 6 states                 | 13-18 credits to graduate |
| 5 states                 | No state requirements     |