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APRIL 2020

# Graduation Pathways 2020

A RESOURCE IN SUPPORT OF OUR  
2020 SENIORS



OREGON  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

*Oregon achieves . . . together!*

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## Preamble

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The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) is committed to providing guidance and support for our seniors to ensure clear pathways to graduation as we navigate unprecedented times together. **Graduation Pathways 2020** keeps learning aspirations high for our current seniors and helps protect students' future success in the context of this extended school closure. We are steadfast in our commitment to all of Oregon's students--most especially our seniors who are at a pivotal place in their educational journey.

**Graduation Pathways 2020** (section four of the [Distance Learning for All Guidance](#)) honors the significant learning and accomplishments of students over time. Oregon's seniors have invested over 12 years in their education, deepening learning and agency as they approach the culmination of their K-12 experience. In short, this represents more than 12,000 hours of learning. Given that the extended school closure represents only a small fraction of this whole, it is incumbent upon us to determine graduation status in a way that is both fair and reasonable.

**Graduation Pathways 2020** Graduation Pathways 2020 maintains the 24 credit requirement for the Oregon Diploma, honoring high standards for learning and achievement. It 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. This guidance allows seniors to receive credit for any course in which they were passing at the time of the extended school closure. As a result, schools can provide additional focus on securing credit-earning opportunities and learning for seniors who were not yet passing all required courses at the time of the school closure. Schools should also focus on support to career and/or college planning for historically underserved seniors.

Our aim is to mitigate negative consequences from any lost learning time due to COVID-19. All of our seniors, regardless of credit status, deserve our personal attention, encouragement, and consistent emotional support. We share in the responsibility to set a clear path toward graduation for every senior.

We also must recognize and try to mitigate the other losses our seniors are facing as they exit our public schools. COVID-19 has kept them from experiencing their senior trips, senior breakfasts, proms, baccalaureates, and possibly graduation ceremonies. We ask that districts and communities come together to find ways to celebrate the many accomplishments of the class of 2020.

This is part of a series of updates to guidance ODE will release to support districts in the delivery of **Distance Learning for All**. As contexts change and needs evolve, we will continue to update this guidance and link it to the [ODE COVID-19 webpage](#).

## Acknowledgement

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We wish to acknowledge that our guidance has been informed by educators and other leaders in Oregon who have been critical thought partners. In the context of shared thinking, collaboration, and problem solving, our own thinking and planning have been enhanced. We appreciate the collective effort, as we rise to the challenge of serving our students and families during school closure. We are stronger together.

Additionally, we wish to thank State Education Agency (SEA) leadership across the nation and the Council of Chief State School Officers. We wish to explicitly acknowledge Washington, whose Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction has served as a key partner and consultant. Additionally Kansas, California, Texas, Ohio, North Carolina, Arizona and Arkansas have contributed materials and resources that have influenced our thinking and planning.

## Naming the Inequities and Centering Guiding Principles

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Our public education system creates a problematic paradox around who the system is designed to serve. It is widely known that, every spring, educators and administrators work with intense focus to get seniors over the graduation finish line and on to the next steps in their lives. Magnified by the COVID-19 crisis, our students who have been pushed to the edge of our system carry the disproportionate weight of meeting graduation requirements. It is incumbent upon each of us as educators to acknowledge the predictable inequities in our system and be held accountable to collective action. We don't pretend that our Graduation Pathways 2020 guidance resolves this problem or fairly distributes the burden but, in developing this guidance, we have worked with and vetted across many communities and will work tirelessly to help all seniors graduate. The guidance is a resource and focuses on seniors who are historically underserved and those that are credit shy. There is no doubt our ability to work strength to strength as educators, leaders, families, and community members is the most important way to focus on our seniors. ODE's guidance for seniors during this time of school closure centers on **Care, Connection, and Continuity of Learning which requires an equity stance.**

ODE strives to live into our equity stance: *Education equity is the equitable implementation of policy, practices, procedures, and legislation that translates into resource allocation, education rigor, and opportunities for historically and currently marginalized youth, students, and families including civil rights protected classes. This means the restructuring and dismantling of systems and institutions that create the dichotomy of beneficiaries and the oppressed and marginalized.*

In order to live into this stance, we must heighten our attention to particular groups of students who often bear the burden of the system's oppressive practices. Examples of what this could look like, include focusing educator resources on supporting seniors who still need to obtain credits, focusing counseling resources on the post-secondary transitions for first generation college students and students from historically underserved communities, and focusing the school community on supporting the needs of the students most heavily impacted by the health and economic impacts of COVID-19. Through all of this work, we must see the strengths

and meet the needs of students experiencing houselessness; students of color, including African-American/Black students; Alaska Native and American Indian students; emerging bilingual students; students of migrant and farmworker families; students experiencing disability; students who are LGBTQIA+, students in foster care; and students navigating poverty.

As we lead this effort across Oregon, the **Distance Learning for All Guiding Principles** will anchor our state in common values and help generate collective action during this time:

- **Ensure safety and wellness.** Students need food, clothing, a safe place to learn and shelter, as well as a sense of care and connection, in order to engage in challenging intellectual work. Please see the [ODE COVID-19 website](#) for Mental Health and Social Support resources.
- **Cultivate connection and relationship.** Student connections and relationships with trusted adults promote belonging, which is especially important as learning takes place outside of the school setting.
- **Center in equity and efficacy.** Prioritize equity in every decision; build on cultural and linguistic assets to inspire learning and promote student efficacy. Consider how decisions and actions attend to racial equity and social justice ([Oregon Educator Equity Lens](#)). Consider the assets of students who experience disability.
- **Innovate.** Iterate through complex change with a spirit of possibility, centering in deep learning, student agency, and culturally sustaining practices.

## Graduation Requirements for Seniors

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ODE's Graduation Pathways 2020 guidance is grounded by the following foundational premise:

**We will honor and recognize that seniors dedicated 12 years and 7 months of learning and progress during their K-12 careers. Our goal is to hold students harmless, recognize their accomplishments and protect their future plans. Less than 2 percent of seniors' total K-12 learning time has been impacted by COVID-19.**

This guidance for Graduation Pathways 2020 relates only to *current* high school seniors, as defined by students who first enrolled in ninth grade in the 2016-2017 school year or earlier (including 5th or 6th year seniors). This guidance does not apply to students who first enrolled in ninth grade in the 2017-2018 school year or later, unless they have an early graduation plan that was approved before the Executive Order ([EO 20-08](#)) was issued on March 17, 2020.

This guidance provides options and recommendations to award credits for seniors that account for their work and accomplishments up to the point of school closure.

## What’s Essential: Graduation Pathways 2020 Guidance

- Maintain current Oregon Diploma, Oregon Modified Diploma, and Oregon Extended Diploma subject-area and credit requirements.
- Award subject-area credit based on a senior’s progress or demonstrated proficiency as of school closure.
- Award a diploma if a senior was on track to graduate prior to the closure.
- Ensure opportunity for seniors to earn credit for course work or learning they have engaged with since the school closure.
- Assign seniors Pass/Incomplete for all courses impacted by school closure. (See Reconciling Credit section below.)

Suspend all Essential Skills and Personalized Learning requirements for seniors<sup>1</sup> (Career Related Learning Experiences (CRLEs), Extended Application, and Education Plan and Profile). *Note: ODE will pursue State Board of Education action and OAR revision.*

## Summary of 2020 Oregon Diploma Requirements

Subject Area	2020 Regular Diploma Requirement	2020 Modified Diploma Requirement*	2020 Extended Diploma Requirement
English Language Arts	4.0 credits	3.0 credits	2.0 credits
Mathematics	3.0 credits	2.0 credits	2.0 credits
Science	3.0 credits	2.0 credits	2.0 credits
Social Sciences	3.0 credits	2.0 credits	3.0 credits
Second Language/ The Arts/CTE	3.0 credits	1.0 credits	1.0 credits
Health	1.0 credits	1.0 credits	1.0 credits
Physical Education	1.0 credits	1.0 credits	1.0 credits
Electives	6.0 credits	12.0 credits	0 credits
Essential Skills and Personalized Learning Requirements	Suspended	Suspended	Not Required
<b>Total</b>	<b>24.0 credits</b>	<b>24.0 credits</b>	<b>12.0 credits</b>

\* Credit for a modified diploma shall be granted through a continuum of instruction beginning at basic skills and progressing through high level skills, according to individual student needs across academic content areas. Courses granting credit towards a modified diploma must contain substantial academic content.

<sup>1</sup> This also applies to the class of 2021.

## Reconciling Credit

For the final spring term(s), seniors shall be awarded credit based on a Pass/Incomplete (or withdrawal) determination:

- If any senior is determined to be failing a course at the date of school closure and assigned an incomplete, the district shall provide opportunities to that senior to improve to a passing grade commensurate with peers who were determined to have “passed” or met proficiency by the same date. The student should not have to start the class over or be held to a higher standard than other seniors who “passed” the same course.
- For the final term(s) of a one-credit course over a series of terms:
  - If a senior was on-track for a passing grade (A-D or equivalent) at the date of closure, then the senior shall be awarded a “Pass” status.
  - If the senior was not on-track with a passing grade (F or equivalent) at the date of closure, then the senior shall be awarded an “Incomplete” or “withdrawal” status, with opportunities to earn a “Pass” preferably by the end of the school year, but this can extend until August 31, 2020.
  - The markings only apply for the spring/final term(s), not the full-year grade (i.e., the senior shall receive a B for semester one and a Pass for semester two).
- For any one-term semester course:
  - “Pass” status shall be awarded to seniors based on a passing grade (A-D or equivalent) earned in the current term through the date of closure.
  - “Incomplete” or “withdrawal” status shall be awarded to seniors based on a failing grade (F or equivalent) earned in the current term through the date of closure. If the class is required for a diploma, the district shall provide opportunities for the senior to earn a “Pass” preferably by the end of the school year, but this can extend until August 31, 2020.
- Do not penalize any seniors when determining whether credit should be awarded, taking into account where accommodations and supports such as extended time could not be provided due to COVID school closure.

## Requirements and Recognition

- Align all requirements for earning an Oregon Diploma with ODE guidance in order to ensure fair and equitable treatment of seniors across the state. Districts may not add additional graduation requirements for seniors in the Class of 2020.
- Implement any honoring of accomplishments with an equity lens. Districts are encouraged to recognize senior accomplishments such as additional credits earned, outstanding academic performance or improvement, Indigenous graduation services, and other academic honors. It is important to consider current circumstances that may have prevented some seniors from receiving such recognition due to lack of access to school activities or learning during the closure period.
- Provide additional support and credit-earning opportunities to seniors needing credits to graduate. Consider Oregon’s flexible [Credit Options](#), as well as ODE’s [Credit Options](#)

[webpage](#), when making these opportunities available. When developing personalized student graduation plans, reflect the student context, funds of knowledge and learning environment.

## Personalized Student Graduation and Transition Plans

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The instructional time and support seniors receive at school is not easily replaced by distance learning. It is important to consider the practical steps necessary to serve every senior equitably and to differentiate supports during this unique period of time.

ODE recommends the following steps for districts to identify graduation status and develop and communicate personalized student graduation and transition plans.

### Steps for Identifying Senior Credit Status

1. **Review and update teacher gradebooks** to determine course status at the time of school closure. Determine which seniors were meeting learning standards for each of their required courses (passing). Determine which seniors were not yet meeting learning standards for each of their required courses (not yet passing).
2. **Use course completion data** to determine which seniors are meeting or exceeding credit requirements to graduate and which seniors will need additional support to meet graduation credit requirements. Districts should determine:
  - a. Seniors who meet Oregon Diploma credit requirement
  - b. Seniors with IEPs who meet Oregon Diploma credit requirement (see next section)
  - c. Seniors who need credit to meet Oregon Diploma requirements
  - d. Seniors with IEPs who need credit to meet Oregon Diploma requirements (see next section)
3. **Identify and determine support for students** who qualify for 504s, students who qualify for English Language Development services, and students who have been historically underserved by our system.
  - a. Review 504 plans as well as English Language Development (ELD) plans and consider the implementation of the plans. (If a student's 504 or ELD plan was not followed, the district must hold the student harmless during the closure.)
  - b. The supports and opportunities should reflect the student context and learning environment, including work and family demands and capacity for distance learning.
  - c. Consider engagements with community-based organizations to provide culturally and linguistically-responsive supports.
4. **Develop a personalized student graduation and transition plan** for each student, prioritizing those who need credit to graduate and historically underserved students who may benefit from additional support navigating transition to college and/or career. [See Comprehensive School Counseling Plan for Seniors](#) and [Personalized Student Graduation Plan Template](#).



5. **Utilize student’s [education plan and profile](#)** for additional considerations, such as student goals, career exploration, FAFSA completion and college applications when creating personalized plans.
6. **Communicate with seniors and families** to share credit status and finalize their graduation pathway plan.

### Communication Timeline

Once graduation status for 2020 is determined, it will be important to communicate directly with seniors and their families and co-develop a plan that articulates the student’s pathway to graduation and beyond. (Note: Please reference [Distance Learning for All Guidance](#), section 1B. p. 12-13, for guidance on Partnering with Parents, Families, and Caregivers.)

Given the heightened attention and concern felt by our seniors and their families, we recommend districts provide an initial communication that outlines the process and timeline for determining graduation status *as soon as possible*. By April 30, 2020 every senior and their family shall receive written notification that outlines credit status as it relates to Oregon Diploma 2020. All communication shall be accessible to seniors and their families in the home language of the student and/or family.

- **Seniors meeting credit requirements for Oregon Diploma 2020:** Reach out to students and their families, by April 30, 2020, to affirm Oregon Diploma 2020 credit requirements have been met. Outline a plan to continue senior’s learning and transition to career and college. For seniors on an IEP who are graduating with a regular diploma, this must include notice of termination of IEP services upon graduation or the transition services offered during the closure.
- **Seniors needing credits to meet requirements for Oregon Diploma 2020:** Reach out to students and their families by April 30, 2020, via phone (or another mode based on family preference) to confirm that the student needs additional credits to meet the Oregon Diploma 2020 graduation requirements. Outline a plan to continue senior’s learning, earning of credits, and transition to career and college. For this guidance to apply, diploma requirements must be met by August 31, 2020. For students with an IEP, this must include transition services offered during the closure. Follow-up with confirmation on credit status as it relates to Oregon Diploma 2020 and the graduation plan in writing in the preferred home language.

#### Timeline:

- **As soon as possible:** Provide initial communication to families on the process and timeline for determining status for graduation.
- **April 30:** Notify each senior’s family on their student’s graduation status and next steps.
- **August 31:** Deadline for students to meet Oregon Diploma 2020 requirements.

### Communication Guidelines

Identifying and communicating with each senior about their graduation status will require

dedication and diligence from school administrators, counselors, social workers, teachers, registrars and other educators in formats that are less familiar. The following communication guidelines will contribute to a student’s sense of understanding, well-being and value during this time away from school, peers and teachers.

- **Guidelines for Contacting Seniors’ Parents or Guardians:** Please refer to section 1B. p. 12-13 in [Distance Learning for All](#) for guidance on Partnering with Parents, Families, and Caregivers that includes considerations for contacting persons in parental relationship to students, supports in languages other than English, resources for contextualized supports, and methods for communication. “Person in Parental Relationship” is defined in [ORS 339.133](#).
- **Communicating with Seniors Supported by Individualized Education Programs (IEPs):** Consider holding an IEP meeting or meeting to review the student’s current status and IEP goals and supports in place with consideration for the guidance in section 4D, the student’s graduation status as of the school closure, and the input of the person in parental relationship.

As districts develop coursework options for seniors who are not on track to graduate, there must be consideration for provision of services and supports included in student IEPs. The district will communicate with families regarding IEP service termination following steps outlined in section 4D of this document. Districts are encouraged to communicate with students and families regarding the potential need for flexibility and adjustments to ensure that health and safety requirements are satisfied, while also continuing to provide specially designed instruction and related services to the extent possible. This will necessitate coordination of staff involved in delivery of instruction.

For seniors who are not on-track to graduate, schedule an IEP meeting via web conference or phone to discuss credit-earning options under Distance Learning for All to develop a plan to support the student’s graduation by August 31, 2020.

- **Communicating with multilingual and bilingual families:** Ensure communication is linguistically responsive. This includes mindful consideration of preferred home language and providing interpretation support. Consider partnership and engagement with community-based partners who provide culturally and linguistically responsive services to students and staff.
- **Communications Toolkit:** ODE is providing [template letters and sample language](#) to support districts in following these suggestions.

## **Special Education Services for Seniors**

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Students protected under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) require further consideration under the law. In determining status

towards graduation using the Pass/Incomplete status, districts must consider the additional guidance below to ensure our commitment to equity and access for students with IEPs.

### **Seniors with IEPs On Track to Graduate**

1. Communicate with the family regarding:
  - a. Oregon Diploma: Termination of Services
  - b. Modified or Extended Diploma: Transition Services offered during closure
  - c. Certificate of Completion: Transition Services offered during closure
2. If the student earns an Oregon Diploma, the district's FAPE obligation to that student will end. The student will no longer receive K-12 educational services, including those prescribed by the IEP.
  - a. If the parent/guardian wants the student to continue to receive special education services through the originally planned graduation date, the IEP team will need to meet to discuss the continued need for special education services pending graduation. Teams can make a decision, with implications for graduation:
    - i. The student continues to require services and will not graduate at this time. The IEP team must develop a plan to provide credit earning options under Distance Learning for All that enables the student to graduate by August 31, 2020. FAPE must continue to be provided until graduation.
    - ii. The student no longer requires services and can graduate. Parent retains rights under Procedural Safeguards.

### **Additional Considerations for Seniors with IEPs who may Need Credits to Graduate**

1. The district must ensure appropriate services and supports were provided before classifying the senior as not on track. At a minimum, this includes:
  - a. Reviewing IEP records to ensure that district provided FAPE;
  - b. Gathering evidence from each teacher/course that an appropriately developed IEP was fully implemented. Such documentation shall include, but is not limited to evidence that all:
    - i. Specially designed instruction (SDI) was delivered as intended by the IEP team, consistent with the initiation, frequency, and duration required;
    - ii. Accommodations, related services and supplementary aids and services were delivered as intended by the IEP team; and
    - iii. Evidence that the IEP team worked towards the measurable annual goals contained within the IEP, including progress monitoring data specific to those goals.
  - c. Ensuring that the parent, guardian, or person in a parental relationship was afforded the opportunity to meaningfully participate in the IEP process, including any meetings where student progress towards graduation was reviewed.

*Documentation for requirements in 1a-1c above in which the senior was considered not on track must be provided. If such documentation cannot be provided, the district shall hold that student*

*harmless during the closure.*

## Specific Student Scenarios for the Class of 2020

These scenarios represent real dilemmas or questions ODE has received from districts. They reflect our current guidance and thinking at the publication date of this guidance. This is the first of a series of updates to guidance ODE will release to support districts in the delivery of Distance Learning for All. As contexts change and needs evolve, we will continue to update this guidance and link it to the [ODE COVID-19 webpage](#). For support with applying an equity lens when working through your own scenarios, this [Oregon Educator Equity Lens](#) may be helpful.

If...	Then...
A senior had a B in their course at the time of school closure.	A senior who had a D, C, B, or A in their course at the time of school closure would be awarded a “Pass” status for the course and receive credits toward graduation.
A senior had a failing grade during the prior term in a course sequence, and a failing grade prior to school closure.	They would receive an “Incomplete” for the current term and receive targeted supports in their graduation plan to help them pass the course and receive a diploma.
A senior is enrolled in credit-recovery courses.	The “reconciling credit” guidelines in section 4B also apply to credit-recovery courses. If a senior is receiving a passing grade at the time of school closure, then they receive full credit with “Pass” status. If a senior is not receiving a passing grade at the time of school closure, then they receive an “Incomplete” with opportunities for instruction through Distance Learning for All to demonstrate learning and earn credits.
A 5th-year or 6th-year senior is working toward graduation.	The same requirements that apply to seniors in their 4th year of high school apply to a 5th-year or 6th-year senior who is working toward graduation.
A senior had a failing grade in the grading term at the time of school closure, and they were	The senior would not likely pass the course and credit would not be awarded.

<p>awarded an Incomplete for that term; also, the student does not demonstrate enough evidence of learning to earn a passing grade for the course by August 31, 2020.</p>	<p>If the course and/or credit was required for graduation, the student may need to enroll in credit-recovery or consider an alternate pathway (i.e., additional schooling for the 2020-2021 school year, high school equivalency programs like the GED, etc.).</p> <p><b>However</b>, in some cases districts may determine that credit should be awarded if there is a larger achievement pattern that deserves consideration. Upon review of the totality of the student’s educational experience, if it is determined that credit is justified, the decision should be supported with documentation.</p>
<p>The school operates on a trimester schedule and had just concluded its second trimester when school closed. The senior had earned passing marks for the first two trimesters in a full year (1 credit) course, but no grade had been recorded for the third trimester.</p>	<p>The senior would pass the course, earn 1 credit, and receive a “Pass” on their transcript.</p>
<p>A student was a week into the trimester taking a stand-alone health class. This class is required to graduate, but we don’t yet have progress information.</p>	<p>The school will need to determine if the student is able to earn credit in this course through any of the credit options available in Distance Learning for All guidance or under OAR. If the student earns this credit through one of those options, they will be able to graduate.</p>
<p>A student is taking a dual credit course and is awarded college credit.</p>	<p>High schools can use the college credit as justification for granting high school credit for proficiency to the student.</p>
<p>A student in grade 10 is engaged in a course with seniors that started prior to the closure.</p>	<p>Distance Learning for All allows for continuity of learning for all students, including students in grades 9-11.</p>
<p>The school determines that a senior is not on track for graduation and makes a personalized graduation plan that will enable the student to meet graduation requirements by August 31,</p>	<p>The school’s administration will need to meet with the person in a parental relationship to review their concern and the student’s academic record. Following</p>

<p>2020. The parent/guardian/person in a parental relationship disagrees with this determination and wants the student to graduate now.</p>	<p>that meeting, the principal will need to make a determination as to the student’s graduation status. The parent shall be notified of this determination in writing, and retains all district complaint rights.</p>
<p>A senior is short of credits and works every summer to financially support their family. How can they get help?</p> <p><i>Note: give thoughtful, responsive consideration for our migrant students</i></p>	<p>We know that many high school students have to work right now and into the summer. It will be essential for districts to dig deep and harness all creative solutions and options to meet students navigating school, family safety, and getting basic needs met. Ideas include work-study credit, developing audio recordings or podcasts that could be engaged with while working (if safe to do so), or encouraging and supporting taking high school equivalency exams such as the GED for credit. Oregon regulations allow for multiple <a href="#">Credit Options</a> at OAR 581-022-2025, as well, and ODE is making performance assessment materials available for educators to pursue these flexible credit-bearing options on ODE’s <a href="#">Credit Options webpage</a>.</p>

**Celebrations, Traditions and Ways to Honor Seniors**

The end of the senior year of high school comes with varying traditions designed to recognize, honor, and celebrate the accomplishments of each student’s K-12 experience and learning. While this spring term represents less than 2 percent of the Class of 2020’s overall time spent learning, it also represents the culmination of over 12 years of dedication. These culminating celebrations include the graduation ceremony, baccalaureate events, senior prom, senior trips, senior breakfasts, and a variety of other events and traditions. We should all strive to find ways to individually and publicly honor seniors’ efforts and academic achievements.

- Consider rescheduling celebrations to a time in the future when social distancing measures are relaxed.
- Explore online options for recognition, if they can be made accessible to all students and families.
- Maintain school honors for students (cords, medals, certificates, awards, honors, etc.).

- Integrate student, staff, and community voice to develop both personalized and public recognition for students in the graduating Class of 2020. Connect with other communities and districts to spark creative ideas. Some districts are thinking about planning parades (honoring social distancing), others are working to invite special guests to deliver virtual key notes or special performances.
- Allow policies and practices that recognize the diversity of our students and families to promote cultural inclusivity and equity. The Oregon Department of Education fully supports policies and practices that promote cultural autonomy and gives students the ability to wear items of cultural significance honoring their unique and diverse cultures. When centering the graduation needs of American Indian students and their families, a cultural practice for many is the wearing of culturally significant items such as eagle feathers, beaded caps, tribal insignias, moccasins and stoles during ceremonies.

## Appendix

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**Comprehensive School Counseling Plan for Seniors:** A resource designed to provide suggested guidance for how Comprehensive School Counseling Programs may address seniors' social-emotional learning, academic development, and career and college readiness by providing a continuum of services and supports matched to individual student needs.

**Personalized Student Graduation Plan Template:** A sample template schools can use to develop a plan for Seniors Needing Credits to meet Oregon Diploma 2020 Requirements.

**Graduation Pathways 2020 Timeline:** A visual timeline to help districts understand key dates for Graduation Pathways 2020.

**Graduation Pathways 2020 Summary Document:** A summary document distilling the contents of Graduation Pathways 2020.

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Note: All FAQs related to Graduation Pathways 2020 will be updated regularly on our [FAQ website](#). Districts are encouraged to share these FAQs with students and families. They are included with the Graduation Pathways 2020 Communication Toolkit.*

### **Graduation Requirements and Diplomas for 2020**

#### **1. What about graduation ceremonies?**

Senior graduation is an important milestone for students and families and for many, their students will be the first in their family to graduate. Schools are encouraged to begin planning for alternative graduation ceremony options. These options should plan for the possibility that celebrations would be completely virtual and not allow for in-person gatherings, regardless of graduating class size. Allow policies and practices that recognize the diversity of our students

and families to promote cultural inclusivity and equity. The Oregon Department of Education fully supports policies and practices that promote cultural autonomy and gives students the ability to wear items of cultural significance honoring their unique and diverse cultures. When centering the graduation needs of American Indian students and their families, a cultural practice for many is the wearing of culturally significant items such as eagle feathers, beaded caps, tribal insignias, moccasins and stoles during ceremonies.

**2. Can a local district require additional graduation requirements?**

No. No additional requirements can be applied to the Class of 2020.

**3. Are districts able to require seniors to complete their capstone projects?**

Districts must follow the graduation requirements as listed in the Graduation Pathways section of the Distance Learning for All Guidance. To ensure no student is harmed due to the school closure, no district shall apply additional requirements for a diploma for the Class of 2020. A capstone project cannot be required to earn a diploma, but students may certainly be recognized for completing a capstone or similar project.

**4. Does this guidance support fifth and sixth year seniors as well?**

The guidance pertains to students who were first enrolled in ninth grade in the 2016-2017 school year or earlier; so students who were freshman in years prior to 2016-2017 are also included. This guidance does not apply to students who first enrolled in ninth grade in 2017-2018 or later, unless they have an early graduation plan approved before the Executive Order (EO 20-08) was issued on March 17, 2020.

**5. How are Honors Diplomas affected?**

Districts have local control for decisions related to honors diplomas and any additional award recognitions related to graduation. The [National Honor Society](#) recommends accommodations and flexibility.

**6. How does this impact students pursuing the Seal of Biliteracy?**

Students pursuing the Seal of Biliteracy, who did not earn the seal prior to March 12, 2020, can still be included in the fall collection for 2020 graduation (if they meet all of the requirements). Districts will need to determine how to administer their assessment(s) once the closure is lifted. If students take the district-approved assessment(s) after October 2, they would be included in the 2021 collection. More guidance will be forthcoming.

**7. How does this impact the Alternative Certificate/Certificate of Attendance?**

Alternative Certificates are based on attendance over four school years. We do not see an impact on the alternative certificate based on this guidance. Alternative certificates are awarded based on individual student needs and achievement.

**8. Can high school equivalency, such as GED, be used for students to graduate?**

Yes. School districts can use high school equivalency, such as GED, exams to determine proficiency and award credit to students and graduate students. However, all high school



equivalency exams, including GED, must be delivered under current school closure and state social distancing/group gathering guidelines.

**9. If a student wants to return as a senior for the 2020-2021 school year, would they be allowed to register?**

This is a local decision. *Note: We are still working on guidance around whether the student would be within a 4-year or 5-year graduate cohort.*

**10. Can we use credit options to award credits to seniors?**

There are several credit options available to Oregon students. Oregon's [Credit Options](#) rule describes the ways students can earn credit [see sections 2(a) - 2(e) of the regulation]. ODE is developing additional [Credit Options Guidance](#) that will help districts use performance assessment approaches to support students in meeting their credit needs.

**11. Who can I reach out to if I need more information or guidance specific to our district?**

In order to be as responsive as possible to specific inquiries around graduation requirements for this year, we have set up a dedicated email. Please send all of your inquiries to [GraduationPathways@ode.state.or.us](mailto:GraduationPathways@ode.state.or.us), and we will follow up as quickly as possible.

**Access to Distance Learning for All**

**12. Will counselors also contact students and families, and what about students with no internet?**

Educators (counselors included) are charged with reaching out to students and families through their district processes. Contact is not limited to use of the internet. Phone calls are encouraged. The key focus is making a connection to each student to ensure they and their family have what they need for food and care with learning to follow while complying with the Stay Home Stay Safe expectations.

**13. Is there a plan to access TV stations for learning as a backup in addition to the school districts' choices?**

This is an option ODE encourages districts to pursue with their local access channels. We are currently researching all of the public television and radio stations to determine how to maximize that as a possible solution.

**14. I'm a senior halfway through school and short of credits. I must work over the summer and now to support my family financially, how can I get help?**

We know that many high school students have to work right now and into the summer. It will be essential for districts to dig deep and harness all creative solutions and options to meet students needing to navigate completing school, family safety, and getting basic needs met. Ideas include work-study credit, developing audio recordings or podcasts that could be engaged with while working (if safe to do so), or encouraging and supporting taking the GED for credit. Oregon regulations allow for multiple [Credit Options](#) at OAR 581-022-2025 as well, and ODE is

making performance assessment materials available for educators to pursue these flexible credit-bearing options on ODE's [Credit Options webpage](#).

### **15. How can ODE and/or districts work with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to support translation services?**

This crisis illuminates a deeper need to bolster translation services, speed, and quality. Translation services are held and contracted in different ways by ODE and different school districts. In some communities, partnerships with CBOs for translation supports can and should be pursued. Where there are strong and existing contracts with translation service providers, it is a new opportunity for the state and districts to solve how to move more quickly and effectively to provide translations of essential documents.

### **16. What level of support is there for students who are homeless? How do they access learning without dependable internet?**

First and foremost, the focus is student safety and access to food. Once that is established, districts are encouraged to contact and get expertise from their McKinney-Vento Act liaison. The following resources can also be helpful:

- Oregon's regional [Continuums of Care](#) are networks of state and local programs assisting community members with housing and other services.
- [211-Info](#) connects people with social and health services, shelter and transitional housing, food banks and homelessness assistance.
- [Community Action](#) programs in many areas are providing assistance to families and individuals navigating poverty.
- The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness has posted [recommendations](#) for planning, preparation and mitigation of coronavirus spread.
- [School House Connection's website](#) provides excellent resources for schools and early learning programs to address homelessness during this time.

With regard to instruction and engagement, it will require a collective community and district effort to pursue any and all options to meet students needing to navigate completing school, safety, and getting basic needs met. Ideas include work-study credit, developing audio recordings or podcasts that could be engaged with while working (if safe to do so), or encouraging and supporting taking the GED for credit.

## **Grading and Pass/Incomplete**

### **17. Are districts able to use Pass/Incomplete for grading?**

For the final spring term(s), seniors shall be awarded credit based on a Pass/Incomplete determination. For grading outside of the final spring term(s), this has been and continues to be a local decision. Please consider possible implications, such as GPA and NCAA eligibility criteria. (See NCAA Eligibility question below.)

**18. Will districts have flexibility in interpreting the pass/fail or pass/incomplete guidance?**

ODE's guidance will supersede local decision making as authorized by Executive Order 20-08 in response to COVID-19. All of Oregon's districts will assign Pass/Incomplete to students for any coursework completed during the COVID-19 school closure.

**19. Can we be allowed to give letter grades? I have seniors who pass/incomplete will harm based on them taking dual credit courses, and counting on this term to boost their GPA.**

All of Oregon's districts will assign Pass/Incomplete to students for any coursework completed during the COVID-19 school closure. Letter grades will not be allowed. Every student in the nation is in a similar situation and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission and universities across the globe will understand the impact on the Class of 2020. It is our responsibility to provide Oregon's seniors with graduation pathways that support their collective future.

**20. We have foreign exchange students who were required to go back to their country of origin. They use this year as a part of their graduation requirements. Can we apply the Pass/Incomplete option to those students even if they are not seniors, as this is their last time being impacted by our system?**

Yes.

**21. For courses less than one-credit, where district grading software may not accurately reflect a students' mastery or proficiency, can teachers make revisions to accurately reflect student learning?**

Yes. Teachers' professional judgement counts and will be critical to determining student proficiency. If grading software doesn't reflect student learning as of the March 13 date, teachers should make changes with clear notes or documentation to support their determination.

**22. What about seniors who need grades for the Oregon Promise 2.50 GPA requirement?**

Student GPAs will be generated based on the "freezing" of grades as of March 13, following the guidance outlined. [Oregon Office of School Access and Completion](#) (OSAC) is working on accommodations due to the interruptions from COVID-19 and the resulting school closure. Please encourage seniors to continue their Oregon Promise application even if they are unsure they will receive a 2.5 GPA or above. Additionally, encourage all seniors to complete the FAFSA or ORSAA student aid applications so they are considered for federal, state and institutional financial aid. Districts may need to make plans for staff to verify student GPA during summer 2020. School staff can reach out to the staff at the [Office of Student Access and Completion](#) with any questions or for assistance.

**23. On a semester system, if a senior received an F for the first semester in a year-long senior English course, and the school worked to remediate and the student passed senior English for the 1st semester, when it comes to the 2nd semester of English does the student receive passing credit in senior English for the 2nd semester regardless of what they were receiving as of March 13?**

No. But this is a student you've clearly succeeded with and know how to support. Therefore, we encourage you to place your focus on helping connect and re-engage this student based on their grade as of March 13.

**24. Will the final transcript for seniors look any different given the Pass/Incomplete grading scale?**

Potentially, yes. And, this will likely be true for student transcripts across the nation as nearly every senior is affected by COVID-19 school closures. Transcripts can reflect Pass/Incomplete indicators without having negative impact for students' future pathway. Districts should consider how they present student transcripts, including the possibility of attaching a letter that indicates the Pass/Incomplete status as reflective of the COVID-19 school closure for the Class of 2020. This practice has also been used by districts in the case of closures for natural disasters, such as the New Orleans Hurricane Katrina.

**25. Does Graduation Pathways 2020 mean students will not take any course third trimester and simply be awarded a pass/no-pass grade, for no work whatsoever, that is commensurate with what was earned first trimester?**

Yes, students under this guidance in a trimester system are awarded credits based on prior coursework. However, the grade that is utilized should come from the preceding trimester which would be the 2nd trimester, not the first. In some cases, where coursework is offered in the first and third trimester (skipping the 2nd) then yes, you would use the first trimester grade.

**26. If our students need to complete all three trimesters with passing grade, to earn credit. How do we apply this model?**

A: If a student needs credits after applying this guidance, the district needs to use the [Distance Learning for All](#) approach and review flexible [Credit Options](#).

**27. What about the senior who had an F in the grading term at the time of school closure, and they were awarded an Incomplete for that term. And, the student does not demonstrate enough evidence of learning to earn a passing grade for the course by August 31, 2020.**

The senior would not likely pass the course and credit would not be awarded. If the course and/or credit was required for graduation, the student may need to enroll in credit-recovery or consider an alternate pathway (i.e., additional schooling for the 2020-2021 school year, high school equivalency programs like the GED, etc.). **However**, in some cases districts may determine that credit should be awarded if there is a larger achievement pattern that deserves consideration. Upon review of the totality of the student's educational experience, if it is determined that credit is justified, the decision should be supported with documentation.

## **Meaningful Engagement of the Class of 2020 Beyond Credit Attainment**

### **28. How can we help students with safety and social-emotional and mental health?**

As we engage with students and families in new environments and in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, we have received several questions about supports and resources for navigating issues of student safety and social-emotional and mental health. Please see the [ODE COVID-19 website](#) for Mental Health and Social Support resources across a range of topics. If you have a specific concern not addressed, contact [ODECOVID19@ode.state.or.us](mailto:ODECOVID19@ode.state.or.us).

### **29. To clarify, if seniors were passing until March 13, then they are not required to participate in the “Distance Learning for All” plan for the remainder of the semester- other than to engage in College/Career services?**

Yes. Here’s a quick distillation of what’s in the full guidance on this subject:

- All of our seniors, regardless of credit status, deserve our personal attention, encouragement, and consistent emotional support.
- Reach out to students and their families, by April 30, 2020, to affirm Oregon Diploma 2020 credit requirements have been met. Outline a plan to continue senior’s learning and transition to career and college. For seniors on an IEP who are graduating with a regular diploma, this must include notice of termination of IEP services upon commensurate with graduation date or the transition services offered during the closure.

### **30. What’s going to be available to students to complete work by August?**

For seniors, we are asking districts to keep growing and building any and all supports that will help a senior graduate throughout the summer. This likely means continuing summer school efforts and broadening the access students may have to this kind of sustained learning environment.

### **31. What about students who are immigrants and/or refugees that might have language barriers at home, how are they being supported?**

First and foremost, the focus needs to be on student and family safety (emotional and physical) and secure access to food and shelter. Additionally, there is a lot of fear and distrust among our immigrant and/or refugee population so it is critical that outreach and contact be initiated by people that are known and trusted within the community. Ideally, this may be a teacher or community liaison. This includes honoring home language and culture and considering the strengths and needs of students we name in the introduction and in the equity and access section of this guidance. As educators we have now become guests in the homes and communities of the students and families we serve. We ask that districts work from a place of honoring and harnessing assets including home language, family (siblings and extended family), and culture. And, district leaders should seek out other districts who are doing this well and learn from them.

**32. If a student does not finish the whole class course, say in Algebra II, how will they have the knowledge needed to go into the next math class in college?**

One of the strengths of this question is its attention to learning beyond a grade or a credit. To honor this question, we are giving you our best response, even if not fully satisfying. Learning is our natural state and students at all developmental ages are learners. Grades and credits are proxies for learning. Students enter college coursework in transitions that don't match their prior knowledge or methods of learning a subject with how the college offers the same or similar content. The transitions required now for the Class of 2020 asks something of all educators, those sending and those receiving, and of the students to focus on what learning they need to make the critical connections and find their way forward. We also ask community colleges and universities to be creative and caring in addressing the unintended learning gaps that this global crisis is causing.

**33. Will AP and IB testing still occur? Will students still be able to earn college credit through AP and IB Testing?**

The College Board has released information as of March 20 regarding AP Testing. Information can be found on their website at [AP Updates for Schools Impacted by Coronavirus](#). At-home testing options will be available and will be 45-minute, online free response tests. For each AP subject, there will be two different testing dates. Optional, free online learning resources are also available on the College Board website.

The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) will not hold exams. Students will be awarded a Diploma or a Course Certificate which reflects their standard of work. [IBO posted an FAQ](#).

**34. Are current high school seniors eligible to participate in Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) sanctioned activities during the 2020-2021 school year?**

Please refer to OSAA for this guidance. Information is available on the [OSAA COVID-19](#) website.

**9th - 11th grade students**

**35. Does this guidance apply to 9th - 11th grade?**

No, and we recognize that this is our next priority. We will be working to engage partners in the field to assist with this new guidance.

**36. Where does Essential Skills fit for the class of 2021? So did you say 11th graders will not have to complete the personalized learning or essential skills requirements to graduate in 2021?**

Essential Skills and Personalized Learning requirements for the Class of 2021 will be suspended (Career Related Learning Experiences (CRLEs), Extended Application, and Education Plan and Profile). **Note: This will require future State Board of Education action and OAR revision.**

## **Guidance for Students Who are Experiencing Disability**

### **37. I'm concerned about students on IEPs and students with disabilities, what are the additional support for these students and families?**

Students protected under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) require further consideration under the law. In determining status towards graduation using the Pass/Incomplete status, districts must consider the additional guidance below to ensure our commitment to equity and access for students with IEPs.

### **38. What should I know about seniors with IEPs on track to graduate?**

See section 4D of the *Distance Learning for All Guidance* for information about communicating with families about transitioning services and FAPE requirements.

### **39. What additional considerations are there for seniors with IEPs who may need credits to graduate?**

See section 4D of the *Distance Learning for All Guidance* for information on reviewing appropriate services and supports, documentation, and communicating with families.

### **40. Will there be an appeal or due process if a student experiencing disability disagrees on the provision of special education services?**

For students who experience disability and have an IEP, there are several procedural safeguards in place that are protected under federal law. These remain in effect when a district implements "Distance Learning for All". The closure of schools and the shift to Distance Learning for All ensures that each district has an obligation to the provisions of FAPE for all students protected under IDEA. This will require strong partnership and flexibility as we all work together to meet the needs of our students during this emergency school closure.

### **41. What about modified diplomas?**

The Graduation Pathways 2020 guidance includes specific requirements for IEP teams when a student finishes with a modified or extended diploma. Students who are working toward modified and extended diplomas deserve personalized attention and prioritized support as they may be particularly vulnerable during this time of school closure.

### **42. Will ODE be releasing guidance and providing support specific to EI/ECSE?**

Specific guidance for EI/ECSE has been released in the [FAQ](#) (within the Students Who Experience Disability section) and Memo on EI/ECSE services.

## **Social Distancing/CDC Guidance**

### **43. Has there been any conversation allowing a very small number of students (who are failing or who do not have phone or internet access) to come to campus?**

We are unable to have any physical interaction with students that may jeopardize health and safety (per OHA). After a review by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), schools may NOT



provide instruction to any K-12 students at physical school sites for any reason or for any duration of time--regardless of size of group or number of students

The only exception to this guidance will come in the form of ways districts meet the [Executive Order 20-08](#) to provide child care for front line staff, such as health care workers and emergency responders. Two links are relevant in providing childcare: [Temp changes to child care rules](#) and this ELD [Toolkit](#) for districts.

## **Higher Education**

### **44. How will this guidance impact college bound seniors and admissions?**

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) is convening a task force to look at this issue and guidance will be forthcoming. It is important to note that students and colleges around the world are impacted by COVID-19 and school closures. In short, the majority of seniors in the nation will be facing the same challenge and we expect universities to be appropriately responsive. In Oregon's model, students are earning all required credits for graduation. While some match our requirements, no state requires more credit for a diploma than Oregon.

### **45. How will this closure impact accelerated learning courses such as AP, IB, and Dual Credit and seniors taking college level courses?**

The College Board, International Baccalaureate and postsecondary institutions will all have varying responses. Please check their respective websites for updates.

### **46. How will this impact Oregon Promise?**

[Oregon Office of School Access and Completion](#) (OSAC) is working on accommodations due to the interruptions from COVID-19 and the resulting school closure. Encourage seniors to continue their Oregon Promise application even if they are unsure they will receive a 2.5 GPA or above. Encourage seniors to complete the FAFSA or ORSAA student aid applications so they can be considered for federal, state and institutional financial aid. Districts may need to make plans for staff to verify student GPA during summer 2020. School staff can reach out to the staff at the [Office of Student Access and Completion](#) with any questions or for assistance.

### **47. How does Pass/Fail affect NCAA eligibility and admittance into higher education? And is the NCAA also upholding the pass /incomplete or will student athletes need a letter grade?**

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; at present this remains our guidance.

As seniors are graduating, their credits/curriculum may be adjusted due to school closures, so there may be individual waivers that will need to be submitted for students' initial eligibility. At this time the NCAA is trying to get a feel for what high schools/states are doing to allow students to complete the coursework necessary to graduate, then they will assess the waiver system as needed. Schools in contact directly with the NCAA should anticipate being asked to indicate if they are going to offer and operate "online school" for the remainder of the course work required.

Here are a few additional resources that might be helpful at this time:

- [NCAA Coronavirus resource page](#)
- [Oregon School Activities Association COVID-19 page](#)
- [ACT Test Pushed back to June 13](#)
- [SAT cancelled for March, but still scheduled on June 6](#)

**48. Will higher education require students from the class of 2020 to take remedial credits upon entering college because they did not finish the entire senior year?**

We are not in a position to predict how the entire field of higher education will respond or what action they may take. However, we are in conversations with many public universities who are pledging care and support to the Class of 2020. We do anticipate there will be flexibility for seniors from higher education.

**49. With continued conversations with HECC around Dual Credit, is there discussion about our local colleges who offer dual credit (PCC, MHCC, OIT, PSU) going to P/Incomplete like many colleges around the country right now? That may resolve the grade issue.**

ODE will continue to pursue these conversations with the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. As of April 8, this has not yet been determined.

**Governance, School Boards and Local Decision-Making**

**50. Will the guidance from ODE override local district policy requirements regarding graduation, or will our Boards need to modify our policy locally?**

ODE's guidance will supersede local decision making as authorized by Executive Order 20-08 in response to COVID-19. Local school boards will not have to modify local policy.