

K12 ACADEMICS — STATE EDUCATION SERIES



Oregon Education Guide

A complete profile — schools, testing, graduation, accountability, school choice, teacher certification & financial aid, each in depth.



Find Your Community
2026 EDITION

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Everything about school in Oregon.

This guide profiles **Oregon's** education system in seven parts, each a two-page deep dive with the key facts, plain-English explanations, and a link to the full, regularly-updated guide online. From K12 Academics, the world's largest education resource, online since 2004.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Education Overview · State Testing · Graduation Requirements · Accountability & Report Cards · School Choice · Teacher Certification · Financial Aid

SEARCH 200+ DIRECTORIES

K-12 Schools · Colleges & Universities · Vendors · Summer Programs · International Programs · Performers

Education Overview

EDUCATION IN OREGON

Oregon educates roughly 540,000 public K–12 students across about 197 school districts , overseen by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and the State Board. Oregon has taken a distinctive path on assessment: it suspended its Essential Skills graduation-test requirement (through 2027–28), so students no longer have to pass a test to...

WHO MUST ATTEND SCHOOL

- ✓ **Start age** — 6
- ✓ **End of compulsory age** — 18 (or completing 12th grade)
- ✓ **Districts** — ~197 school districts
- ✓ **Satisfying it** — Public, private, or registered homeschool

PRE-K IN OREGON

Oregon does not yet have a statewide universal pre-K program, but it has expanded early learning significantly . State-funded programs include Preschool Promise (free, high-quality preschool for eligible income-qualified families), Oregon Prekindergarten (the state's Head Start program), and investments funded by the Student Success Act...



AT A GLANCE

Compulsory	Ages 6–18
Districts	~197
Testing	OSAS
Diploma	24 credits
Choice	Charters

DISTRICTS & CHARTERS

Oregon's largest districts include Portland Public Schools (the state's largest), Salem-Keizer , Beaverton , Hillsboro , and North Clackamas . Oregon has a public charter-school sector — charters authorized by districts (or, in some cases, the state) that operate as public schools of choice, including some online options. Find Oregon...

PRIVATE & INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN OREGON

- ✓ **Independent schools** — Nonprofit, board-governed schools such as Catlin Gabel School , Oregon Episcopal School, and Riverdale (Portland)
- ✓ **Catholic & parochial schools** — Archdiocese of Portland schools (such as the Jesuit Jesuit High School, Central Catholic, and La Salle)
- ✓ **Other religious schools** — Christian and other faith-based options
- ✓ **Specialty schools** — Waldorf (Oregon has many), Montessori, and schools for specific learning needs

READ OREGON'S FULL EDUCATION OVERVIEW GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



State Testing

WHAT YOUR STATE TESTS

Oregon's tests are the OSAS (Oregon Statewide Assessment System): Smarter Balanced for ELA and math and the Oregon Science test. Oregon suspended its "Essential Skills" graduation-test requirement , so students don't need to pass a state test to graduate. Run by the Oregon Department of Education.

WHICH TESTS, WHICH GRADES

- ✓ **Smarter Balanced — ELA & Math** — Grades 3–8 and grade 11 (computer-adaptive with a performance task)
- ✓ **Oregon Science Assessment** — Science in grades 5, 8, and 11
- ✓ **ORExt** — Alternate assessment for eligible students

FORMAT & SUBJECTS

Smarter Balanced is computer-adaptive with a performance task; the science test is computer-based.

IS PASSING REQUIRED TO GRADUATE?

No test-pass gate. Oregon does not require passing a state assessment to graduate (the former Essential Skills requirement is suspended). Students earn a diploma by meeting credit and course requirements set by the state and district.

HOW IT'S SCORED

Smarter Balanced reports four levels (Level 3+ meets standard); the science test reports achievement levels.

AT A GLANCE

System	OSAS
ELA/Math	Smarter Balanced gr 3–8, 11
Science	Oregon Science gr 5, 8, 11
Grad requirement?	No test-pass gate
Opt-out	Broad parent rights
Format	Computer-adaptive

TESTING WINDOWS

OSAS testing runs in a spring window for ELA, math, and science, scheduled by each district.

HOW TO PREPARE

- ✓ **Practice & training tests** — ODE provides free practice tests for the computer-adaptive format
- ✓ **Apply skills** — Smarter Balanced rewards reasoning across standards

PARTICIPATION & OPTING OUT

Oregon gives parents broad opt-out rights — a parent may annually excuse their child from the ELA and math tests. Ask your district about the form and timeline.

ACCOUNTABILITY & PROMOTION

Results feed accountability and school reporting and guide instruction; they are not used to gate graduation.

READ OREGON'S FULL STATE TESTING GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



Graduation Requirements

AT A GLANCE

Oregon requires 24 credits plus personalized learning requirements . Notably, Oregon has suspended its "Essential Skills" proficiency requirement (demonstrating reading, writing, and math proficiency), so students are not currently required to pass a proficiency test to graduate — confirm the current status with your district.

CREDIT & COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Oregon's 24 credits include 4 English, 3 math (Algebra I and above), 3 science, 3 social studies, 1 PE, 1 health, 3 arts/world language/CTE, and electives.

TESTING TO GRADUATE

No proficiency test currently required. Oregon suspended the Essential Skills graduation proficiency requirement. Students take state assessments, but a passing score is not currently required to graduate — confirm the latest with your district.

DIPLOMA TYPES & HONORS

Oregon issues a standard diploma, plus a modified/extended diploma for eligible students and the Seal of Biliteracy . Districts may add honors.

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

Oregon requires personalized learning elements: an education plan and profile , career-related learning experiences , and an extended application project.

AT A GLANCE

Credits	24
Essential Skills	Proficiency requirement suspende...
Exit exam?	No (proficiency paused)
Also	Education plan & career-related...
Confirm with	Your district

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ✓ **How many credits does Oregon require?** — The state sets a minimum, but your district may require more — confirm locally.
- ✓ **Does Oregon require a test to graduate?** — Not currently — Oregon suspended its Essential Skills proficiency requirement; confirm the latest status.
- ✓ **Are there different diploma types?** — Yes — plus honors designations and seals; see the diplomas section.
- ✓ **What if my student is behind on credits?** — Talk to the counselor about credit recovery and alternative pathways.
- ✓ **Where do I confirm the exact requirements?** — Your school counselor, district, and the state department of education.

READ OREGON'S FULL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



Accountability & Report Cards

AT A GLANCE

Oregon publishes At-A-Glance School Profiles and rates schools on each measure using levels , then identifies lower-performing schools for support under ESSA — rather than a single letter grade or star rating.

HOW THIS STATE RATES SCHOOLS

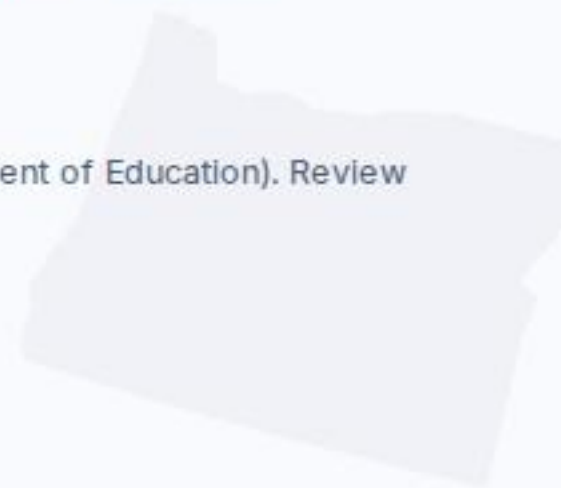
Oregon rates schools on each indicator — academic achievement, growth, graduation (four- and five-year), ninth-grade on-track, regular attendance, and English-learner progress — using performance levels , and identifies schools for comprehensive or targeted support . Read across the indicator levels and any support status.

WHAT GETS MEASURED

- ✓ **Academic achievement** — How students score on state tests (proficiency in reading/ELA and math)
- ✓ **Academic growth / progress** — How much students improve year to year — not just where they land
- ✓ **Graduation rate** — For high schools (the 4-year cohort rate)
- ✓ **English-learner progress** — How English learners are progressing toward proficiency
- ✓ **School quality / student success** — An extra indicator — often attendance/chronic absenteeism, college/career readiness, or similar

FINDING & READING THE REPORT CARD

Look up any school on Oregon's At-A-Glance School Profiles (via the Oregon Department of Education). Review the indicator levels (especially growth and on-track) and the trend.



AT A GLANCE

Format

Rating levels + support identifi...

No

Single grade or stars

Tool

At-A-Glance School Profiles

Look up at

oregon.gov/ode

HOW FAMILIES SHOULD USE RATINGS

- ✓ **Read it in context** — A school's score reflects its students' circumstances too, not only its quality
- ✓ **Look at growth, not just scores** — Growth shows how much a school moves students — often more telling than raw proficiency
- ✓ **Check the trend** — Is the school improving over time?
- ✓ **Look past the summary** — Dig into the underlying data (subgroups, attendance, readiness)
- ✓ **Then visit** — Data raises questions; a visit answers them (see our guide on evaluating a school)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ✓ **How does Oregon rate schools?** — Oregon rates schools by indicator levels and identifies schools for support — not a single grade or stars.
- ✓ **What do the ratings measure?** — Test scores, growth, graduation rate, English-learner progress, and a school-quality indicator.
- ✓ **Where do I look up my school?** — On the state's official report-card portal (see below).
- ✓ **Should I choose a school by its rating alone?** — No — use it as a starting point, weigh growth and context, and visit.
- ✓ **What are CSI and TSI?** — Federal labels for schools flagged for Comprehensive or Targeted Support and Improvement.

READ OREGON'S FULL ACCOUNTABILITY & REPORT CARDS GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



School Choice

AT A GLANCE

Oregon does not have a private-school-choice program (no ESA, voucher, or tax-credit scholarship). It offers public choice through open enrollment (where districts participate) and charter schools.

THIS STATE'S CHOICE PROGRAMS

There is no ESA, voucher, or tax-credit scholarship for private school in Oregon. Families seeking a private school pay tuition (with financial aid often available).

PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE, TOO

- ✓ **Open enrollment / transfers** — Attend a public school outside your zone, where allowed (see our finding-your-school guide)
- ✓ **Charter schools** — Tuition-free public schools of choice (where available)
- ✓ **Magnet schools** — Tuition-free public schools with a specialized focus
- ✓ **Homeschooling** — Legal in all 50 states (rules vary)

LEGAL & LEGISLATIVE STATUS

Private-choice proposals have not been enacted in Oregon. Confirm the current status if you've heard of a new proposal.



AT A GLANCE

Private choice?	No statewide program
Public choice	Open enrollment & charters
Homeschool	Legal (with notice & testing)
Confirm with	Your district

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ✓ **Does Oregon have a private-school-choice program?** — No — Oregon has no private program, but offers public open enrollment and charters.
- ✓ **What's the difference between an ESA and a voucher?** — A voucher pays a private school directly; an ESA is a flexible parent-managed account for many approved expenses.
- ✓ **What is a tax-credit scholarship?** — Donors get a tax credit for giving to organizations that fund private-school scholarships.
- ✓ **Is there public school choice too?** — Yes — open enrollment, charters, and magnets (plus homeschooling).
- ✓ **Where do I confirm the details?** — On the official state program site (see below).

READ OREGON'S FULL SCHOOL CHOICE GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



Teacher Certification

HOW LICENSURE WORKS HERE

Oregon licenses teachers through the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC) . You complete an approved program, pass the required exams, and earn a Preliminary License , later a Professional License .

WHICH TESTS THIS STATE USES

- ✓ **NES (National Evaluation Series)** — Subject-area test(s) for your endorsement (some areas may use other approved tests)
- ✓ **edTPA** — A teaching performance assessment completed during student teaching (confirm current status)
- ✓ **Civil rights / protecting students** — Oregon requires a Protecting Student and Civil Rights module
- ✓ **Note** — Requirements vary by endorsement — confirm your specific tests

WHAT YOU NEED TO GET LICENSED

- ✓ **A bachelor's degree** — From an accredited college or university
- ✓ **A state-approved teacher-preparation program** — Completed at a college or through an approved alternative route
- ✓ **Student teaching / clinical practice** — Supervised classroom experience
- ✓ **Pass the required exams** — See the exams section above
- ✓ **A background check** — Fingerprint-based criminal background check
- ✓ **Apply to the state** — Submit your application and documents to the licensing agency



AT A GLANCE

Agency	Oregon TSPC
Subject	NES (National Evaluation Series)
Performance	edTPA
License	Preliminary — then Professional

OTHER PATHS INTO TEACHING

Most states offer alternative routes for career-changers and those with a degree in another field. In Oregon, these typically let you start teaching while completing licensure requirements — through district or university alternative-certification programs, residencies, or emergency/provisional permits. Requirements (and the exams) are...

RECIPROCITY & OUT-OF-STATE LICENSES

- ✓ **Interstate agreements** — Most states participate in the NASDTEC Interstate Agreement, which eases (but doesn't guarantee) recognition of an out-of-state license
- ✓ **You may still owe exams** — States often require you to meet their own testing (or coursework) requirements, sometimes within a grace period
- ✓ **Check both states** — Confirm the specific steps with Oregon's agency and your current state

READ OREGON'S FULL TEACHER CERTIFICATION GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



Financial Aid

THE STATE AID PICTURE

Oregon's state aid is coordinated by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) and its Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC), including a need-based grant and a community-college promise program.

NEED-BASED STATE GRANTS

- ✓ **Oregon Opportunity Grant** — Oregon's main need-based grant for residents at eligible in-state colleges — file early, as funds are limited.
- ✓ **Oregon Tribal Student Grant** — Can cover the full cost of attendance for enrolled members of Oregon's federally recognized Tribes.

PROMISE & FREE-COLLEGE PROGRAMS

The Oregon Promise helps cover community-college tuition for recent Oregon high-school (or GED) graduates who meet the requirements — a mostly last-dollar award with a small minimum.

COLLEGE SAVINGS (529 PLAN)

The Oregon College Savings Plan (529) offers a refundable state tax credit for contributions.

DEADLINES & TIMING

State deadlines are typically much earlier than the federal FAFSA deadline , and some aid is first-come, first-served until funds run out. File the FAFSA as soon as it opens (in the fall) and confirm the state's specific priority date.

AT A GLANCE

Need-based	Oregon Opportunity Grant
Community college	Oregon Promise
Tribal members	Oregon Tribal Student Grant
529 plan	Oregon College Savings Plan
Agency	HECC / OSAC

APPLYING & THE STATE AGENCY

- ✓ **File the FAFSA early** — It's the trigger for state grants and many scholarships
- ✓ **Register with Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission** — Create the state agency's student account to track and claim awards
- ✓ **Confirm your details** — Verify residency, GPA, and enrollment as required
- ✓ **Meet any extra requirements** — Some programs need a separate form, GPA, or service commitment
- ✓ **Reapply every year** — State aid is awarded annually

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ✓ **How do I get Oregon state aid?** — File the FAFSA (and any state form) by the deadline; Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission administers the programs.
- ✓ **Is it need-based or merit?** — Both — Oregon offers need-based grants and merit scholarships.
- ✓ **Are the deadlines earlier than federal?** — Usually yes — file early, as some aid is first-come.
- ✓ **Can I use it out of state?** — Most Oregon aid is for in-state schools; check each program.
- ✓ **Does this list private scholarships?** — No — this guide covers official state programs only.

READ OREGON'S FULL FINANCIAL AID GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



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