Secretary of State Audit Report

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Oregon Department of Education: Efforts to Close Achievement Gaps

Summary

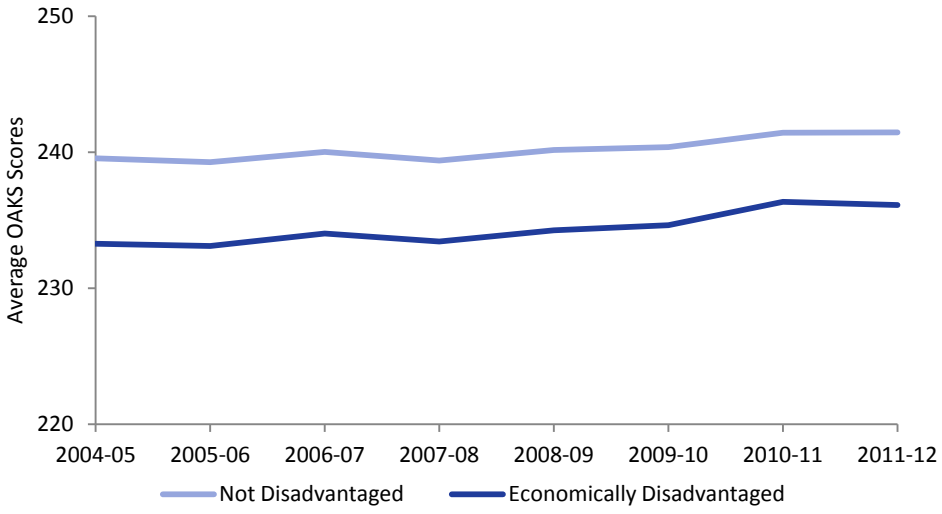
Oregon has significant achievement gaps

Our audit found significant achievement gaps for economically disadvantaged, Hispanic, black, and Native American 8th grade students in the 2011-12 school year. We compared test scores for these student groups to the test scores of reference groups of other students. The difference in test scores between two groups is the achievement gap.

An achievement gap for a specific group indicates they are falling behind in learning. According to research, a five-point gap in test scores as measured by the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) test is equal to one year of learning.

By that measure, Hispanic, black, and Native American 8th graders were at least one year behind in math and reading, having scored on average at least five points lower on the OAKS math and reading tests than other students. Economically disadvantaged 8th graders were one year behind in math, having scored on average at least five points lower on the OAKS math test than non-disadvantaged students (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: 8th Grade Math Economically Disadvantaged Achievement Gap, 2004-05 to 2011-12



Moreover, achievement gaps are larger when minority and economically disadvantaged status are considered together.

Further, we found no improvement for most statewide achievement gaps for 8th grade students from 2004-05 to 2011-12. Only one-third of the schools surveyed were closing the achievement gap in at least one subject. The audit did not identify any schools that were closing all achievement gaps. For a list of the schools we analyzed, see Appendix A.

There are significant social and economic consequences for achievement gaps among the low performing groups. For example, lower achieving students are less likely to graduate from high school, and Oregonians without a high school diploma are more likely to be unemployed, receive public assistance, or be incarcerated at some point in their lifetime.

Achievement gaps among minority and economically disadvantaged students also limit Oregon's ability to meet its education outcome goals. These "40-40-20" goals include 100% high school graduation or equivalent by 2025 with at least 40% of Oregonians earning a community college associate's degree or post-secondary credential and at least 40% earning a bachelor's degree or higher.

Schools that are closing achievement gaps have common practices

We visited some of the middle schools that were closing achievement gaps. Principals and staff from these schools told us about practices they thought contributed to closing their achievement gaps. These practices fell into five key themes:

- **Safe and positive school environment** – Creating a safe and positive school environment was a top priority for these schools, which had well-developed processes for creating respectful learning environments.
- **High expectations and high support** – We observed clearly articulated expectations for student improvement and behavior coupled with support to help all students learn.
- **Teacher collaboration** – Teachers spoke highly of working together to improve instruction and better support students, and they expressed the desire for more time designated for collaboration.
- **Data-informed instruction** – Schools used data extensively for improving instruction, placing students in level appropriate classes, and monitoring student achievement and growth.
- **Strong leadership** – Principals took strong leadership roles, which directly supported effective school practices.

Recommendations

The Oregon Department of Education has made educational equity and closing achievement gaps a priority. For example, the Department is making progress by creating an Education Equity unit and a new report card rating system of schools that considers the achievement gap. However, to better measure success at closing the achievement gap, we recommend using a measurement that highlights the gap as a numerical difference in achievement or other measurement of gap size. Understanding how large achievement gaps are and whether the state is making progress in closing them could assist the Department in determining whether efforts to close the gaps are working, or whether new strategies should be explored.

To help ensure success in meeting its goals for closing achievement gaps, we recommend the Department:

- Develop, analyze, and report an achievement gap measure statewide and at the school level for one or more grade levels. Consider using a gap measure that incorporates the difference in average scores.
- Regularly re-measure achievement gaps, and evaluate and report on the state's progress in closing any achievement gaps.
- Continue with efforts to identify effective school practices linked to achievement gap closing schools, and regularly disseminate this information to school teachers and administrators across the state.
- Provide technical support to schools and school districts to assist them in implementing effective school practices.

Background

Oregon education system

Oregon's PreK-12 education system

The Oregon public school system includes early learning through grade 12 (PreK-12). Oregon has 197 school districts comprised of approximately 1,400 elementary and secondary schools serving more than 567,000 students.

The State Board of Education sets educational policies and standards for Oregon's public schools and oversees the Oregon Department of Education (Department).

In part, the Department is responsible for ensuring school districts comply with state and federal rules and laws. It also holds school districts accountable through regular reporting of student performance.

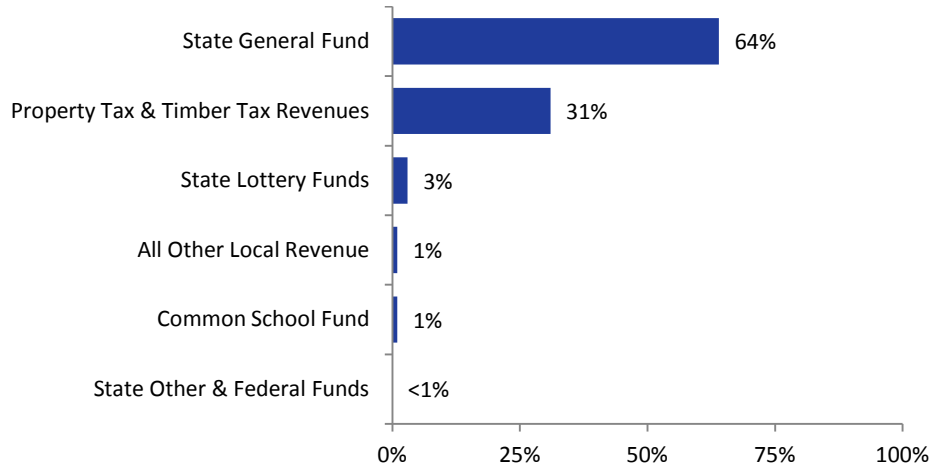
The Department's mission is to foster excellence for every learner through innovation, collaboration, leadership, and service to its education partners.

Besides ensuring compliance and accountability, the Department would like to provide more assistance to its partners focused on improving results, including closing achievement gaps. For example, the Department recently created a new Equity Unit responsible for activities and assistance related to closing achievement gaps, migrant education, civil rights, and English Language Learners support and monitoring.

PreK-12 education funding

Schools are funded mainly by the State General Fund and local property and timber tax revenue. Additional state funds come from the State Lottery, and a small amount from other sources (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: State School Fund Resources, 2013-15 Legislatively Adopted Budget

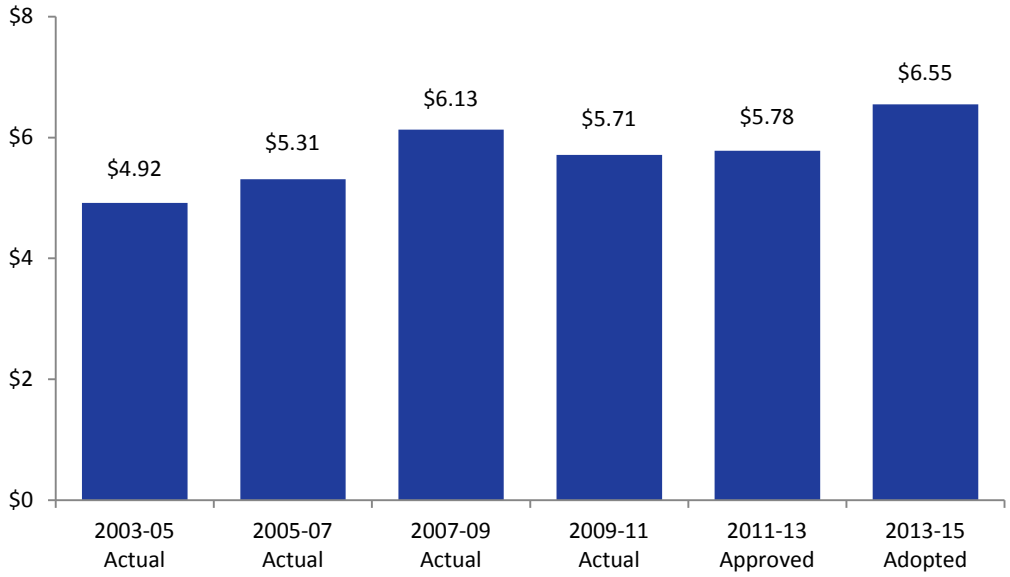


Source: LFO Analysis of 2013-15 Legislatively Adopted Budget

In recent years, state funding for schools has not kept pace with the rate of inflation. Thus, school districts have fewer resources available to address rising costs. As a result, they have reduced administrative and teaching staff, frozen pay, cut professional development, closed schools, and/or cut school days.

However, for the 2013-15 biennium, the Legislature increased state school funding by $774 million to $6.55 billion. This was the largest increase since the 2007-09 budget, when education funding was increased by $824 million from the previous biennium (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: State School Fund Resources by Biennium (in Billions of Dollars)



Source: LFO Analysis of 2013-15 Legislatively Adopted Budget

Key education reform legislation

In recent years, Oregon has experienced significant changes to its education system and leadership. These efforts were framed around establishing an integrated and outcomes-based system of public education.

The Oregon Legislature set a goal of 100% high school graduation or equivalent by 2025. In addition, the Legislature set targets of at least 40% of Oregonians earning a community college associate's degree or post-secondary credential and at least 40% earning a bachelor's degree or higher. This goal is also known as "40-40-20."

The Legislature also passed a bill calling for the creation of a unified system of public education from preschool through graduate school. To implement and support these changes, the Legislature established the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB). The OEIB's role is to coordinate this unified system, drive education policy, and make education investment recommendations to the Legislature.

The OEIB coordinates the efforts of state education agencies, including the:

- Department of Education;
- Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development; and
- Oregon Student Access Commission.

These education agencies determine how best to implement education policies and goals.

Measures of accountability

The Federal No Child Left Behind law requires states to adopt academic standards and an accountability system aligned to those standards. Academic standards are what students are expected to know and do at each grade level. An accountability system includes a student assessment tool designed to measure student progress in meeting academic standards.

In 2010, the State Board of Education adopted the new Common Core State Standards. These new standards, to be fully implemented by the 2014-15 school year, are designed to help ensure all high school graduates are college and career ready in literacy and mathematics.

Since Oregon is moving toward the Common Core State Standards, it is currently transitioning from one assessment tool to another. The assessment being phased out after the 2013-14 school year is the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS). The new assessment, called Smarter Balanced, is designed to measure whether students are meeting the new academic standards.

Oregon's student achievement

Oregon has struggled with student achievement and graduation rates. One study by the Education Week Research Center ranked the state 40th in student achievement compared to other states. This ranking is based on an index of K-12 achievement using 2013 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) data. The index includes graduation rates, measures of achievement for all students, including economically disadvantaged students, and achievement gains over the last 10 years. Oregon also has the second lowest on-time graduation rate compared to other states at 69%.

Oregon fares worse with student achievement for its minority and disadvantaged populations. For example, less than 50% of black, Hispanic, Native American, and Pacific Islander students met or exceeded academic standards for 8th grade math (see Figure 4). Also, only 51% of economically disadvantaged students met or exceeded the standard. Economically disadvantaged students qualify for free or reduced lunch, meaning they come from households with income that does not exceed 185% of the federal poverty line.

Figure 4: Oregon Statewide Student Achievement by Student Subgroup for 2012-13

Student subgroup	8th grade math % meeting or exceeding standard	On-time 4-year graduation rate
Asian	81%	84%
Black	40%	57%
Hispanic	49%	61%
Native American	46%	52%
Pacific Islander	49%	64%
Multi-Ethnic	65%	67%
White	67%	71%
Economically Disadvantaged	51%	60%

Graduation rates are also lower for certain minority and economically disadvantaged students. For example, Native American students had the lowest on-time graduation rate at 52%.

Many interrelated factors contribute to lower achievement and lower graduation rates. These factors vary among schools, school districts, and communities. Factors could be outside or within a school's control. According to research, factors that may impact student achievement include:

- education funding shortfalls;
- large class sizes;
- high absenteeism;
- family income;
- student mobility;
- access to libraries, museums, or other enrichment activities;
- low expectations for student achievement;
- placing groups of students in a separate track with less demanding curriculum;
- cultural differences;
- poor instructional leadership;
- uncertified or inexperienced teachers; and
- poor teacher preparation.

Audit Results

Equity in education is an Oregon priority

Education equity is recognizing the diverse learning needs of students and ensuring all students have the opportunity to learn. The Oregon Education Investment Board and the Department have made educational equity a priority. They believe underperforming students present Oregon's best opportunity to improve overall education outcomes. Due to their commitment to educational equity, both were interested in the results of this audit.

The Department also emphasizes educational equity with the first goal of its 2013-2015 strategic plan—that every student graduates from high school prepared for college, career, and civic life. Helping school districts use best practices to close achievement gaps is an objective listed under that goal. The metric associated with this objective is that by June 2015, achievement gaps in elementary, middle, and high school will close by 5%.

Defining achievement gaps

Achievement gap definitions typically refer to a gap in assessment performance between white and minority students. Recently, researchers have also emphasized the importance of income-based achievement gaps.

Determining how to measure achievement gaps can be a challenge. States often report achievement gaps as the difference in the percentage of students who meet academic standards and those who do not. Meeting academic standards is based on receiving a score above a set threshold on a student assessment. This method can understate the extent of achievement gaps if the focus is only on receiving a passing score.

Using average assessment scores for different student subgroups more accurately illustrates achievement gaps. For example, at one school we analyzed, 82% of economically disadvantaged students and 98% of non-disadvantaged students met state math standards in the 2011-12 school year. Both groups were well above the state's goal of 70% meeting standards. However, the economically disadvantaged student average score was seven points lower than the non-disadvantaged student average. According to research, this seven point gap equates to more than a year's worth of learning.

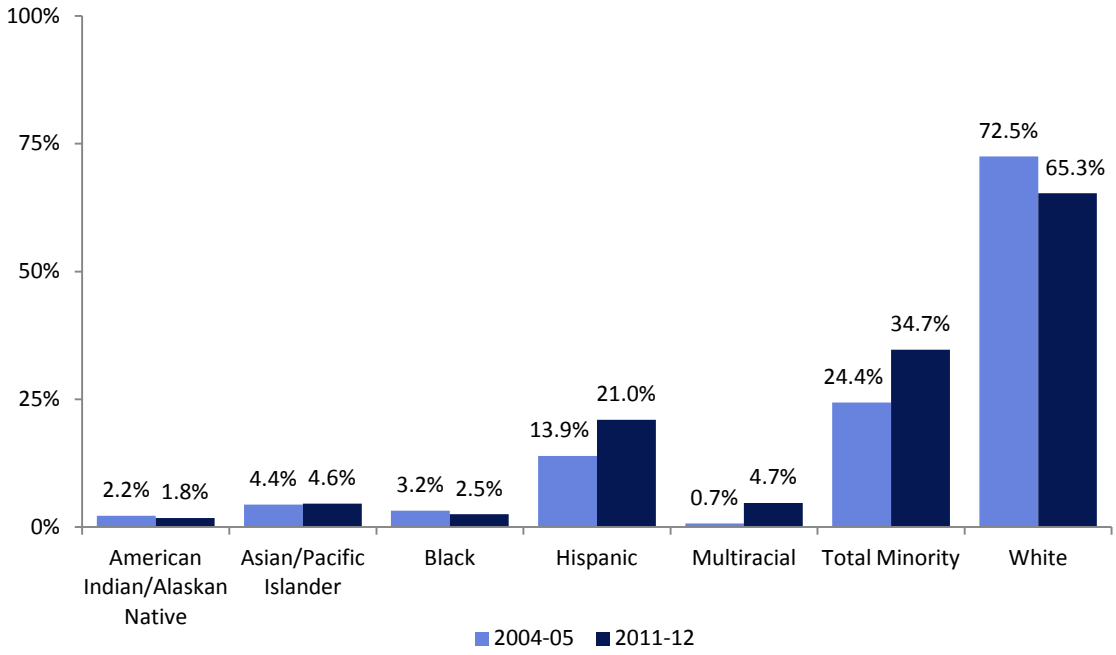
To more accurately assess achievement gaps, we analyzed 8th grade student performance in math and reading using OAKS average assessment scores. We included the economically disadvantaged subgroup and all race/ethnicity subgroups for the statewide 2011-12 achievement gap analysis. However, for our statewide and school trend analyses covering 2004-05 to 2011-12, we focused on economically disadvantaged, Hispanic,

and black subpopulations because they have historically had high achievement gaps.

Changing student populations

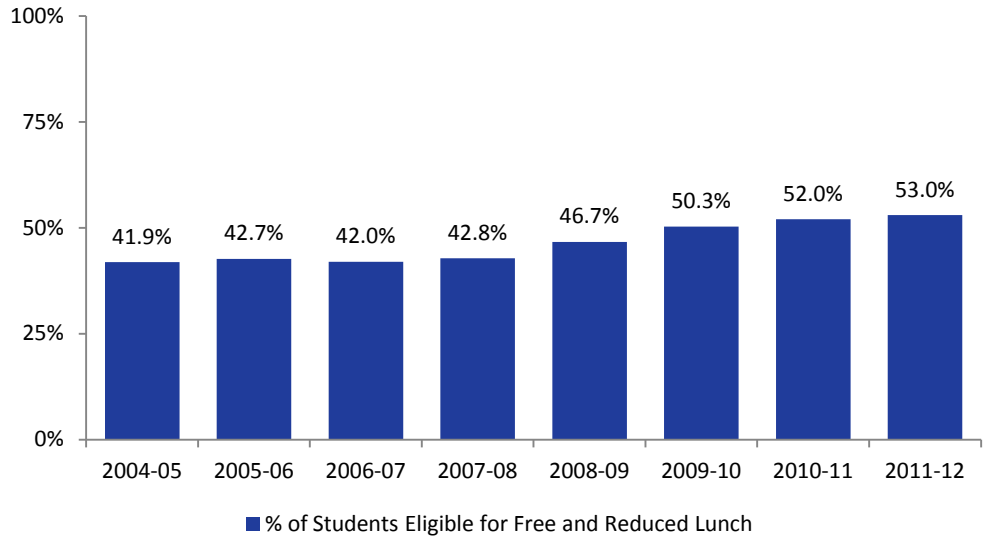
The number of minority students in Oregon has increased over the past eight years, making achievement gaps more important to address. In 2011-12 minority students made up 34.7% of the total 2011-12 K-12 population, which is up from 24.4% in 2004-05 (see Figure 5). Much of that increase has come from the growth in Oregon's Hispanic student population. In 2011-12, Hispanic students represented 21% of Oregon students, which is up from 13.9% in 2004-05.

Figure 5: Oregon Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2004-05 to 2011-12



The number of economically disadvantaged students has also increased. As Figure 6 shows, roughly 42% of students were eligible for free and reduced lunch from 2004-05 to 2007-08. From 2008-09 to 2011-12, the percentage increased each year. Fifty-three percent of students were eligible for free and reduced lunch in 2011-12, which was 11 percentage points higher than 2004-05.

Figure 6: Percent of Oregon Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch, 2004-05 to 2011-12



Oregon has significant achievement gaps

We focused on analyzing the achievement gap for 8th grade students and found significant achievement gaps. However, the National Center for Education Statistics also has reported large achievement gaps in Oregon for 4th grade economically disadvantaged, Hispanic, and black students.

Oregon statewide 8th grade achievement gaps in 2011-12

We found significant achievement gaps for economically disadvantaged, Hispanic, black, and Native American 8th grade students in the 2011-12 school year, though the size of those gaps varied by student subgroup.

To measure achievement gaps for these groups we used 8th grade OAKS assessment scores in math and reading. We calculated the difference between the average score of each subgroup and its reference group. Figure 7 shows the reference group for each subgroup we analyzed.

Figure 7: Student Subgroup and Reference Group Categories

Student Subgroup	Reference Group
Economically Disadvantaged	Not Economically Disadvantaged
Hispanic	White Non-Disadvantaged*
Black	White Non-Disadvantaged*
Native American	White Non-Disadvantaged*
Pacific Islander	White Non-Disadvantaged*
Asian	White Non-Disadvantaged*
White	White Non-Disadvantaged*

*Note: White Non-Disadvantaged excludes economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English language learners.

The size of Oregon's 8th grade achievement gaps in 2011-12 varied depending on the subgroup and subject analyzed. As Figure 8 shows, economically disadvantaged students had an achievement gap of about five points for math and four points for reading. Hispanic and black students were at least six points behind white students in both math and reading. Native American students were at least five points behind white students in both math and reading.

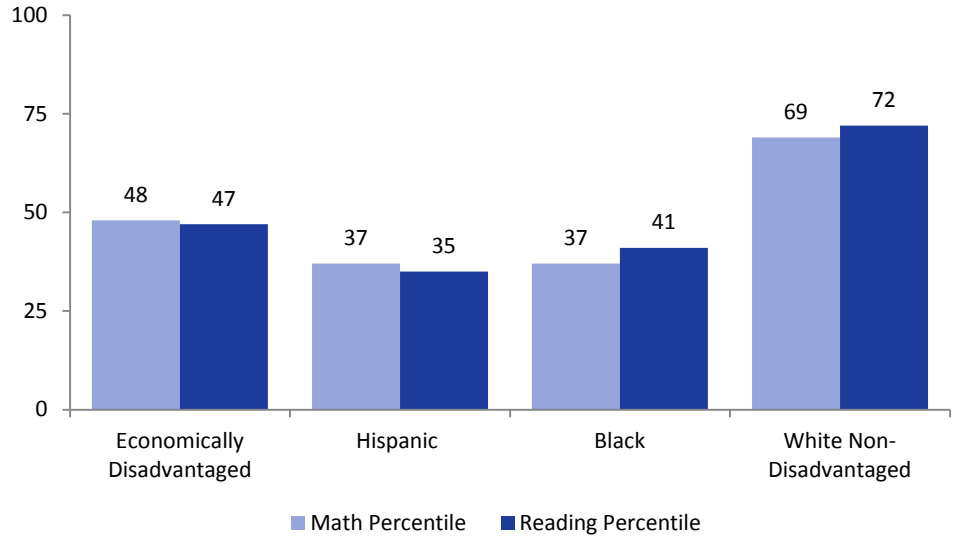
Figure 8: 8th Grade Achievement Gaps in 2011-12, by Student Subgroup

	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Native American	Pacific Islander	Economically Disadvantaged
Math						
Reference Group Average Score	241.4	241.4	241.4	241.4	241.4	241.5
Subgroup Average Score	246.5	233.7	234.4	235.5	238.6	236.1
Achievement Gap	**-5.1**	**7.6**	**7.0**	**5.9**	**2.8**	**5.3**
Reading						
Reference Group Average Score	238.6	238.6	238.6	238.6	238.6	238.5
Subgroup Average Score	239.1	232.6	232.0	233.7	234.7	234.4
Achievement Gap	**-0.4**	**6.0**	**6.6**	**5.0**	**3.9**	**4.1**

*Note: A negative achievement gap number indicates that the student subgroup did not have an achievement gap when compared to the reference group.

Achievement gaps for specific subgroups indicate they are falling behind in learning. According to research, a five-point gap in OAKS assessment scores equals a year of student learning. By that measure, Hispanic, black, and Native American 8th graders were at least one year behind in math and reading. Economically disadvantaged 8th graders were one year behind in math. Putting Oregon's achievement gaps in the context of the entire student population helps illustrate their impact on student learning. For example, white students on average are performing better than 69% of students statewide in math. In contrast, black students on average are performing better than 37% of students in math (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: 8th Grade 2011-12 OAKS Percentile Rank by Subject and Subgroup

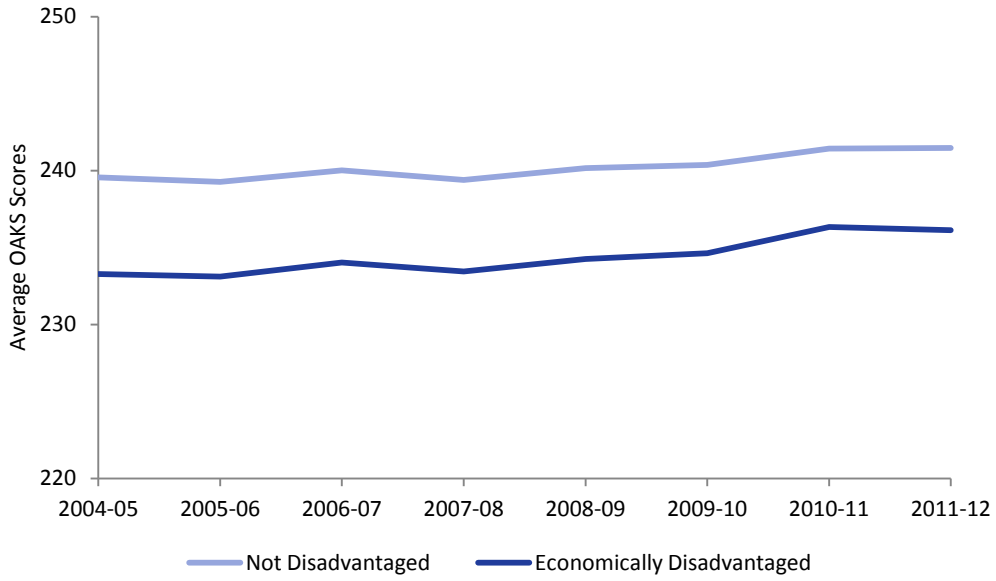


Statewide 8th grade achievement gap trends

We analyzed statewide achievement gap trends for economically disadvantaged, Hispanic, and black 8th graders for an eight year period from 2004-05 to 2011-12. The economically disadvantaged and black achievement gaps remained constant over time in both subjects, while the Hispanic gap narrowed in math and reading over the eight years we analyzed.

The economically disadvantaged achievement gap was larger in math than reading, but both gaps were constant across the eight years. We display figures showing 8th grade achievement gap trends for math in this section, but reading trends were similar. The reading figures are provided in Appendix B. In math, the achievement gap was consistently five to six points for all eight years (see Figure 10). In reading, the gap was consistently around four points.

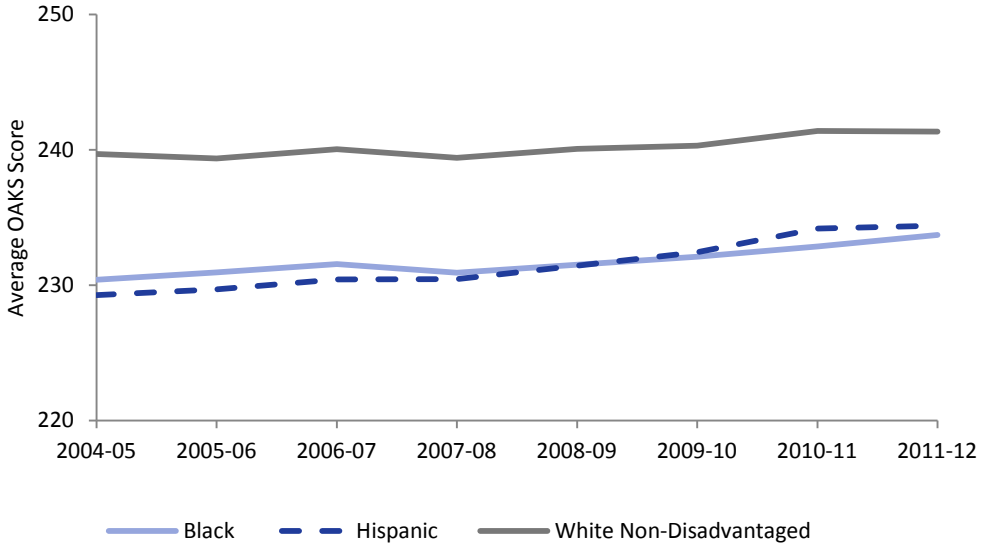
Figure 10: 8th Grade Math Economically Disadvantaged Achievement Gap, 2004-05 to 2011-12



The Hispanic achievement gap narrowed over the eight years we analyzed. In math, the achievement gap was 10 points in 2004-05 and narrowed to seven points in 2011-12 (see Figure 11). In reading, the achievement gap was nine points in 2004-05 and narrowed to under seven points in 2011-12.

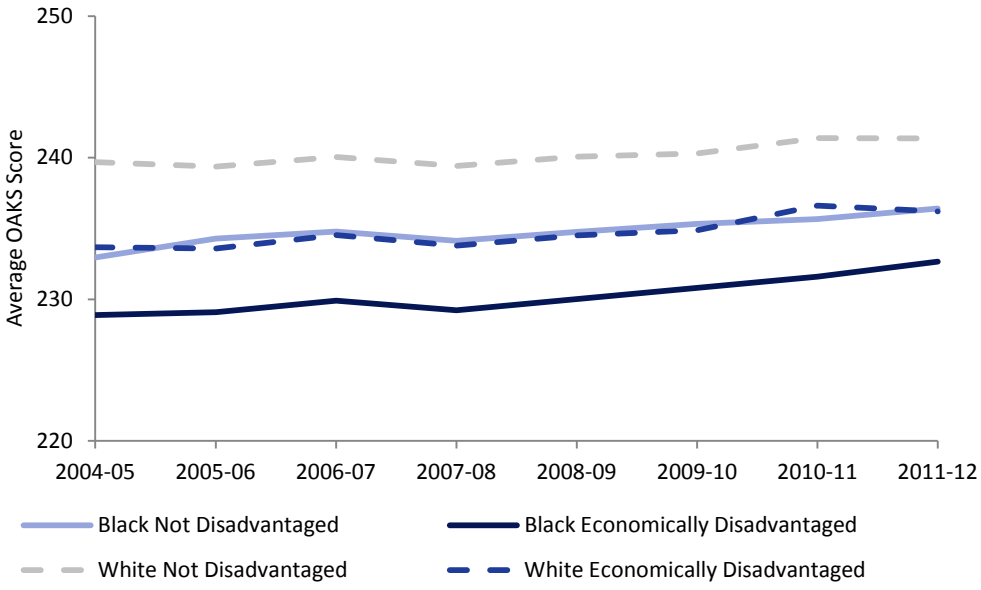
The black achievement gaps were larger than the economically disadvantaged and Hispanic achievement gaps in math and reading, and they remained roughly the same across the eight years we analyzed. In math, the achievement gap remained consistent at around eight points (see Figure 11); while in reading it remained around six points.

Figure 11: 8th Grade Math Hispanic and Black Achievement Gaps, 2004-05 to 2011-12



Achievement gaps are larger when race/ethnicity and economically disadvantaged status are considered together. For example, Figure 12 shows a particularly large gap between the scores of non-disadvantaged white students and those of economically disadvantaged black students. Similar patterns exist for black students in reading and Hispanic students in math.

Figure 12: 8th Grade Math Black Achievement Gap by Economically Disadvantaged Status, 2004-05 to 2011-12



Some schools are closing achievement gaps

Although most statewide 8th grade achievement gaps remained constant over time, our school analysis showed some schools closing achievement gaps. We focused on economically disadvantaged, Hispanic, and black 8th grade achievement gaps in math and reading. Out of the 191 middle schools in 2011-12, there were 120 with large enough populations of 8th graders to analyze. We found 39 schools were closing the achievement gap in at least one subject.

School achievement gap patterns

More schools were closing 8th grade achievement gaps in math than reading. Out of the 120 schools in our analysis, 29 schools were closing a math achievement gap for at least one subgroup, and 24 schools were closing a reading achievement gap. Appendix C shows the locations and achievement gap trends of the 120 middle schools.

Of the schools closing achievement gaps, most were only closing one gap. Out of the 39 schools we identified as closing achievement gaps, 27 schools were only closing achievement gaps in one subject and subgroup. We did not identify any schools that were closing all achievement gaps.

Closing achievement gaps for economically disadvantaged students

Few schools were closing economically disadvantaged 8th grade achievement gaps. Of the 119 schools that met our 20-student population threshold for economically disadvantaged students, 14 schools (11.8%) were closing the achievement gap in math and nine (7.6%) were closing gaps in reading (see Figure 13).

Closing achievement gaps for Hispanic students

We found more schools closing Hispanic 8th grade achievement gaps than any other subgroup. Of the 43 schools that met our 20-student threshold for Hispanic students, as Figure 13 shows, roughly a third showed a trend of closing achievement gaps for these students.

Closing achievement gaps for black students

Ten schools met our six-student population minimum for black students. Only one of these ten was closing the black achievement gap in math (see Figure 13). We did not identify any schools closing the black achievement gap in reading.

Figure 13: Schools Closing Achievement Gaps from 2004-05 to 2011-12, by Subject and Subgroup

	Economically Disadvantaged		Hispanic		Black	
	Math	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Reading
Schools Closing Gap	14	9	14	15	1	0
Total Schools	119	119	43	43	10	10
Percentage	**11.8%**	**7.6%**	**32.6%**	**34.9%**	**10%**	**0%**

Achievement gap closing schools maintain high overall performance

The 39 schools that narrowed achievement gaps in at least one subject did so while maintaining high performance of all students. In almost all of the schools we identified as closing achievement gaps, the reference group was meeting the state's 2011-12 goal of 70% of students meeting proficiency. For a full listing of the 120 schools we analyzed and their achievement gap status, see Appendix A.

Lower achievement can limit future success

Not graduating from high school can limit a student's future opportunities. Oregonians without a high school diploma are less likely to be in the labor force than those with higher education levels. They are also more likely to receive public assistance such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), or Medicaid benefits. Finally, they are more likely to be incarcerated at some point in their lifetime.

Persistent achievement gaps will limit Oregon's ability to meet its 40-40-20 goal by 2025. Low achievement among minority and economically disadvantaged students also has significant social and economic consequences for Oregon.

If achievement gaps continue, it will be difficult for the Department to meet its goal of ensuring that every student graduates from high school prepared for college, career, and civic life. Students who do not meet academic standards in middle school are less likely to graduate from high school.

Achievement gaps also impact Oregon's economy. According to a 2010 ECONorthwest analysis, if Oregon had eliminated its achievement gaps by 1998, economic activity would have been $1.1 to $2.8 billion higher in 2008.

Schools that are closing achievement gaps have common practices

To determine effective school practices, we visited a selection of Oregon schools. We also reviewed national research on effective school practices addressing issues of equity.

Although the schools we selected were geographically diverse and all had experienced staff reductions and budget limitations, they demonstrated common effective school practices. These practices were also consistent with the national research and fell into five key themes: safe and positive school environment, high expectations and high support, teacher collaboration, data-informed instruction, and strong leadership.

Principals and staff from the schools we visited shared with us practices they thought contributed to closing achievement gaps at their schools. They also noted their practices applied to and supported all students.

For example, Walker Middle School focuses on all students improving not just passing. Walker's mission statement is "We will engage all students to reach their highest potential as readers, writers, and problem solvers."

Nine achievement gap-closing schools selected for site visits

We visited nine Oregon middle schools of the 39 we found to be closing achievement gaps (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Schools Selected for Site Visits

School Name	County	School District	Rural/ Urban	School Size
Alice Ott Middle School	Multnomah	David Douglas SD 40	Urban	Large
Fleming Middle School	Josephine	Three Rivers/Josephine County SD	Rural	Small
Henley Middle School	Klamath	Klamath County SD	Rural	Small
Memorial Middle School	Linn	Greater Albany Public SD 8J	Urban	Medium
Molalla River Middle School	Clackamas	Molalla River SD 35	Rural	Medium
Mountain View Middle School	Yamhill	Newberg SD 29J	Rural	Medium
Ogden Middle School	Clackamas	Oregon City SD 62	Rural	Medium
Walker Middle School	Marion	Salem-Keizer SD 24J	Urban	Medium
Whiteaker Middle School	Marion	Salem-Keizer SD 24J	Urban	Large

In order to obtain a diverse representation of schools, we considered the following factors when selecting schools for site visits:

- strength of the closing achievement gap trend;
- high achievement for all students;
- high proportion of minority or economically disadvantaged students;
- geographical representation;
- mix of urban/rural schools; and
- variety of school sizes.

Safe and positive school environment

National research found successful schools have an atmosphere of respect and caring that emanates from the teachers and principals. The students also reciprocate caring and respect. During our school visits, we heard it is important for students to have a safe place where adults cared about them. For example, even if a child does not like a particular subject, if they like and respect their teacher, they tend to try harder.

Principals said creating a safe and positive school environment for students, staff, and parents is a top priority for their schools. We learned of school efforts to foster positivity, build trust, and create an environment conducive to learning.

Many of the schools we visited used Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which is a framework for using behavioral interventions to enhance academic and social behavior outcomes for all students. Staff said this framework is an effective system for teaching positive behavior and creating a respectful environment.

These schools place importance on treating students with respect, who then reflect that respect back. Teachers also said they feel respected by their students and colleagues. Consistent with what we heard, as we toured the schools, we observed polite orderly students in the halls and classrooms.

Teachers said having a well-developed process for dealing with disruptive behavior allows teachers to stay focused on teaching. For example, Memorial Middle School shared having no tolerance for disrespect. Staff at Memorial addresses behavior immediately when it prevents students or those around them from learning. Memorial's focus is on improving student behavior rather than on consequences for disruptive behavior. Teachers mentioned their appreciation for the support they receive from administrators with student behavior.

Schools post creative signs in hallways and classrooms stating desired behaviors and expectations.

To encourage and reinforce desired behaviors, schools use many ways to reward students and celebrate successes. Some rewards are simple low cost incentives, such as early release for lunch, use of a recreation room, and school "bucks" that students can spend at the school store. Mountain View Middle School shared that their incentive program worked so well that it inspired their parent group to raise funds for reward field trips.

Using earned "bucks" to purchase cool stuff from the school store motivates Memorial Middle School students to meet expectations.

A culture of positive peer pressure to succeed academically has also been cultivated at these schools. For example, staff at Molalla River Middle School have worked hard over the past few years to set the tone that their school is about academics.

Principals mentioned seeing a positive shift in student behavior because of efforts to create safe and positive learning environments. In particular, they observed a shift in the student body with the successful students now having more influence over their peers – it is cool to be smart.

Additionally, we were told disciplinary referrals at Molalla River Middle School went down to 400 from 1,800 since implementing a behavioral intervention system.

High expectations and high support

"These are all our kids and their success is all of our responsibility." – Ken Gilbert, Memorial Middle School Principal

National research shows that effective schools believe in their students' ability to meet high standards and they are responsible for helping their students meet those high standards.

We observed examples of clearly articulated expectations for both academic improvement and student behavior. Some schools require teachers to post daily learning objectives in their classrooms. Staff said daily learning objectives communicate expectations to students and help teachers focus their daily lessons.

The schools we visited believe that all students can learn and improve regardless of their current achievement level. They also believe, as educators, they have the responsibility, commitment, and ability to teach them.

Alice Ott Middle School set behavior expectations explicitly in their student handbook. For example, their handbook documents expected behavior in the classroom, in the hallway, during morning arrival, at assemblies, and in the restroom (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: Alice Ott Middle School Behavioral Expectations

Alice Ott Middle School

School-wide Behavioral Expectations

	School Rules		
Pursue Excellence	**Acting by Respectfully**	**Working by Responsibly**	**Staying by Safe**
School-Wide 	• Use kind words • Be understanding of people's differences (ethnic, culture, learning, etc) • Value yourself, others, school equipment and property • Refrain from chewing gum at all times	• Be on time and prepared • Clean up after yourself • Own your behavior	• Leave cell phones, hats, backpacks, purses and personal belongings in locker • Be aware of your environment • Keep hands and feet to yourself • Walk at all times • Be where you are supposed to be

According to the research, effective schools organize themselves around helping students learn. We found many examples of schools supporting student success during our site visits. We observed that these schools are dedicated and creative in their efforts to identify individual student needs. Schools meet these needs by providing both academic support and social services.

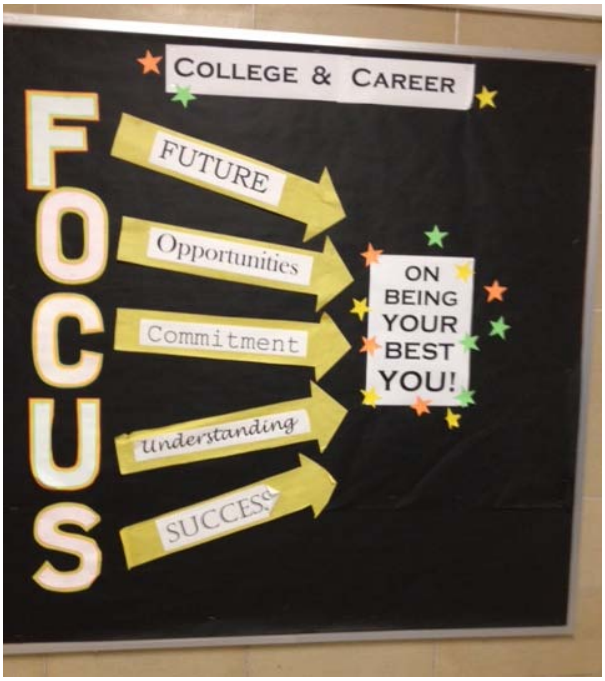
All schools we visited have various learning interventions in place to supplement regular in-class instruction for students who need additional support. For example, some schools assign extra math and reading instruction in place of an elective course. During intervention sessions, schools also re-teach lessons using different methods and sometimes different teachers. Memorial Middle School also offers a two-week summer intervention session for incoming 6th graders who are at risk for behavior, attendance, and/or learning challenges.

At Mountain View Middle School, a dedicated staff person is responsible for formal study hall. Students with late assignments are required to fill out a missed deadline form and the study hall staff person ensures students' work is completed. This system provides support to students while allowing teachers to focus on instruction. When students are held accountable to keep pace, teachers can cover more content.

Additionally, if Mountain View students perform poorly on a test, a study plan is developed and students are given a re-take test. Teachers share the study plans with each other to better support the student's learning.

Supporting student success includes identifying and offering additional learning opportunities for students already demonstrating proficiency. Students demonstrating proficiency are allowed to select an elective or other enrichment activity. Examples of electives and enrichment activities include band, choir, art, industrial tech, and a chess tournament.

Whiteaker Middle School places a strong emphasis on college readiness. Teachers at Whiteaker expose students to the possibility of attending college by posting alma maters signs outside their classrooms and wearing college tee shirts and sweatshirts on Fridays.



Whiteaker Middle School makes it a priority to encourage their students to think about and plan for their future.

In addition to academic support, schools show genuine care in identifying and providing students what they need to succeed in terms of social services. This support includes food, clothing and school supplies. To provide convenient access, Memorial Middle School has county social services staff come to their school to conduct counseling appointments with students.

At Alice Ott Middle School, the principal encourages stronger connections between home and school. He decreased the number of staff meetings in exchange for teachers agreeing to make 10 positive contacts with parents each month. He also encourages a focus on addressing chronic absenteeism. School counselors and administrators conduct home visits if a student has a repeated pattern of missing class. If the parent is not home, the counselor leaves a note on the door asking the parent to contact the school.

Teacher collaboration

Research on effective school practices shows utilizing teacher collaboration makes teachers' time with students more effective and worthwhile. The research also noted that collaboration can be more effective when time is designated for that purpose.

All schools we visited use teacher collaboration. Teachers spoke highly of their time in collaboration teams as it improves their teaching practices and makes them more efficient. We also heard repeatedly that teachers wish they had more time to collaborate.

Teachers said they collaborate formally and informally to create lesson plans, develop assessments, analyze data, learn from each other, and ensure they teach the same concepts. Teachers also use collaboration to support struggling students and implement learning interventions.

All schools we visited use Professional Learning Communities, which are formal teams of teachers focused on collaborating, learning from each other, and improving instruction. Usually, schools have Professional Learning Community teams for each subject area. Whiteaker Middle School teams review assessment data, and if the data shows that one teacher's students did better than others, the group asks that teacher what they did differently. The other teachers learn from that teacher and modify their instruction if needed.

In addition to having Professional Learning Communities by subject area, Ogden Middle School created additional teams of interdisciplinary teachers who share the same students. By assigning each grade level student to a team, either the Eagles or the Falcons, Ogden essentially created "schools within a school." Because teams share the same students, teachers can more easily identify those who are struggling in more than one subject, and find collaborative ways to support them.

Schools have come up with creative ways to set aside time for teachers to collaborate. For example, Henley Middle School has been using professional development late starts for several years. Late starts are designated days that students come to school an hour late to allow staff professional development meeting time. Henley staff described the time as invaluable for meeting as a department to talk about curriculum pacing, lesson development, and classroom management.

Even with late starts, Henley found creative ways to ensure instructional time is protected. One way Henley does this is by reducing transition time between classes.

Other schools we visited facilitated teacher collaboration by organizing halls by subject area, so same subject teachers have classrooms close together, and by coordinating common preparation times.

Schools also found ways to collaborate among schools within their school districts to address common issues such as developing common

assessments and coordinating curriculum pacing to reduce the impact of student mobility. Student mobility means that students' home residences change frequently, often within the same community and school district.

Data-informed instruction

In line with effective school practice research, extensive use of data is important to the schools we visited for monitoring and supporting achievement for all students. Data is used for placement of incoming students in level appropriate classes, identifying students for learning interventions, and monitoring student achievement and growth. Schools mentioned the importance of both academic and behavior/discipline data.

Research supports identifying struggling students using multiple assessment methods on a frequent basis, known as formative assessments. Teachers use information from these assessments to provide learning support and improve instruction, but not necessarily for grading. Some educators teaching the same classes spoke of developing common assessments and evaluating results collectively to support students and to adjust their instruction as needed.

At Fleming Middle School, teachers use frequent assessments to inform instruction and summative tests, which include pre- and post-tests for each standard. The purpose of summative tests is to measure student growth, not just achievement. Both the principal and teacher teams review student assessment data.

At Henley Middle School, staff frequently look at assessment data and grades. For example, teams meet weekly to review failing grade reports and other data reports on struggling students. Staff also use data to identify students needing additional math classes during one of the scheduled learning interventions held throughout the day.

We noted some schools seemed more proficient with data, while others expressed interest in having additional data support. Staff shared that educators need to know how to access and analyze data, and how to interpret data so they can respond appropriately. They also expressed the need for technical assistance on how to access individual student data maintained by the Department.

Strong leadership

All school principals we visited expressed a clear vision for student success and continuous improvement. National researchers found strong leadership and vision to be an essential element of effective school practices.

We learned that principals take strong leadership roles, which directly supports the effective school practices discussed above. Principals are protective of instructional time and committed to providing the best environment they can for students, parents and staff.

Principals praised their hardworking staff and expressed concern for their students' success. Respect and appreciation for principals was echoed by staff who said principals walk their talk, are approachable, communicate clear expectations, and focus on improvement. Principals mentioned having low staff turnover. These schools also had continuity of leadership, with many of the principals having been with their school for several years.

Principals at the schools we visited have a strong presence that helps make them effective leaders. For example, the principal at Fleming Middle school was described as wearing his vision on his sleeve. He has a strong stance on what is needed to educate kids, and brings others on board with that vision. Additionally, we were told the model of success he built at his school is making its way to other middle schools in the district.

Consistent with effective schools research, we were told principals serve as instructional leaders by having an active presence in the school. They often visit classrooms, and provide feedback and support to teachers as necessary. Some schools have assistant principals who are also instrumental in this work. We heard comments from staff that their leaders are good at giving both positive and constructive feedback. Staff noted they feel comfortable seeking input from their leaders to improve their instruction and feel safe trying new things.

District leadership also helps support student success. We heard that districts collaborate with teachers to establish curriculum, curriculum schedules, and common assessments. Districts also implement late starts or early releases that schools can use for teacher collaboration and professional development. Superintendent leadership can also help improve student achievement. For example, the principal at Ogden Middle School described her superintendent as invested, genuine, and visionary. The principal meets with the superintendent every week and benefits from his personal approach and his prior experience as a principal of her school.

Department efforts to address achievement gaps

Education Equity Unit

The Department has a newly created Education Equity unit. Education equity is recognizing the diverse learning needs of students and ensuring all students have the opportunity to learn. The Education Equity unit is charged with ensuring progress on preparing all students for high school and beyond and closing achievement gaps. The unit is currently developing advisory groups that will work on developing educational practices that meet the learning needs of all students. This unit is also assisting school districts in developing equity policies.

Celebrating Student Success Program

From 2005 to 2012, the Department ran the Celebrating Student Success Program. This award program recognized schools that demonstrated true progress in closing achievement gaps.

The program analyzed student achievement data to identify schools where achievement of minority and disadvantaged groups was growing at a faster rate than other groups. The analysis also had to show achievement was not dropping behind for other groups at these schools.

Once schools were identified as demonstrating true progress in closing achievement gaps, they were invited to apply for the award. The application required schools to demonstrate evidence of intentional practices aimed at improving student achievement. The program then reviewed the applications and selected schools for the award.

For each award school, the program published a brochure that included a one-page summary of the school's effective practices. The program sent these brochures to all school districts. In 2012, the program also posted these brochures online along with a video of each school. The Celebrating Student Success program was discontinued in 2013 due to a lack of staff available to work on the program.

Currently, researchers at Portland State University are expanding on the findings of the Celebrating Student Success program. These researchers are obtaining more detailed information on the effective practices of schools that won the award more than once. Once the research is complete, the Department plans to share this information with the goal of scaling up these practices in other schools. For example, the Department plans to share this information with teachers and administrators at a series of statewide professional development meetings.

Improving low performing schools

Another example of the Department addressing achievement gaps is through its efforts to improve low performing schools. Priority and focus schools are schools identified as the lowest performing 15% of Title I schools. Title I is a program of the Federal No Child Left Behind law that provides additional financial assistance to schools with a large number of students living in poverty. Priority and focus schools are given additional supports and accountability requirements, such as:

- assigning a leadership coach to the school principal;
- providing technical assistance;
- requiring additional monitoring of student achievement data; and
- delivering professional development training to teachers and administrators.

The Department has changed the way it identifies priority and focus schools. It now considers student academic growth and graduation rates for minority and disadvantaged groups. This is in addition to considering the percentage of all students meeting academic standards, overall student academic growth, and overall graduation rates. Student academic growth is a measure of how much a student learns over time, such as from one year to another.

In addition, the Department considered achievement gaps in identifying focus schools. Schools were designated as focus schools if they had large differences in percent proficiency between the highest and lowest performing subgroups.

Report card rating system

The Department redesigned its annual school report card for the 2012-13 school year. The report card gives each school a rating from one to five. A rating of one is the bottom 5% of schools, thus the lowest performing. A rating of five is the top 10% of schools, thus the highest performing.

The previous report card primarily presented student achievement based on the percentage of students meeting academic standards, also called student proficiency. The new report card has a rating system based on a combination of student proficiency, student academic growth, and the growth of minority and disadvantaged groups.

The purpose of the new rating system is to distinguish between schools with the same overall percent proficiency, but different subgroup growth. For example, if economically disadvantaged students are growing at a much lower rate than all students, this will affect the overall school rating. This new rating system enables the Department to better understand which schools are closing achievement gaps for minority and disadvantaged groups. If subgroups show higher growth than the growth for all students, it is an indicator that achievement gaps are closing.

Reporting of achievement gaps could be improved

We learned that equity in education and closing achievement gaps is a priority for the Department, which has been making efforts to address achievement gaps. Although the Department presents student achievement data by different student subgroups, it is not presented as a clear numerical gap, such as the numerical difference or size of achievement gaps between minority and disadvantaged subgroups and a non-disadvantaged reference group. An example of a non-disadvantaged reference subgroup is white non-economically disadvantaged students. In addition, the Department does not report whether achievement gaps are closing from year to year.

For example, the 2012-13 statewide report card provides percent of students meeting or exceeding proficiency for each subgroup on the statewide assessment (see Figure 16), but it does not provide the numerical difference or the size of the gap between subgroups and a designated non-disadvantaged subgroup.

Parents and stakeholders interested in achievement gaps would need to calculate the differences in student proficiency between subgroups themselves. See Figure 17 for an example of how the Department could report the gap in achievement.

Figure 16: 2012-13 Oregon Statewide Report Card Table – Grade 4 Math

Grade 4 Mathematics

Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Standard 2011 - 2013

	--	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
All Students	--	65%	66%	64%
Students with Disabilities	--	36%	35%	32%
Asian/Pacific Islander	--	79%	79%	76%
Asian	--	83%	83%	80%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	--	56%	54%	49%
Black (not of Hispanic origin)	--	44%	46%	43%
Hispanic origin	--	52%	51%	48%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	--	48%	52%	49%
White (not of Hispanic origin)	--	70%	71%	69%
Multi-racial	--	67%	68%	66%

Note: Multi-Racial does not include students who reported Hispanic Ethnicity – these students are all reported under Hispanic. See http://www.ode.state.or.us/news/announcements/announcement.aspx?=4630 for more information.

www.ode.state.or.us/data/annreportcard/rptcard2013.pdf (Page 34)

Figure 17: 2012-13 Oregon Statewide Report Card Table Showing Gap: Grade 4 Math

	Percent of students meeting or exceeding standards 2011-13	Percentage gap between subgroup and white students (not of Hispanic origin)
All Students	64%	-5%
Students with Disabilities	32%	-37%
Asian/Pacific Islander	76%	+7%
Asian	80%	+11%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	49%	-20%
Black (not of Hispanic origin)	43%	-26%
Hispanic origin	48%	-21%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	49%	-20%
White (not of Hispanic origin)	69%	--
Multi-racial	66%	-3%

Note: A negative percentage gap denotes that the subgroup is performing lower than white students.

The Department also incorporates achievement gap data in its school report card rating system and published school report cards. For example, for each subgroup, the 2012-13 school report cards compare the percentage of students meeting or exceeding proficiency on the statewide assessment against the statewide average for the same subgroup.

However, like the statewide report card, the school report cards do not provide the numerical difference or the size of gaps in achievement between subgroups and a designated non-disadvantaged subgroup. See Appendix A for an example of how the achievement gap can be reported for each subgroup as small, medium, or large for each school.

If the Department highlighted achievement gaps as a numerical difference in achievement or other measurement of gap size, it would add additional accountability and help ensure success in closing achievement gaps. Understanding how large achievement gaps are statewide and for each school, and whether gaps are closing from year to year, could assist the Department in determining whether efforts to close the achievement gaps are working, or whether new strategies need to be explored

As described in the Defining Achievement Gaps section above, we also found that using differences in average assessment scores for different student subgroups more accurately illustrates achievement gaps than differences in proficiency. For example, at one school we analyzed, both the economically disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students were well above the state's goal of 70% meeting standards in the 2011-12 school year. However, the economically disadvantaged student average score was seven points lower than the non-disadvantaged student average. Research indicates that gap would equate to more than a year's worth of learning.

Recommendations

To help ensure success in meeting its goals for closing achievement gaps, we recommend the Department of Education:

- Develop, analyze, and report an achievement gap measure statewide and at the school level for one or more grade levels. Consider using a gap measure that incorporates the difference in average scores.
- Regularly re-measure achievement gaps, and evaluate and report on the state's progress in closing any achievement gaps.
- Continue with efforts to identify effective school practices linked to achievement gap closing schools, and regularly disseminate this information to school teachers and administrators across the state.
- Provide technical support to schools and school districts to assist them in implementing effective school practices.

Objectives, Scope and Methodology

Our audit objective was to determine the extent of achievement gaps in Oregon for 8th grade minority and economically disadvantaged students, and identify effective school practices for closing achievement gaps. This was part of a broader objective to identify how the Department could use analysis of student data to help drive improvement in achievement.

Our audit scope included a statewide achievement gap analysis for the 2011-12 school year and a statewide and school-level trend analysis of achievement gaps from 2004-05 to 2011-12. We focused on 8th grade math and reading average score gaps on the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS). We included the economically disadvantaged subgroup and all race/ethnicity subgroups for the statewide 2011-12 achievement gap analysis. We only included the economically disadvantaged, Hispanic, and black student subgroups in the statewide and school-level trend analysis. We focused on these three subgroups, because they have historically had high achievement gaps.

Our school analysis of economically disadvantaged and Hispanic achievement gaps only included schools with a minimum of 20 students in the subgroup and the reference group. For our analysis of black achievement gaps, we lowered the minimum number of students to six because schools tended to have small populations of black students. We analyzed 120 schools that had populations large enough to analyze. To give an idea of the number of schools we excluded, in 2011-12 there were 191 middle schools in Oregon.

Beginning with the 2009-10 school year, the U.S. Department of Education changed race/ethnicity definitions for the purpose of reporting student data. We considered the potential impact of this change when deciding to report the achievement gap trend analysis results for the 2004-05 to 2011-12 school years for Hispanic and black students. In reviewing our results, we found there was a trend of higher average scores over the eight years for Hispanic students; however, this trend began before the 2009-10 school year. We also found there were only small changes in black average scores from 2004-05 through 2011-12. Although we decided to include the achievement gap results for all eight years for these two subgroups, this change in race/ethnicity definitions should be considered when interpreting results.

Because of the unique educational needs of students with disabilities, we excluded those students from our analysis. We also excluded English language learners from our economically disadvantaged analyses.

To answer our audit objective, we reviewed national reports on achievement gap definitions and methodologies. We also consulted with Department staff on how best to measure achievement gaps. We obtained OAKS assessment data from the Department, then reviewed documents and

performed tests to assess data reliability. We concluded that the data were sufficiently reliable to answer our audit objective.

We calculated state and school achievement gaps for each school year using average OAKS scores. To assess whether a subgroup had a closing achievement gap trend, we conducted regression analyses.

From our school analysis of achievement gaps, we also identified a judgmental selection of nine schools to visit. To choose these schools, we weighed multiple factors, including:

- strength of the closing achievement gap trend;
- high achievement for all students;
- high proportion of minority or economically disadvantaged students;
- geographical representation;
- mix of urban/rural schools; and
- variety of school sizes.

At these site visits, we interviewed school administrators, teachers, and staff to gain their perspectives on what practices they thought contributed to closing achievement gaps at their schools. Our literature review on effective school practices informed our interview questions. We also toured the schools and sat in on classes. We did not verify the causal relationship between school practices and the closing of achievement gaps at these nine schools.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Oregon Department of Education
Response to Secretary of State's Audit on:
ODE's Efforts to Close Achievement Gaps
April 17, 2014

The Oregon Department of Education appreciates the Secretary of State's audit on the agency's efforts to close achievement gaps. With over 167,000 students of color in this state, and an alarming and persistence opportunity gap, the work couldn't be more critical.

Below is the agency's response to the Secretary of State's four recommendations. In summary, the agency agrees with the recommendations and will either be starting new work or continuing existing work in response.

The one concern the agency has with the audit is the methodology undertaken to determine successful practices in schools found to be closing achievement gaps. By only visiting schools that were successfully closing achievement gaps, and not visiting schools that are not successfully closing these gaps, it's not possible to know if observed practices are unique to 'successful' schools and tied to gap closure or whether the practices may also be found in schools with persisting gaps. Hence, it is not possible to determine from this methodology, whether those practices are responsible for the closing gaps or whether the gap closure is related to a combination of other factors.

1. **Develop, analyze, and report an achievement gap measure statewide and at the school level for one or more grade levels. Consider using a gap measure that incorporates the difference in average scores.**

Agency Response: During the 2014-2015 school year, the Oregon Department of Education will start issuing an annual report displaying school districts' achievement gaps. The first report will focus on achievement gaps in high school graduation. The following year, the agency plans on adding one additional indicator to the report such as 9th grade on track or college credit earning while in high school. By the third year, the agency plans on adding a third indicator such as student achievement in a grade and subject area as measured by the statewide summative assessment. The reason for the phased in approach is to ensure the agency is using the most reliable and valid data in light of the new high school collections and the transition to a new summative assessment next school year. The agency will display school districts' achievement gaps instead of school level achievement gaps because the number of students by subgroup in many schools makes that level of data statistically insignificant. For many subgroups, the achievement gaps measure will compare the subgroup's performance to that of the "non-disadvantaged" subgroup. The "non-disadvantaged subgroup" is the complement of the "disadvantaged" subgroup on the district Achievement Compacts and consists of Asian, white, and multi-racial students that are also not a member of the economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient, or students with disabilities subgroups.

2. **Regularly re-measure achievements gaps and evaluate and report on state's progress in closing achievement gaps.**

Agency Response: Since 2009, ODE has reported out how Oregon schools are doing at closing the achievement gap through one of its annually reported key performance measures (KPMs). The 2013 report on this KPM is included in ODE's Annual Performance Progress Report, available online at http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=1779. However, as ODE has intensified its focus on gap closure in the past two years we have begun to find this historic measure somewhat problematic. This KPM not only has a rather narrow focus, but it can be significantly impacted by

the size of a given school. In schools with a very small number of Hispanic students (often as few as 1 to 4) the performance of even a single student can markedly impact the average. In schools with small populations, a single student performing well on state tests can raise the average, while in schools with larger Hispanic student populations, more Hispanic students would need to perform significantly above the average for the school to see improvement. To address these issues, and to align with ODE's strategic plan, ODE proposes to take a new approach to tracking achievement gap closure through its KPMs starting in the 2015-17 biennium. Pending adoption by the Legislature in the 2015 legislative session, ODE plans to begin setting specific achievement targets and reporting out on student achievement for all students as well as specifically for students of color and students with disabilities in the following areas:

- 3rd grade literacy as measured by student performance on the statewide English language arts assessment
- 9th grade students on track to graduate as measured by the percentage of students who have completed six or more credits by the end of 9th grade
- High school completion within 5 years

As part of the statutorily KPM submission process and schedule, ODE submitted its proposed 2015-17 KPMs for consideration on April 14, 2014 to its budget analysts at the Legislative Fiscal Office and the Chief Financial Office. Independent of formal adoption of these KPMs by the Legislature for the 2015-17 biennium, ODE will track performance for all students and key sub-groups on these measures as part of its internal accountability under ODE's strategic plan. In support of Goal 1 of the Strategic Plan (to ensure that every learner graduates from high school and is ready for college, career, and civic life), ODE has identified specific milestones and key work to be accomplished between now and June 2015. The goal of this work is to help districts implement effective practices to close achievement gaps for students of color and English language learners and to improve the quality of special education services to close achievement gaps for students with disabilities. ODE management closely monitors progress under these objectives to ensure that ODE resources are prioritized effectively to reach the goal of closing the achievement gap, and this summer ODE will engage in the process of identifying the next phase of work to be done through 2017 to continue to see progress.

3. Continue with efforts to identify effective school practices linked to achievement gap closing schools, and regularly disseminate this information to school teachers and administrators across the state.

Agency Response: Since 1999, the Quality Education Commission, working closely with ODE staff, has conducted research into best practices by Oregon's schools. Starting in 2008, the Commission started using a "matched pair" methodology in evaluating best practices in individual Oregon schools. Under this methodology, the Commission identified pairs of schools with similar student demographics but with much different student outcomes. Teams of educators then visited the schools, interviewing staff and students to determine how practices differed between the schools in each matched pair. The Commission is currently conducting its fourth round of these matched pair analyses and will include the results in their 2014 report.

ODE's Research and Data Analysis Office is also focusing its recent research on practices that show promise in closing the achievement gap. The office has recently begun analysis of the achievement of Limited English Achievement (LEP) students, with a focus on grade-of-exit and time spent in English language programs and their effect on high school graduation rates.

Finally, ODE is developing joint projects with the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB) to better understand how the allocation and use of resources affects schools' effectiveness in

increasing student achievement for low income and LEP students, with a focus on closing the achievement gap.

4. **Provide technical assistance to schools and school districts to assist them in implementing effective school practices**.

Agency Response: ODE currently provides, and will continue to provide, technical assistance to Focus and Priority schools. Focus schools are Title 1 schools with large achievement gaps, and Priority schools are Title 1 schools with student achievement in the bottom 5% of schools statewide.

In addition, ODE will develop a proposal to the OEIB by August 1, 2014about how to provide supports and interventions to non-title Level 1 schools (bottom 5% in student achievement) and school districts.

Currently, all Focus and Priority schools must have an improvement plan based on the Federal Turnaround Principles that is created through the Indistar system. This plan includes a self-assessment. As Priority and Focus Schools complete their initial Comprehensive Achievement Plans (CAPs) for the school year, a review is completed, feedback given, and revisions are made to bring the plan and budget up to standard for approval. Subsequently, schools revise as necessary and quarterly reviews are done in November and February of each year. Before submission, the district is tasked with participating in the development and reviewing of the contents of the CAPs. The district is the first point for monitoring progress of the schools. Significant technical assistance is provided by Education Specialists to districts and principals regarding their plan and plan implementation. This is also embedded in the feedback and assistance districts and principals receive through the annual approval and quarterly reviews.

Additionally, ODE has developed an extensive Continuous Improvement Network through which technical assistance is provided. Regional Network Coordinators, Leadership Coaches, School Support Teams, and ODE's school improvement point person all provide ongoing technical assistance. The technical assistance that ODE provides ranges from specific requests for professional development by topic, to assistance navigating and manipulating Indistar and a school's CAP. Leadership coaches provide weekly and daily professional development spending 8-10 hours per week side by side with principals.

ODE also hosts annual Odyssey conferences which provide a wealth of technical assistance, as well as, annual Principal/Coach meetings and quarterly coaches meetings which provide technical assistance.

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The courtesies and cooperation extended by officials and employees of the Department of Education during the course of this audit were commendable and sincerely appreciated.

Appendix A – School Achievement Gap Results

Note: Appendix A provides achievement gap measures for each school. These measures are not intended to show overall school success.

Appendix A shows the economically disadvantaged, Hispanic, and black achievement gap results in math and reading for all 120 middle schools we analyzed. We also included the size of each school's achievement gap for each subgroup, measured as a difference in the average score of a subgroup and its reference group. These results include whether the school showed a trend of closing the achievement gap for a subgroup over eight years.

We excluded some middle schools from our analysis because they did not meet our minimum student population threshold or because they did not have eight years of available data. We also excluded some subgroups from the 120 middle schools we analyzed if those subgroups did not meet our minimum student population threshold.

Gap Size: No Gap = < 0 points, S = Small (< 3 points), M = Medium (3-6 points), L = Large (> 6 points)
Gap Closing: ■ Closing, □ Not Closing
-- Not included in analysis
Note: This table provides achievement gap measures for each school. These measures are not intended to show overall school success.

		Economically Disadvantaged				Race/Ethnicity							
						Hispanic				Black			
		Math		Reading		Math		Reading		Math		Reading	
School Name	District Name	Gap Size	Gap Closing	Gap Size	Gap Closing	Gap Size	Gap Closing	Gap Size	Gap Closing	Gap Size	Gap Closing	Gap Size	Gap Closing
Agnes Stewart	Springfield	S	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Alder Creek	North Clackamas	M	□	S	□	M	■	M	□	--	--	--	--
Alice Ott	David Douglas	S	■	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Armand Larive	Hermiston	M	□	M	□	M	□	M	□	--	--	--	--
Ashland	Ashland	M	■	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Azalea	Brookings-Harbor	M	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Baker	Baker	S	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Beaumont	Portland	L	□	L	□	--	--	--	--	L	■	L	□
Boring	Oregon Trail	No Gap	□	No Gap	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Briggs	Springfield	M	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Brixner	Klamath County	S	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Broadway	Seaside	L	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Cal Young	Eugene	L	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Calapooia	Greater Albany	M	□	S	□	M	□	M	□	--	--	--	--
Cascade	Cascade	L	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Cascade	Bend-LaPine	S	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Cascade	Bethel	S	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Gap Size: No Gap = < 0 points, S = Small (< 3 points), M = Medium (3-6 points), L = Large (> 6 points)
Gap Closing: ■ Closing, □ Not Closing
-- Not included in analysis
Note: This table provides achievement gap measures for each school. These measures are not intended to show overall school success.

		Economically Disadvantaged				Race/Ethnicity							
						Hispanic				Black			
		Math		Reading		Math		Reading		Math		Reading	
School Name	**District Name**	**Gap Size**	**Gap Closing**	**Gap Size**	**Gap Closing**	**Gap Size**	**Gap Closing**	**Gap Size**	**Gap Closing**	**Gap Size**	**Gap Closing**	**Gap Size**	**Gap Closing**
Cedar Park	Beaverton	L	□	M	■	L	□	L	■	--	--	--	--
Cedar Ridge	Oregon Trail	M	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Centennial	Centennial	S	□	M	□	L	□	L	■	L	□	L	□
Chehalem Valley	Newberg	M	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Cheldelin	Corvallis	M	□	M	■	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Claggett Creek	Salem-Keizer	S	□	S	□	L	□	M	□	--	--	--	--
Clear Creek	Gresham-Barlow	M	□	S	□	L	□	M	■	--	--	--	--
Coffenberry	South Umpqua	No Gap	□	No Gap	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Colin Kelly	Eugene	M	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Conestoga	Beaverton	M	□	M	□	S	■	M	□	--	--	--	--
Coquille Valley	Coquille	M	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Creswell	Creswell	S	■	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Crossler	Salem-Keizer	L	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Dexter McCarty	Gresham-Barlow	M	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Duniway	McMinnville	L	□	M	□	L	□	L	□	--	--	--	--
Eagle Point	Eagle Point	M	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Estacada	Estacada	S	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Evergreen Jr High School	Hillsboro	L	□	L	□	L	□	L	□	--	--	--	--
Fern Ridge	Fern Ridge	No Gap	□	No Gap	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Five Oaks	Beaverton	M	□	M	□	L	□	L	■	L	□	L	□
Fleming	Three Rivers	S	■	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Floyd Light	David Douglas	L	□	M	□	L	□	L	□	L	□	L	□
Gardiner	Oregon City	S	■	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Gordon Russell	Gresham-Barlow	M	□	M	□	M	■	M	■	--	--	--	--
Hanby	Central Point	L	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Hauton B Lee	Reynolds	M	□	M	□	L	■	L	□	L	□	L	□
Hazelbrook	Tigard-Tualatin	L	□	M	□	L	■	L	■	--	--	--	--
Henley	Klamath County	S	■	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Gap Size: No Gap = < 0 points, S = Small (< 3 points), M = Medium (3-6 points), L = Large (> 6 points)
Gap Closing: ■ Closing, □ Not Closing
-- Not included in analysis
Note: This table provides achievement gap measures for each school. These measures are not intended to show overall school success.

		Economically Disadvantaged				Race/Ethnicity							
						Hispanic				Black			
		Math		Reading		Math		Reading		Math		Reading	
School Name	**District Name**	**Gap Size**	**Gap Closing**	**Gap Size**	**Gap Closing**	**Gap Size**	**Gap Closing**	**Gap Size**	**Gap Closing**	**Gap Size**	**Gap Closing**	**Gap Size**	**Gap Closing**
High Desert	Bend-LaPine	M	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Highland Park	Beaverton	L	□	S	□	L	■	M	□	--	--	--	--
Hood River	Hood River County	L	□	M	□	L	□	L	□	--	--	--	--
Hosford	Portland	L	□	S	■	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Houck	Salem-Keizer	M	■	M	□	L	□	L	■	--	--	--	--
Hugh Hartman	Redmond	M	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Inza R Wood	West Linn-Wilsonville	M	■	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
J B Thomas	Hillsboro	L	□	M	□	L	□	L	□	--	--	--	--
J W Poynter	Hillsboro	M	□	M	□	L	■	L	□	--	--	--	--
Jackson	Portland	L	□	M	■	--	--	--	--	L	□	L	□
James Madison	Eugene	M	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
James Monroe	Eugene	L	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Jefferson County	Jefferson County	L	□	L	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
John C Fremont	Douglas County	M	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
John F Kennedy	Eugene	M	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Joseph Lane	Douglas County	M	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Judson	Salem-Keizer	L	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
La Grande	La Grande	M	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
LaCreole	Dallas	S	■	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
LaPine	Bend-LaPine	S	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Leslie	Salem-Keizer	M	□	M	□	L	□	L	■	--	--	--	--
Lincoln	South Lane	S	□	No Gap	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Lincoln Savage	Three Rivers	S	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Linus Pauling	Corvallis SD	L	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Mark Twain	Silver Falls	M	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Meadow Park	Beaverton	L	□	L	□	L	□	L	□	--	--	--	--
Memorial	Greater Albany	M	■	S	■	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Molalla River	Molalla River	S	■	S	□	S	■	M	■	--	--	--	--

Gap Size: No Gap = < 0 points, S = Small (< 3 points), M = Medium (3-6 points), L = Large (> 6 points)
Gap Closing: ■ Closing, □ Not Closing
-- Not included in analysis
Note: This table provides achievement gap measures for each school. These measures are not intended to show overall school success.

		Economically Disadvantaged				Race/Ethnicity							
						Hispanic				Black			
		Math		Reading		Math		Reading		Math		Reading	
School Name	District Name	Gap Size	Gap Closing	Gap Size	Gap Closing	Gap Size	Gap Closing	Gap Size	Gap Closing	Gap Size	Gap Closing	Gap Size	Gap Closing
Mountain View	Beaverton	M	□	S	□	M	□	M	□	M	□	L	□
Mountain View	Newberg	M	□	M	□	L	■	L	■	--	--	--	--
Mt Tabor	Portland	L	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	L	□	L	□
Neil Armstrong	Forest Grove	M	□	M	□	L	■	L	□	--	--	--	--
North Albany	Greater Albany	L	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
North Marion	North Marion	M	□	S	□	M	□	M	□	--	--	--	--
North	Grants Pass	L	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Oaklea	Junction City	S	□	S	■	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Obsidian	Redmond	M	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Ogden	Oregon City	S	■	S	■	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Ontario	Ontario	--	--	--	--	L	□	L	□	--	--	--	--
Parkrose	Parkrose	S	■	S	□	--	--	M	□	S	□	M	□
Patton	McMinnville	L	□	L	□	L	□	L	□	--	--	--	--
Philomath	Philomath	L	□	L	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Pilot Butte	Bend-LaPine	S	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
R A Brown	Hillsboro	M	□	M	□	L	■	L	■	M	□	L	□
Rowe	North Clackamas	M	□	M	□	M	□	L	□	--	--	--	--
Sandstone	Hermiston	M	□	M	□	M	□	M	□	--	--	--	--
Scenic	Central Point	M	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Sellwood	Portland	L	□	L	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Seven Oak	Lebanon	M	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Shasta	Bethel	M	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Siuslaw	Siuslaw	S	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Sky View	Bend-LaPine	S	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
South	Grants Pass	M	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Spencer Butte	Eugene	M	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
St Helens	St Helens	S	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Stayton	North Santiam	L	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Stephens	Salem-Keizer	S	□	S	□	L	□	L	□	--	--	--	--

Gap Size: No Gap = < 0 points, S = Small (< 3 points), M = Medium (3-6 points), L = Large (> 6 points)
Gap Closing: ■ Closing, □ Not Closing
-- Not included in analysis
Note: This table provides achievement gap measures for each school. These measures are not intended to show overall school success.

		Economically Disadvantaged				Race/Ethnicity							
						Hispanic				Black			
		Math		Reading		Math		Reading		Math		Reading	
School Name	**District Name**	**Gap Size**	**Gap Closing**	**Gap Size**	**Gap Closing**	**Gap Size**	**Gap Closing**	**Gap Size**	**Gap Closing**	**Gap Size**	**Gap Closing**	**Gap Size**	**Gap Closing**
Sunridge	Pendleton	M	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Sutherlin	Sutherlin	S	□	No Gap	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Sweet Home	Sweet Home	S	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Talent	Phoenix-Talent	M	□	M	□	L	□	L	□	--	--	--	--
Talmadge	Central	M	□	M	□	L	□	L	■	--	--	--	--
The Dalles	North Wasco County	M	□	M	□	L	□	L	□	--	--	--	--
Theodore Roosevelt	Eugene	L	□	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Thomas R Fowler	Tigard-Tualatin	M	□	M	□	L	□	L	□	--	--	--	--
Thurston	Springfield	S	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Tillamook	Tillamook	M	□	M	□	M	□	L	■	--	--	--	--
Twality	Tigard-Tualatin	L	□	M	□	L	□	L	□	--	--	--	--
Walker	Salem-Keizer	M	□	M	■	M	■	M	■	--	--	--	--
Walt Morey	Reynolds	M	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Walter L Kraxberger	Gladstone	S	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Whiteaker	Salem-Keizer	S	■	S	■	M	□	--	--	--	--	--	--
Whitford	Beaverton	L	□	M	□	L	■	L	■	--	--	--	--
Winston	Winston-Dillard	S	□	S	□	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Wy'East	Hood River County SD	S	□	S	□	L	■	L	□	--	--	--	--

Appendix B – State Reading Achievement Gap Figures

Figure 18: 8th Grade Reading Economically Disadvantaged Achievement Gap, 2004-05 to 2011-12

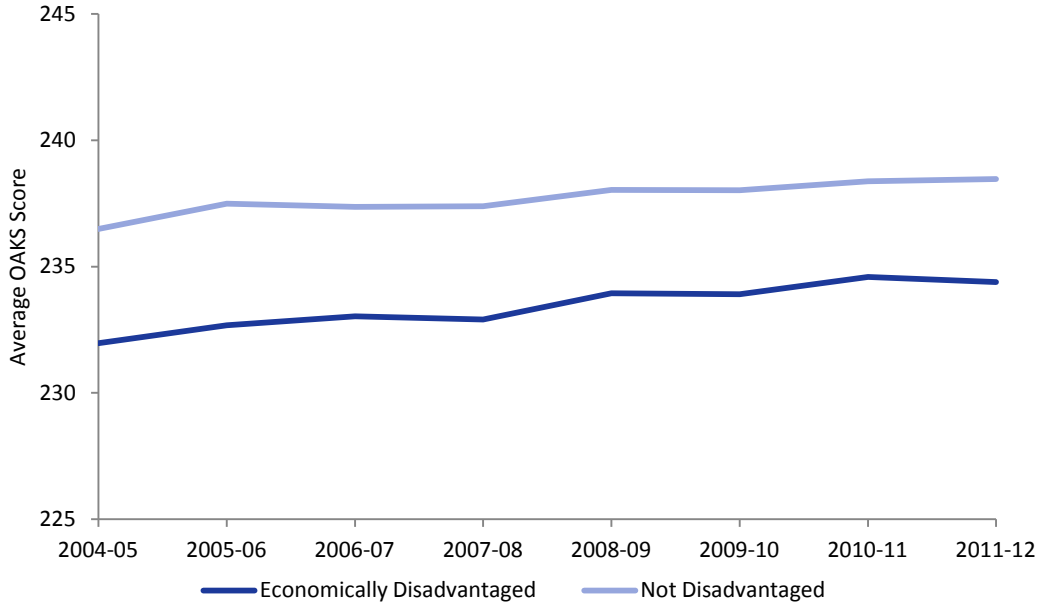
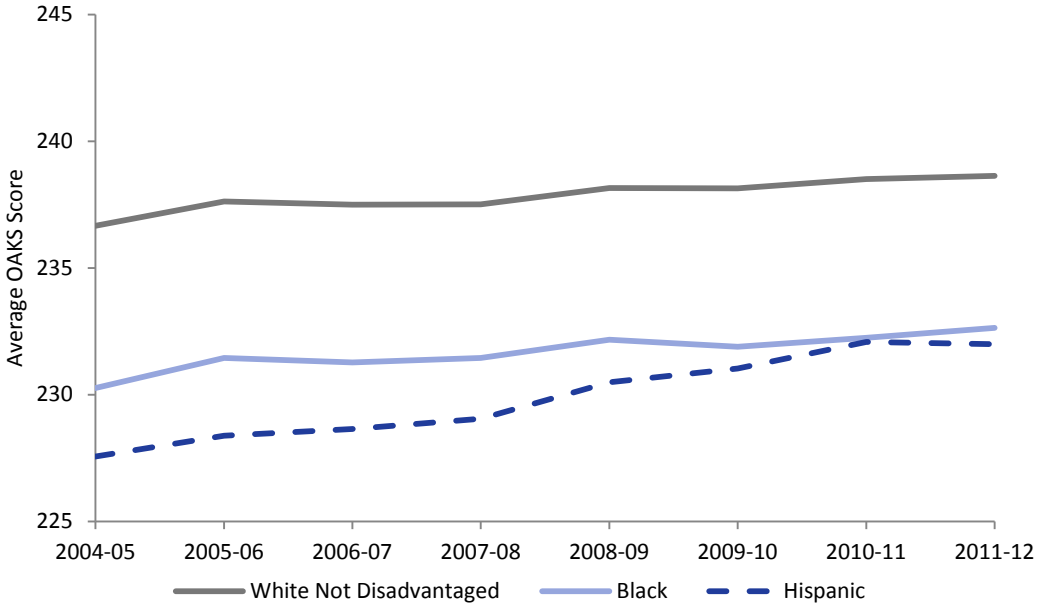
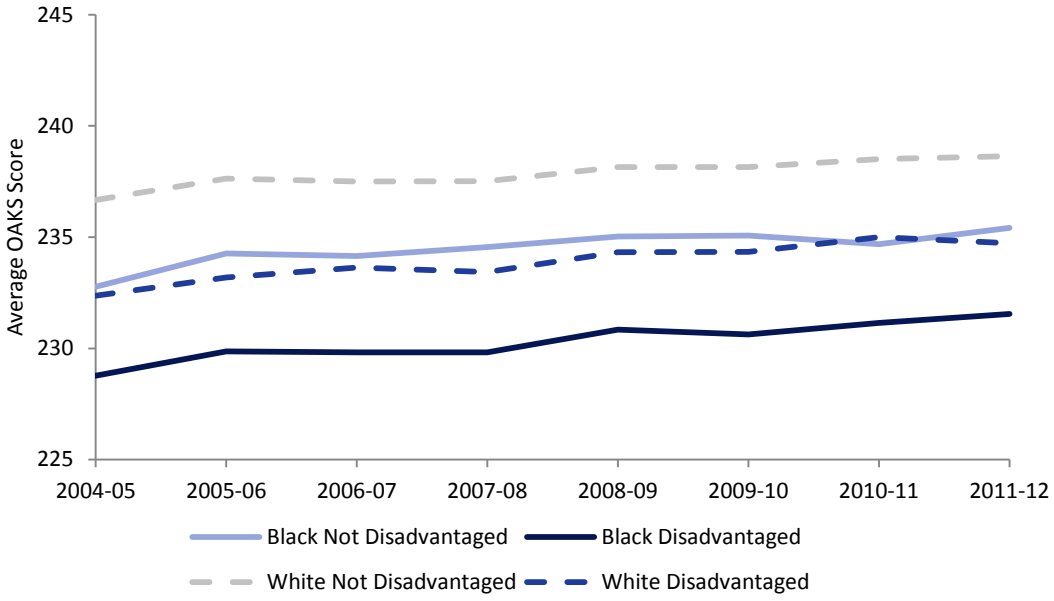


Figure 19: 8th Grade Reading Hispanic and Black Achievement Gaps, 2004-05 to 2011-12



*Note: In 2009-10, the U.S. Department of Education changed race/ethnicity definitions.

Figure 20: 8th Grade Reading Black Achievement Gap by Economically Disadvantaged Status, 2004-05 to 2011-12



*Note: In 2009-10, the U.S. Department of Education changed race/ethnicity definitions.

Appendix C - Map of School Achievement Gap Trends 2004-05 to 2011-12

We analyzed whether 120 middle schools showed a trend of closing achievement gaps. We focused on 8th grade achievement gaps in math and reading for economically disadvantaged, Hispanic, and black student groups from 2004-05 to 2011-12.

Thirty-nine of the schools showed a trend of closing the achievement gap for at least one student group and at least one subject. Because we needed a minimum of 20 students in each subgroup and reference group, we excluded some middle schools with small student group populations.