

Assessment for Prosperity Impact Pilot: Post-Secondary Encouragement Tool and Convocation Summary

The School2Work Committee is a growing group of secondary, post-secondary, youth development and workforce representatives coming together to work on increasing the number of students successfully transitioning from high school to college and/or a career in our region. The School2Work Committee is part of a larger initiative, Southern Oregon Success (SORS), which is coalescing a unified system serving children, youth and families (from prenatal-24) that is integrated, measurable and accountable. SORS, in partnership with the Oregon Education Investment Board, is a Regional Achievement Collaborative invested in the educational and life success of all its children and youth, and the OEIB's 40/40/20 vision for Oregon's future.

To better understand the post-secondary encouragement activities currently in place in our region's schools, the committee developed the Post-Secondary Encouragement Tool (PSET), which describes the fundamental supports— for all students, or targeted at parents, small groups, or individuals – that are ideally in place at schools for students to successfully transition to post-secondary training and/or a living wage job. Utilizing the PSET as a guide, small teams (comprised of committee members) interviewed every high school in Jackson, Josephine and Klamath Counties. School staff engaged in the interviews included administrators, college/career counselors, guidance counselors, and/or teachers engaged in career-related learning. Each school was then provided multiple sources of data about their school's graduation and post-secondary outcomes:

1. A summary of their PSET interview.
2. The OR Department of Education "report card" for their particular school.
3. Auxiliary data to their ODE report card that provided more specific data about post-secondary success of their students, including the success of relevant subpopulations, post-secondary persistence and graduation rates for students who transitioned into community college vs. university. All data compared their trends with the state average. Schools reported finding this data extremely valuable. It was generated in partnership with ECONW, Oregon Solutions and the Oregon Prosperity Initiative.

In December 2013, the committee then convened the schools together for a *Post-secondary Encouragement Convocation* to 1) Share promising activities already happening in schools across the region, 2) Identify prioritized needs by county, and as a region, and 3) Initiate relationships with career/workforce and social service partners who offer services that could help their students be more successful. It was attended by over 100 professionals from K-12, Rogue Community College, Southern Oregon University, workforce programs, social service providers, and career-related learning programs. Through a partnership with the Oregon Prosperity Initiative Cylvia Hayes, Oregon's first lady, spoke about her firsthand experience with the barriers youth living in poverty face when transitioning from school to post-secondary training and a job with a living wage.

At the end of the event, each school then identified two Priority Action Points they would like to move on immediately, and with which organizations/programs they would like to partner. In evaluations, almost every school stated that the highest value of the day was meeting community partners, and that they didn't get enough time with them. Utilizing the school's self-identified Priority Action Points, and the realization that community partners play a pivotal role as schools work to successfully address their priorities, the School2Work Committee is focused on strengthening partnerships between schools and community partners. This will be accomplished by developing "Community Liaison Teams" for each school, and holding a second event – in partnership with Oregon Solutions – to develop specific partnerships agreements between interested schools and community partners.