

FINAL REPORT

October 2022



Prepared By:
Recovery School Workgroup

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the 2022 interim, Representative Rachel Prusak convened a cross-agency workgroup to recommend a long-term, sustainable funding solution and governance model for Oregon's recovery high schools, which serve students in recovery from substance use disorder and address their intersectional needs around education and health care. The mission of a recovery high school is to provide a safe and supportive, recovery-focused education for youth in recovery, where they can develop the skills and strengths needed for personal, academic and community success. Recovery schools provide a fresh start for students by offering a holistic approach to both health care and education in a small, peer-supported environment.

During the 2022 Legislative Session, the Oregon Recovery High School Initiative advocated for a one-time bridge funding package to support existing recovery programs in Oregon, and to facilitate the development of a statewide plan for the expansion of recovery schools over the next several years. This expansion planning began with the formation of the **Recovery School Workgroup**, which met from June-September 2022 to identify the best path forward for funding and governing recovery high schools in Oregon. The purpose of this work was to recommend a consistent model for these educational entities to follow, and ensure that proper oversight, funding and standards are in place at a statewide level.

The following recommendations outline the background for this work, the standards established for recovery schools nationwide, and the Workgroup's recommendation to make recovery schools **ODE-designated entities** moving forward. With unified responsibility for recovery high schools at ODE, future qualified programs will have access to the existing funding established in the State School Fund (SSF), but also to funding streams from the **Statewide Education Initiatives Account (SEIA)**. These additional funding streams will make up the cost differential for recovery school students, who have additional, non-traditional service needs around recovery support, counseling and transportation.

To help with the administrative and technical responsibilities created by this new governance model, the Workgroup recommends the establishment of an ODE-appointed advisory committee made up of experts in education, health care and recovery support services. As ODE reviews, approves and monitors recovery schools seeking ODE-designated status and funding, it will have a partner in the advisory committee.

The details of these funding, governance and advisory recommendations can be found on the following pages, along with the membership and composition of the Recovery School Workgroup.

BACKGROUND

Right now, there is one recovery high school in Oregon, [Harmony Academy](#), and a number of districts have expressed interest in starting one of their own.

The need for recovery high schools in Oregon is significant:

- **50%** of all high school students currently use an addictive substance with 1 in 3 qualifying as the medical definition of addiction
- **70%** of teens relapse within six months of treatment
- Youth attending a recovery high school are almost **twice as likely** as their peers to be clean and sober six months after enrolling
- Oregon ranks **48/50** of states for providing substance use treatment to adolescents in need

With such a high number of students with substance use disorder in our state, the Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission identified expanding “recovery models for children and adolescents (e.g., Recovery High Schools)” as a key component of its year-three priorities in the [2020-2025 ADPC Oregon Statewide Strategic Plan](#) (pg. 65/66).

WHAT RECOVERY SCHOOLS OFFER

Recovery high schools provide a safe, supportive, and effective academic environment for youth in recovery by providing the following:

- Academic competency
- Alternative peer support groups
- Holistic recovery support
- Comprehensive case management and resource coordination
- Family support
- Social supports and community integration
- Positive peer culture
- Integrated family support

RECOVERY SCHOOL WORKGROUP

Given the need in Oregon and the promise of recovery high schools, the cross-agency recovery school workgroup was tasked with providing recommendations to spread the model, with a sustainable funding source and a strong governance model. The 18-member group, representing multiple state agencies, experts in substance use disorder, recovery high school staff and founders, and others met over three months and developed consensus recommendations. (See Appendix A for a list of workgroup members.)

The Workgroup crafted their recommendations relying on the following principles:

- Preserve fidelity to the recovery school model
- Ensure accreditation standards for recovery schools are met
- Ensure accreditation standards for diploma are met
- Center equity
 - The governance and funding models have to work for students throughout Oregon, taking into account race, language, socioeconomic status, gender identity and geography (rural students)
- Maintain a responsive model
- Serve students across Oregon
- Ensure that people from communities served participate in design and implementation of local models
- Support cross-agency collaboration
- Affirm clarity of administrative responsibility for services and students

RECOMMENDATION #1

Oregon Department of Education oversight of recovery schools

- The Cross Agency Workgroup recommends that the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) be responsible for providing education to students in Oregon Recovery Schools. This would be accomplished through agreements for services with school districts, Education Service Districts (ESDs) and/or charter schools, according to a process established by ODE. Once ODE has an agreement for services with a recovery school, it becomes an ODE-designated Recovery School. ODE-designated recovery schools may have agreements with other entities, such as community-based organizations or Oregon's nine federally-recognized tribes.
- ODE will hold responsibility for FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education) for students attending ODE-designated recovery schools.
- ODE will have discretion in choosing which schools it enters into agreements for services with: recovery schools in Oregon are not guaranteed an agreement for services with ODE or funding. In its determination, ODE will consider the school's alignment with standards for accreditation established by the [Association of Recovery Schools](#) (ARS), geographic distribution, and the need in the community.
- In addition to newly established recovery schools, recovery schools currently operating in Oregon also will be eligible to seek an agreement for services with ODE.
- ODE will establish eligibility criteria for students to attend recovery schools, based on input from the advisory committee (see below) and research from ARS and other relevant organizations.

- ODE will have discretion as to the number of schools it designates as recovery schools, though it will not designate more than nine recovery schools before July 1, 2029.
- At least every two years, ODE will report to the advisory committee about progress, successes and challenges.
- On January 1, 2028, ODE, in partnership with the advisory committee, will make recommendations to the legislature about the state of recovery schools in Oregon and outline successes, challenges and additional needs.

RECOMMENDATION #2

Minimum standards for ODE-designated recovery schools

- The Workgroup recommends that ODE ensures that ODE-designated recovery schools are aligned with the standards for accreditation established by the [Association of Recovery Schools \(ARS\)](#)
 - Within four years of starting, each recovery school must start the accreditation process with a recovery school accreditation body (ARS or its equivalent)
- ODE will set additional standards for recovery schools. ODE should consider, but not be limited to, the following standards:
 - The school should be designed for and serve students recovering from substance use disorder
 - The school should be a school of choice - students cannot be mandated or required to attend recovery schools
 - The school must offer an Oregon high school diploma
 - The school should meet requirements under Division 22 (OARs)
 - The school should use licensed administrators and teachers in accordance with existing standards for traditional public schools

ODE-designated recovery schools should be tailored to address the needs in their communities, while also meeting the minimum standards set out by ODE.

RECOMMENDATION #3

Oregon Recovery Schools Advisory Committee

The Workgroup recommends the establishment of an advisory committee to:

- Provide recommendations, community input, and guidance to ODE to fulfill the intent and impact of recovery high schools

- Provide feedback to ODE on the monitoring of recovery schools in Oregon
- Provide feedback to ODE on technical assistance needs for recovery schools
- Advise on legislative and policy changes around recovery schools to support the creation and sustainability of recovery schools

The Workgroup recommends the advisory committee consist of **no more than 15** members appointed by the Director of ODE. At least three of the seats should be filled by individuals with experience establishing a recovery high school. The remainder of the advisory committee, which will be staffed by ODE, should include representation from:

- Oregon Department of Education
- Oregon Health Authority
- Local public and/or mental health
- Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission
- Youth Development Division
- Nine Federally Recognized Tribes of Oregon
- Family/caregivers who have experience with recovery schools and/or substance use disorder
- Youth who have experience with recovery schools and/or substance use disorder
- School district or ESD administrator (ideally one working with a recovery school)
- Individuals with experience in the following:
 - Substance use disorder treatment
 - Disability rights and/or special education
 - Expertise and experience in integrating and elevating equity
 - Higher education
 - Experience with student services
 - Establishing a recovery high school

The advisory committee should reflect the racial and geographic diversity of Oregon.

RECOMMENDATION #4

Cross-agency partnerships and braided funding

The Workgroup recommends that ODE work closely with other state agencies. While recovery schools will be overseen by ODE, the Department should work in partnership with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). OHA will work with ODE to provide and braid funding. The Workgroup recommends that OHA funding be maximized and, to the extent possible, be used for planning costs for recovery schools and other costs related to start-up, as necessary.

ODE will also engage other relevant state and local entities, including, but not limited to: the Youth Development Division, the Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission, the Oregon Youth Authority, the Oregon Department of Human Services, and local public/mental health authorities.

RECOMMENDATION #5

ODE funding mechanism and formula

The Workgroup recommends a funding model for recovery schools that have an agreement for services with ODE that provides a base amount for a funding floor with additional funds for each additional student. Each school would receive a minimum amount of funding for the first 15 students. The floor and multiplier could be adjusted over time if deemed necessary.

The funding amount for recovery schools for ODE-designated recovery schools should be calculated via a specified formula.

- ODE will receive from the State School Fund (SSF) a grant equal to the ADMw of all students opting to attend an Oregon Recovery School, plus:
 - Funds from the Student Success Act (SSA), Statewide Education Initiatives Account (SEIA)
- The amount from the SSA will be calculated in the following fashion:
 - Target (base) funding amount – SSF allocation = difference paid out of SSA
- Under this funding model, a new “bucket” for recovery schools will need to be established in the SEIA

Once a recovery school has an agreement for services with ODE, it is no longer eligible for the state school fund allocation for students; funding will be provided through the ODE agreement.

APPENDIX A: WORKGROUP MEMBERSHIP

Name	Agency/Organization	Title
Representative Rachel Prusak	Oregon Legislature	Representative
Senator Rob Wagner	Oregon Legislature	Senate Majority Leader
Morgan Allen	Coalition of School Administrators	Deputy Executive Director of Policy and Advocacy
Samantha Byers	Oregon Health Authority	Block Grant Manager for Recovery Programs
Tim Cook	Clackamas Community College	President
Bernardino De La Torre	Oregon Health Authority	Youth Substance Use Disorder Program and Policy Coordinator
Sharon Dursi-Martin	Harmony Academy	Principal
Jill Gray	Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission	Senior Policy Analyst
Bill Hansell	Youth Development Division	Youth Policy Analyst
Donna Lewelling	Higher Education Coordinating Commission	Director, Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development
Debbie Koreski	Mahonia Public Affairs	Partner/Lobbyist
Tony Mann	Harmony Academy/ORHSI	Co-Founder and Chair
Stacy Michaelson	Multnomah Education Service District	Government Affairs Administrator
Kristen Miles	Harmony Academy	Board member
Christine Otto	Multnomah Education Service District	Senior Educational Services Administrator
Kate Pattison	Oregon Department of Education	Charter School Specialist
Ashley Thirstrup	Oregon Health Authority	Interim Director of Health In Education
Tenneal Wetherell	Oregon Department of Education	Assistant Superintendent, Office of Enhancing Student Opportunities