

Expanded Learning Opportunities Policy Update – May, 2018

Policy issues have quickly moved front and center in relationship to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) implementation in Oregon and across the nation. OregonASK has examined the most prominent policy issues and gained meaningful feedback from stakeholders – including youth, all the way to the state legislature. Policy experts in the field, including the Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) and leadership from the Oregon Department of Education offered insight in policy recommendations that could include additional Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) implementation. Augmented by local and regional policy input, a series of focus groups and policy discussions have taken place over the past several months. These discussion forums have led to policy recommendations based on meaningful consultation at the local, regional and state levels.

This policy work is key, as the political overtones of ESSA implementation can tend to overshadow the potential improvement of educational programs and flexibility offered by a new, broad range of options at the state and local level. While much of the flexibility provided through ESSA lands at the state level, districts now have a key voice in the school improvement process and have more influence in how their state allocated funding can be used to meet the goals of ESSA. Therefore hearing directly from our constituents throughout Oregon, and providing the critical lessons learned to the state agency and legislative counterparts has become a focus of the policy work.

The ELO policy topics identified as key issues by stakeholders include:

Access	Program Quality
Equity	School & Community Partnerships
Funding	Credit for ELO

The requirements for evidence-based intervention required by ESSA provides a strong basis for Expanded Learning Opportunities, as there are many research studies, both past and present, that provide strong levels of support to the cost-effectiveness of implementing and/or sustaining afterschool and summer learning programs. Strong partnerships, also a hallmark in many of the ELO programs across the state fits with the criteria of ESSA programming and is highlighted in the approved Oregon ESSA plan. Finding evidenced-based strategies for interventions is particularly critical in rural areas, which was a focus of this project.

Policy recommendations for inclusion of ELO options on the local level include:

Alternative Education Options (Code IGB)	Graduation Requirements (Code IKF)
Credit for Proficiency (Code IKH)	Program Exemptions (Code IGB)
Educational Equity (Code JBB)	Local Wellness Program (EFA)
Title IA/Parental & Family Involvement (Code IGBC)	

The expansion of the funding for Title IV provides for flexibility for ELO to ensure a “well-rounded” education, the strong research base relating to afterschool and summer programming, along with the economic advantages of serving students with necessary interventions in the out of school time arena. Fiscal transparency, including disaggregation at the school level relating to per-pupil spending will be a leverage point for using funding in the far more economical arena of ELO going forward.