Oregon Dropouts
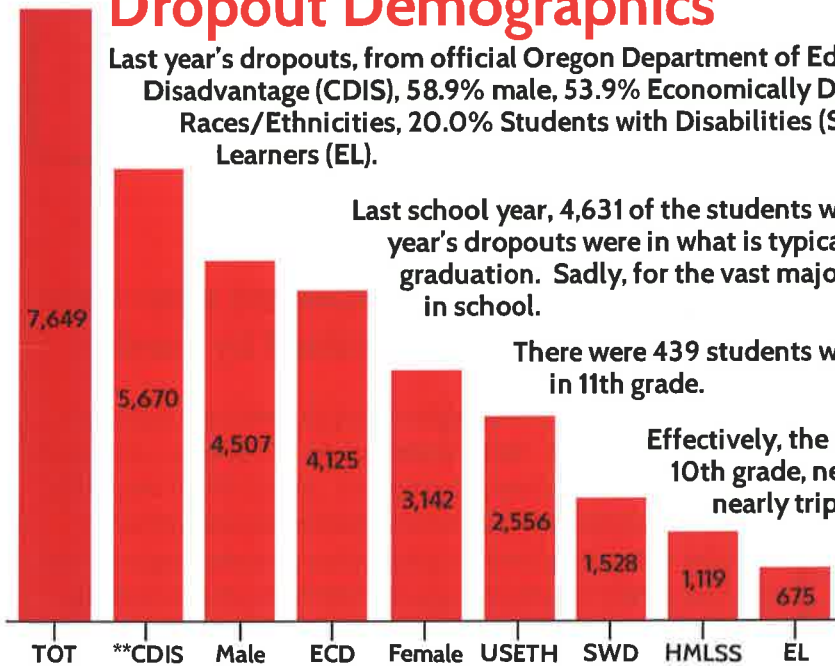### 7,649 students dropped out of high school last year. 4,631 were in 12th grade.

Dropout Demographics

Last year's dropouts, from official Oregon Department of Education counts* and categories, were 74.1% Combined Disadvantage (CDIS), 58.9% male, 53.9% Economically Disadvantaged (ECD), 41.1% Female, 33.4% Underserved Races/Ethnicities, 20.0% Students with Disabilities (SWD), 14.6% Homeless (HMLSS), and 8.8% English Learners (EL).

Last school year, 4,631 of the students who dropped out were in the 12th grade. Over 60% of last year's dropouts were in what is typically considered to be the last year of high school before graduation. Sadly, for the vast majority of these 12th graders, it was simply their final year in school.

There were 439 students who dropped out in 9th grade, 896 in 10th grade, and 1,683 in 11th grade.

Effectively, the number of students who drop out doubles from 9th to 10th grade, nearly doubles again from 10th to 11th grade, and then nearly triples from 11th to 12th grade.

Bar chart values: TOT 7,649; **CDIS 5,670; Male 4,507; ECD 4,125; Female 3,142; USETH 2,556; SWD 1,528; HMLSS 1,119; EL 675.

*All statistics, percentages, and counts are estimates based on Oregon Department Education (ODE) 2014-15 school year data, unless otherwise stated (ODE, 2016).

**Combined Disadvantage (CDIS) = Economically Dsadvantaged (ECD), English Learners (EL), Students with Disabilities (SWD), African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (USETH).

Key Findings

✓ More students dropped out last year (7,649) than in any other year in the past decade. The dropout rate of 4.3% is also at a ten-year high.

✓ The 2014 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates that 42,506 youth living in Oregon, ages 18 to 24, have not earned a high school diploma or recognized equivalency.

✓ An astounding 74.1% of dropouts are students in the Combined Disadvantage (CDIS) group. The CDIS group results from combining students who are in any of the following groups: Economically disadvantaged (ECD), English Learners (EL), Students with Disabilities (SWD), or Underserved Races/Ethnicities (USETH).

✓ Oregon has improved its graduation rate over 5% since 2012-2013 when the 68.7% cohort graduation rate was the lowest of any reporting state that year.

✓ Despite gains in the graduation rate, Oregon currently has more dropouts and a higher dropout rate than it did in 2012-2013, when the graduation rate ranked last among all reporting states.

✓ To state it plainly: increasing graduation rates does not necessarily equate to decreasing dropout rates. Decreasing dropouts and increasing graduates are different, although related efforts.

Racial and Ethnic Disparities

The educational achievement gap is clearly evident in the dropout rates. Every under-served racial/ethnic group is over-represented as dropouts; they drop out at a higher rate than would be expected based on their rate in the total high school population.

Underserved races/ethnicities represent 25.4% of the high school population yet they comprise 33.4% of the dropouts. Students who are Hispanic/Latino comprise 25.4% of all dropouts, nearly five full percentage points over their representation in the high school population. Students who are African American are over-represented by more than 1%, as are students who are American Indian/Alaska Native.
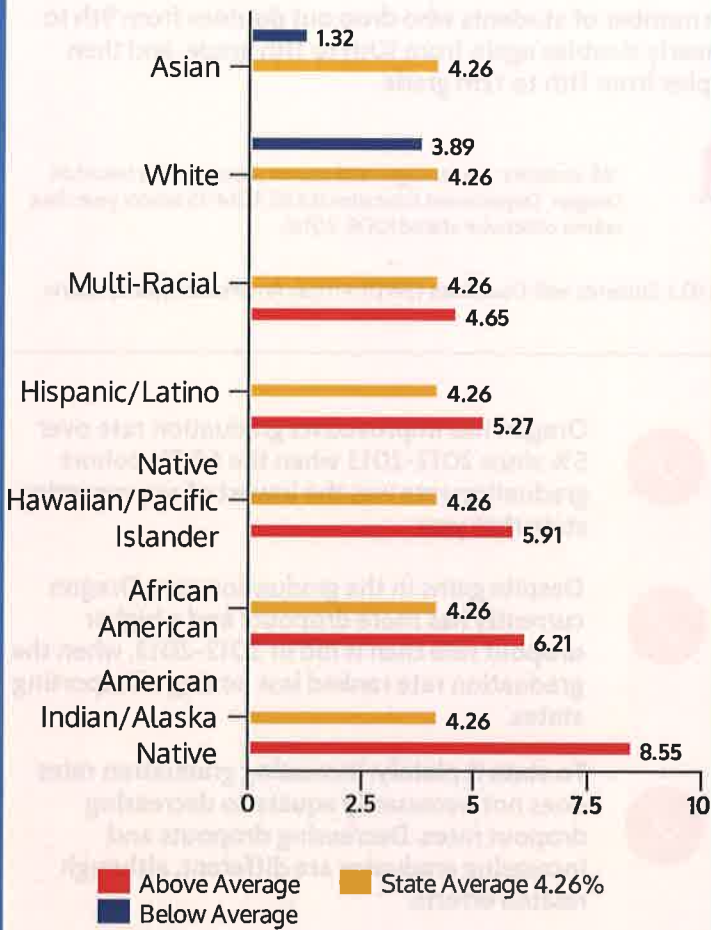
Conversely, students who are White and Asian are underrepresented as dropouts, by over five and two percentage points respectively.

4.3 %

...is the highest dropout rate in over a decade

Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Value 1	Value 2
Asian	1.32	4.26
White	3.89	4.26
Multi-Racial	4.26	4.65
Hispanic/Latino	4.26	5.27
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	4.26	5.91
African American	4.26	6.21
American Indian/Alaska Native	4.26	8.55

Legend:
- Above Average (red)
- State Average 4.26% (orange)
- Below Average (blue)

Racial and ethnic disparities are even more concerning when examined by gender.

Males comprise 51.5% of high school students yet represent 58.9% of dropouts. Males represent 66.3% of Asian dropouts, 63.7% of African American dropouts, and 62.1% of Hispanic/Latino dropouts. Only White and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander comprise a smaller proportion of male dropouts, but still well above the percentage of male high school students.

Percent of Dropouts by Gender

Male: 58.9 %

Female: 41.1 %

Female dropouts from most underserved racial/ethnic groups are disproportionately economically disadvantaged in comparison with their male counter parts. . Among Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders 63.3% of females dropouts are economically disadvantaged which is 15.8% higher than males. For African American female dropouts, 61.2% are economically disadvantaged, 14.2% higher than males. Hispanic/Latino female dropouts are 61.6% economically disadvantaged, 1.6% higher than males. At 64.7% only American Indian/Alaska Native male dropouts have a higher percentage who are economically disadvantaged, 14.2% higher than their female counterparts.

Evidence Based and Emerging Practices

- **Provide Low-Literacy Support:** Low literacy skills are a major predictor of high school failure. Because literacy skills are so important to academic success, many educational options for out-of-school youth have minimum literacy requirements for participants (Balfanz, Herzog & MacIver, 2007).

- **Include Accelerated Learning and Credit Recovery:** Students who are over age and severely under credited cannot spend multiple years to earn a diploma. The task is daunting and unrealistic (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007).

- **Incorporate Connections to Postsecondary Education/Training:** Successful re-engagement programs prepare students for well-paying, high-skilled jobs through postsecondary education and workforce training programs (Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, 2015).

- **Have a Variety of Options to Address the Unique Needs of Dropouts:** Students leave high school for numerous reasons and dropouts have unique needs and circumstances. Examples include providing non-traditional hours, providing year-round education, and having access to online learning (Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, 2015).

- **Employ a Positive Youth Development Approach:** Increase resiliency factors which in turn increase positive outcomes (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Guerra & Bradshaw 2008).

Dropping out of school significantly increases the chance of problem drug and alcohol use, and the commission of violent crime in early adulthood (Henry, Knight, & Thornberry, 2012).

Action is Needed Now

The need represented by Oregon's dropouts is immediate and critical. The most recent data available from the American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2014 estimated that among 18-24 year-olds living in Oregon, between 42,506 and 56,458 had not earned a high school diploma or a recognized equivalency.

42,506
Oregon 18-24 year-olds without a high school diploma or recognized equivalency

Youth Development Council Mandate

The Oregon Legislature has charged the Youth Development Council (YDC) with overseeing a unified, seamless system that provides services to school-age children through youth 24 years of age in a manner that supports positive youth development towards educational and career success.

Specifically, the YDC advocates for the provision of services to Opportunity Youth ages 16-24 who are disengaged from the educational system and the workforce, and for Priority Youth, ages 6-15, that are at risk of disengaging and becoming Opportunity Youth.

Students that have dropped out of high school are, by definition, at the very core of the YDC's legislative mandate and Positive Youth Development advocacy.

Dropouts are at risk of engaging several state systems including juvenile justice, public health, and corrections, all of which can be the starting point for re-engagement efforts. Ideally, other systems and community-based organizations can help mitigate the risk dropouts face and facilitate a full re-engagement with educational and workforce opportunity.

The Youth Development Council is uniquely situated and indeed mandated to oversee the seamless delivery of a coordinated statewide effort to re-engage Oregon's dropouts successfully with education and career.

Youth Development Council Policy

The Oregon Legislature should enable the realization of the Youth Development Council's legislative mandate to oversee an accountable, measurable, and unified system providing services to Opportunity Youth by authorizing the full implementation of funding for the YDC to initiate and coordinate statewide re-engagement efforts.

Re-engagement efforts with the greatest impact will require cross systems' collaboration between youth serving agencies. The YDC is uniquely positioned as the state agency legislatively mandated to coordinate services for the population of youth that re-engagement efforts must target. To ensure the seamless delivery of equitable statewide re-engagement services, the YDC must be empowered to implement and coordinate statewide re-engagement efforts.

Current education policy and statutes should be analyzed to identify areas that have the unintended consequence of discouraging re-engagement efforts.

Oregon's educational policy and statutes, especially regarding school and district accountability, may unintentionally serve as a barrier to re-engagement. Washington State has enacted legislation removing statutory impediments and perceived consequences that hindered re-engagement efforts while maintaining the integrity and intent of the school accountability system.

Efforts to re-engage students that have dropped out, and efforts to improve on-time graduation rates should be understood as distinct issues.

In recent years, the four-year cohort graduation rate has increased at the same time the dropout rate has increased. While the current increase in both of these rates may be attributed to methodological changes, the rate calculations are different. This distinction means that improving the on-time graduation rate does not necessarily correspond to a decrease in the dropout rate. Conversely, decreasing the dropout rate does not necessarily mean there is a corresponding increase in the on-time graduation rate. Understanding and appreciating these differences has important implications in terms of desired outcomes and funding priorities.

YOUTH & YOU

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Return on Investment

National estimates show that for any single dropout 16 to 24 years of age remaining disengaged from school and work, society experiences an immediate tax burden of $13,900 per year, and an immediate social burden of $37,450 per year, in 2011 dollars (Belfield et al., 2012). Based on this estimate, the 7,649 students who dropped out of high school last year, assuming they remain disengaged from school and work, represent an immediate yearly tax and social burden of $392,776,150. Re-engaging the number of youth that dropped out last year would cost $15,298,000 based on an estimated $2,000 re-engagement cost per dropout. Re-engaging and keeping engaged the same number of disengaged youth as students who dropped out last year represents an estimated yearly savings of over $350 million.

$350 million in yearly savings

...if the same number of disengaged youth as students who dropped out last year were to be re-engaged and remain engaged.

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