

# OREGONIANS' EDUCATION PRIORITIZATION

## REAL-WORLD SKILLS, TEACHER PAY, AND COLLEGE ALTERNATIVES

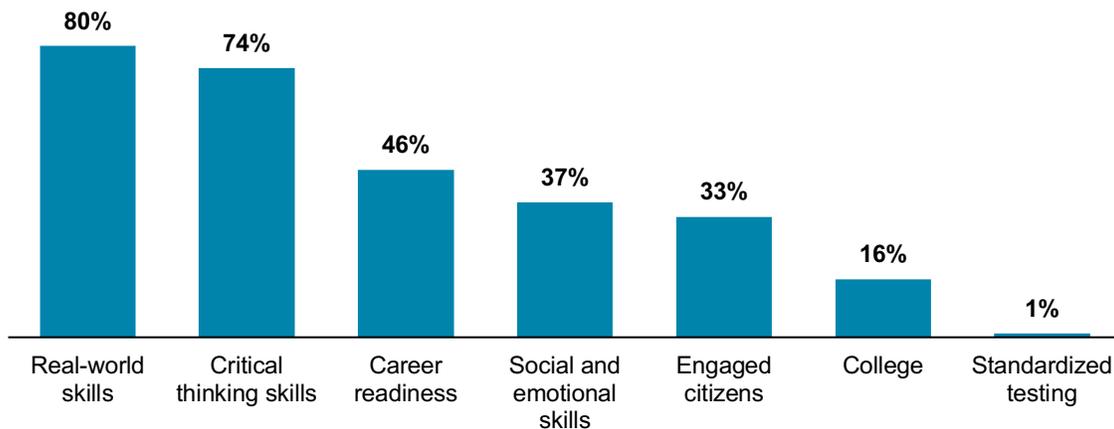
DHM Panel August Survey Results  
August 14, 2019

As the summer comes to a close, students, families, teachers, and schools are gearing up for the new academic year. The start of a school year brings reflection, goal setting, and the opportunity for change. In this spirit, we asked Oregonians for their priorities for the state's educational system.

These findings come from the August fielding of our DHM Panel. The survey was conducted from July 17 to 25, 2019, and surveyed 574 Oregonians. The results were weighted by age, gender, area of the state, political party, and level of education to ensure a representative sample of Oregon residents. The margin of error for this survey ranges from  $\pm 2.5\%$  to  $\pm 4.1\%$ .

### Oregonians prioritize real-world skills and career readiness over testing.

A strong majority of Oregonians say that real-world and critical thinking skills should be top priorities for Oregon's K–12 public education system. Nearly half prioritize career readiness and only 16% prioritize college preparedness. Preparing students for standardized testing is by far the lowest priority among those tested.

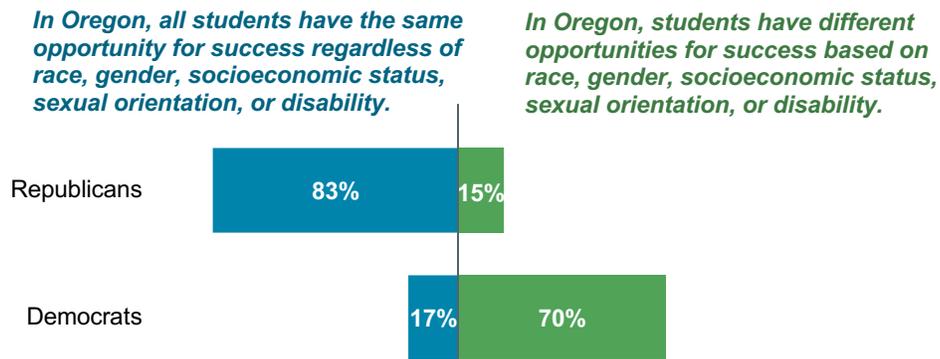


Party affiliation plays a role in the priorities that Oregonians set for Oregon's schools. For example, Republicans (63%) are more likely to say that preparing students for careers should be a priority than Democrats (39%).

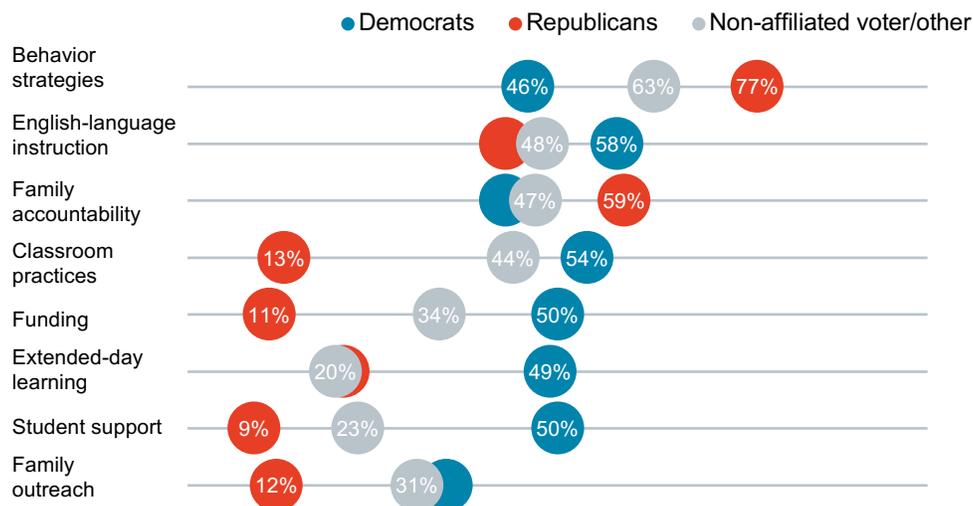
## Oregonians are split on the existence of the achievement gap and favor more traditional solutions.

41% of Oregonians say that all students have the same opportunities for success regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or disability while 50% say that students have different opportunities for success based on these categories.

Party affiliation plays a significant role in the way that Oregonians' view student opportunity for success. Republicans (83%) are more likely to say that students have the same opportunities for success than Democrats (17%). Meanwhile, Democrats (70%) are more likely to say that students have different opportunities for success than Republicans (15%).



When rating the importance of strategies aimed at closing the achievement gap, a majority of Oregonians (60%) say that it is “very important” to implement classroom behavior management strategies that hold students accountable. This is followed by English-language instruction (52%) and holding families accountable for student absenteeism and performance (49%) as the next highest rated strategies. Oregonians gave lower ratings of importance to culturally responsive strategies such as teaching to diverse learning styles (40%) and outreach to students’ families (28%).



Party affiliation is also a factor in how Oregonians view the importance of strategies to close the achievement gap. While party does not play a significant role in support for English-language instruction and family accountability, it is a driving factor in support for classroom behavior strategies. Republicans (77%) are more likely to say classroom behavior strategies are very important to close the achievement gap than Democrats (46%). Aside from the top three strategies, all other strategies are much more favored by Democrats than Republicans.

### Oregonians favor additional compensation and support for teachers.

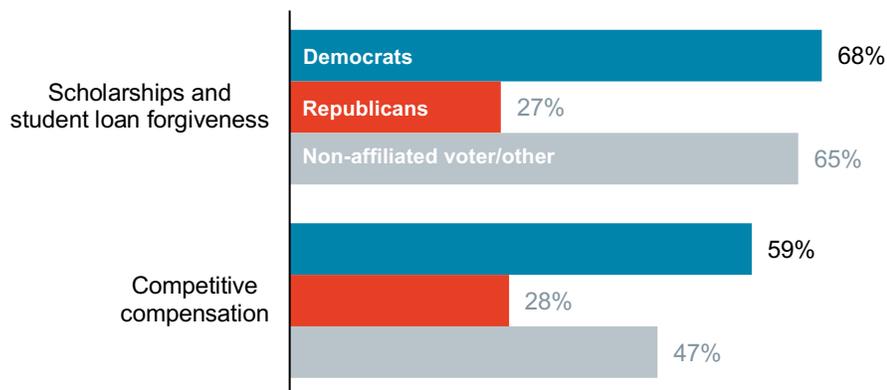
Oregonians guessed that the average starting salary for a teacher with a bachelor’s degree is \$38,076, which was slightly higher than the actual average for the 2018–19 school year (\$37,698<sup>1</sup>). Oregonians think that teachers should be paid 25% more, an average starting salary of \$48,777.



**Oregonians think teachers' starting salary is \$38,076 ...and should be \$48,777**

The top three strategies that Oregonians say should be a priority for addressing the current teacher shortage are offering scholarships and student loan forgiveness to encourage careers in education (56%), providing mentorship to new teachers (48%), and offering competitive compensation (48%).

Here too, party affiliation impacts the strategies that Oregonians favor. Democrats (68%) and Independents (65%) are more likely to favor offering scholarships and student loan forgiveness than Republicans (27%). Democrats (59%) are also more likely than Republicans (28%) to favor offering competitive compensation to attract and retain teachers.

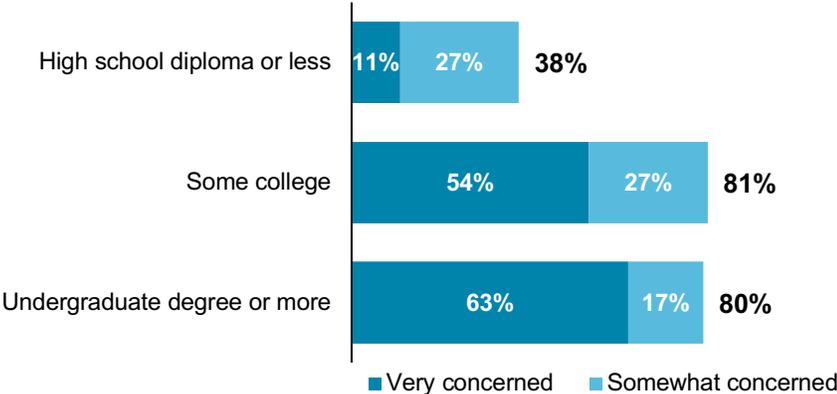


<sup>1</sup> [http://www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Employee\\_Management/Salary\\_Survey\\_Book.aspx](http://www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Employee_Management/Salary_Survey_Book.aspx)

**Oregonians question the value of college, are concerned about student loans, and want alternatives to traditional higher education.**

In light of the continual increase in college tuition, 70% of Oregonians say that a college degree is less valuable today than it was 50 years ago. Age plays a significant role in how Oregonians view the value of a college degree, as younger Oregonians (76%) are more likely to say that a college degree is less valuable today than Oregonians who are 65 years old and over (42%).

74% of Oregonians are concerned about student loan debt in America. Party affiliation and education level plays a role in concern about student loan debt. Democrats (89%) are more likely to say they are concerned about student loan debt than Republicans (64%). Oregonians with undergraduate degrees or more (80%) and those with some college or a 2-year degree (81%) are more likely to report concern over student loan debt than Oregonians with high school diplomas or less (38%).



When rating policy proposals to address student loan debt on the national level, Oregonians largely support expanding opportunities for alternative education paths (68%). This is followed by support for lowering caps on interest rates for student loans (44%) and providing universal free public college (38%).

**DHM Panel Education**  
**July 17–25 2019**  
**N=574; ±2.5% to ±4.1%.**

**WARM-UP**

1. All things considered, do you think Oregon is headed in the right direction, or off on the wrong track?

Response category	n=574
Right direction	36%
Wrong track	52%
Don't know	12%

**K–12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

The following questions are about Oregon's K–12 public education system.

2. Did you ever attend a K–12 public school in Oregon?

Response category	n=552
Yes	62%
No	38%
Don't know	--

[New page]

3. [If Yes] How satisfied are you with your experience attending Oregon's K–12 public schools?

Response category	n=337
Very satisfied	24%
Somewhat satisfied	45%
Not too satisfied	18%
Not at all satisfied	10%
Don't know	3%

[New page]

Ask all

What grade would you give the following aspects of the K–12 public education system in Oregon?

[Randomize]

Response category	A	B	C	D	F	Don't know
4. Your local public schools	9%	29%	20%	17%	11%	14%
5. Oregon's public schools	1%	20%	29%	21%	13%	16%
6. Teachers	23%	35%	17%	6%	5%	13%
7. Administrators	2%	16%	29%	20%	16%	16%
8. School boards	2%	18%	22%	23%	14%	21%
9. Support staff	18%	29%	23%	7%	5%	18%

[New page]

10. Which of the following statements most closely matches your view of Oregon’s public education system, even if neither matches your opinion exactly? **[Rotate]**

Response category	n=551
Our K–12 schools do not have a funding problem; if they spent what they have more efficiently they could meet the needs of all students.	39%
Our K–12 schools have a serious funding problem; there’s simply not enough money to meet the needs of all students.	47%
Don’t know	13%

**[New page]**

11. Select up to three priorities which should be the focus of Oregon’s K–12 public education system? **[Check boxes][Randomize]**

Response category	n=552
Prepare students for college	16%
Help students develop social and emotional skills	37%
Prepare students for careers	46%
Prepare students for standardized testing	1%
Help students develop real-world skills for adulthood	80%
Help students develop critical thinking skills	74%
Prepare students to be engaged citizens	33%
None of these	1%
Don’t know	2%

**[New page]**

In Oregon, how important is it to: **[Randomize]**

Response category	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not at all important	Don’t know
12. Have a teaching force that reflects the racial and ethnic diversity of the student population	25%	32%	27%	14%	2%
13. Require all teachers to be trained in culturally responsive teaching	26%	33%	18%	20%	4%
14. Integrate the cultural knowledge of ethnically diverse students into curriculum	25%	27%	26%	17%	5%

15. Which of the following statements most closely matches your view of opportunity in Oregon’s public education system, even if neither matches your opinion exactly? **[Rotate]**

Response category	n=549
In Oregon, all students have the same opportunities for success regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or disability.	41%
In Oregon, students have different opportunities for success based on race, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or disability.	50%
Don’t know	9%

**[New page]**

In the past few years, Oregon's graduation rate has improved. However, the achievement gap between white students and students of color persists.

16. What do you think is the primary reason that this achievement gaps between white students and students of color persists in Oregon? **[Open]**

17. How important it is to close the achievement gap between white students and students of color in Oregon's K–12 public schools?

<b>Response category</b>	<b>n=547</b>
Very important	49%
Somewhat important	28%
Not too important	13%
Not at all important	5%
Don't know	5%

**[New page]**

Below are some strategies schools could employ to close the achievement gap. How important do you consider each strategy to be? **[Randomize]**

<b>Response category</b>	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Somewhat important</b>	<b>Not too important</b>	<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
18. Comprehensive student support such as medical and social services	32%	35%	19%	12%	2%
19. Outreach to students' families such as having family centers in schools	28%	44%	14%	6%	9%
20. Extended day learning such as full day pre-K, kindergarten, and summer camp programs	33%	36%	15%	11%	5%
21. Classroom practices such as teaching to diverse learning styles	40%	30%	14%	11%	5%
22. Additional resources and funding including federal, state, and private funding	35%	34%	16%	12%	3%
23. English-language instruction for students for whom English is not a first-language	52%	28%	10%	7%	3%
24. Implement classroom behavior management strategies that hold students accountable	60%	26%	5%	3%	7%
25. Holding families accountable for student absenteeism and academic performance	49%	29%	10%	7%	5%

**[New page]**

## TEACHERS

The next set of questions focus on Oregon's public-school teachers.

26. What do you think is the average starting salary for a teacher with a bachelor's degree in the state of Oregon? Please enter a whole number without a dollar sign or commas. **[Open]**

Response category	n=497
Mean	\$38,076

27. What do you think the average starting salary should be for a teacher with a bachelor's degree in the state of Oregon? Please enter a whole number without a dollar sign or commas. **[Open]**

Response category	n=496
Mean	\$48,777

**[New page]**

Grade how well Oregon's public schools does each of the following: **[Randomize]**

Response category	A	B	C	D	F	Don't know
28. Attracting and retaining talented teachers	6%	18%	29%	16%	7%	24%
29. Providing competitive compensation to teachers	10%	21%	24%	13%	9%	22%
30. Offering professional development opportunities for teachers	10%	23%	17%	6%	1%	42%
31. Providing competitive pension and retirement benefits	26%	28%	14%	5%	6%	20%

**[New page]**

During the Great Recession, Oregon lost 3,800 teaching positions and the state's teacher shortage continues today. Below are some policy strategies that have been proposed to address the teacher shortage.

32. Select up to three strategies that you think should be a priority for Oregon. **[Check boxes][Randomize]**

Response category	n=543
Offer scholarships and student loan forgiveness to encourage careers in education	56%
Recruit and prepare community members to teach in their local school districts	25%
Provide mentoring and school-wide support systems for new teachers	48%
Develop school principals who know who to attract and retain teachers	28%
Offer competitive compensation to attract and retain teachers	48%
Strengthen licensure reciprocity so that teachers can more easily teach in a new state	47%

Response category	n=543
None of these	4%
Don't know	6%

[New page]

33. How important do you think teacher performance evaluations are in measuring teacher quality and developing a high-skilled teacher workforce?

Response category	n=543
Very important	34%
Somewhat important	37%
Not too important	19%
Not at all important	3%
Don't know	8%

[New page]

34. In an effort to support teaching and learning, schools can use the following strategies to measure teacher performance. Choose the top three strategies that you think are most effective in measuring teacher performance. **[Check boxes limited to three responses][Randomize]**

Response category	n=542
Student ratings	51%
Peer ratings	59%
Self-evaluation	19%
Parent feedback	56%
Employer/administrator ratings	48%
Student standardized test scores	22%
Teaching scholarship	14%
Don't know	7%

[New page]

## COLLEGE EDUCATION AND STUDENT LOANS

The next few questions are about college education and student loans.

35. Thinking of your closest friends, would you say most of them have a college degree, some of them have a college degree and others do not, or most of them do not have a college degree?

Response category	n=540
Most have a college degree	36%
Some have a college degree and others do not	42%
Most do not have a college degree	21%
Don't know	1%

36. Do you agree with the following statement? In order to get ahead in life these days, it's necessary to get a college education.

Response category	n=540
Strongly agree	15%
Somewhat agree	35%
Somewhat disagree	30%

Response category	n=540
Strongly disagree	21%
Don't know	--

37. As college tuition has continued to rise, many people have questioned whether the cost of higher education is worth the benefit. Do you believe a college degree is more valuable or less valuable than it was 50 years ago?

Response category	n=540
More valuable	11%
Same value	17%
Less valuable	70%
Don't know	2%

[New page]

38. Do you currently have, or have you ever had, student loan debt?

Response category	n=537
I currently have student loan debt	19%
I have had student loan debt in the past	30%
I have never had student loan debt	50%
I prefer not to answer	2%

39. **[Split A]** According to current statistics, Americans now owe \$1.5 trillion in student loans. How concerned, if at all, are you about the amount of student loan debt in America?

Response category	n=288
Very concerned	43%
Somewhat concerned	31%
Not too concerned	18%
Not at all concerned	6%
Don't know	1%

40. **[Split B]** How concerned, if at all, are you about the amount of student loan debt in America?

Response category	n=252
Very concerned	52%
Somewhat concerned	24%
Not too concerned	16%
Not at all concerned	6%
Don't know	1%

[New page]

Student loan debt is an issue that is being discussed at the national level. The following are policy proposals that have been put forth as ways to address rising student loan debt.

41. Select up to three proposals that you support the most. **[Check boxes]** **[Randomize]**

Response category	n=540
Cancelling student loan debt	22%
Providing universal free public college	38%
Lowering caps on interest rates for student loans	44%
Providing full-ride scholarships to college for low-income students	33%
Eliminating federal student loan programs	14%

Response category	n=540
Eliminating caps on interest rates for student loans and setting rates based on risk	6%
Expanding opportunities for alternative education paths, such as career and technical education, online instruction, and accelerated or transfer programs	68%
Allowing employers to automatically deduct student loan payments from employee pay	21%
None of these	3%
Don't know	2%

## DEMOGRAPHICS

These last questions are for demographic purposes only. Your responses are confidential

42. What is your zip code? **[Open]**

43. In what year were you born?

Response category	n=538
18–34	11%
35–44	35%
45–54	17%
55–64	18%
65+	19%

44. With which of the following gender identities do you identify? Check all that apply.

Response category	n=531
Male	49%
Female	49%
Non-binary or gender non-conforming	1%
Trans	--
Other	n=2

45. With which of the following races of ethnicities do you identify? Check all that apply.

Response category	n=529
African	--
Asian or Pacific Islander	1%
Black or African American	1%
Hispanic or Latino	3%
Middle Eastern or North African	--
Native American or American Indian	3%
Slavic	--
White or Caucasian	96%
Other	4%

46. What is your party registration?

Response category	n=536
Democrat	46%
Republican	27%
Independent Party of Oregon	6%
Registered with some other party	5%

Not registered as a member of a party (non-affiliated voter)	17%
Not registered to vote	--

47. When it comes to politics and elections are you?

Response category	n=537
Very liberal	17%
Somewhat liberal	26%
Middle of the road	27%
Somewhat conservative	20%
Very conservative	10%

48. What is the highest level of education you have received?

Response category	n=538
Less than high school diploma	1%
High school diploma	12%
2-year degree/some college/trade	60%
4-year degree	14%
Graduate degree	13%

49. What was your total household income for 2018? Remember to include everyone and your best guess is okay.

Response category	n=520
Less than \$25,000	14%
\$25,00–\$49,999	18%
\$50,000–\$74,999	21%
\$75,000–\$99,999	17%
\$100,000–\$149,999	23%
\$150,000 or more	7%

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50. The questions this month were chosen based on feedback from previous respondents. Is there a topic you would like to see covered in next month's survey? **[Open]**