



May 15, 2019

Co-Chair, Senator Lew Frederick
Co-Chair, Representative Susan McLain
Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Education

Dear Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain,

Thank you for the opportunity to answer questions that arose during the May 9 presentation.

Senator Roblan inquired about the retention rate of the Tennessee Promise Program and how it compared to the retention rate of the Oregon Promise Program. In order to offer such a comparison, it is important to understand the similarities and differences of the respective programs. While the eligibility requirements for the Oregon Promise Program were created using the Tennessee Promise Program as an example, there are a few notable differences.

Table 1: Oregon and Tennessee Comparison

Tennessee	Oregon
Recent high school graduates or GED recipients who earn their GED prior to their 19 th birthday	Recent high school graduates (with a 2.5 GPA or higher) or GED recipients (with a test score of 145 or higher)
Enroll in fall semester immediately following high school graduation	Enroll within six months of high school graduation or GED completion
Enroll full time	Enroll at least half time
Complete the FAFSA in addition to the Tennessee Promise application	Complete the FAFSA or ORSAA in addition to the Oregon Promise Application
Attend a community college or Tennessee College of Applied Technology	Attend a community college
Eligible for up to five semesters	Eligible for up to 90 credits
Last dollar program	Last dollar program

Both programs have different requirements to maintain eligibility. For example, in Tennessee, students must complete eight hours of community service for each semester the student is enrolled in the program, participate in a mentoring program and attend mandatory meetings. Students must also maintain a 2.0 GPA.

In Oregon, students must complete a first year college experience requirement during their first three terms, maintain continuous enrollment in subsequent terms, and maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) at the institution they are attending.

When measuring retention, it's important to examine the various outcomes that indicate student success along the education pathway. These include whether a student: (a) has completed a credential, (b) transferred to a university, (c) is still enrolled at a community college and still participating in the promise program, and (d) is still enrolled at a community college, though no longer participating in the promise program. The HECC examines these outcomes in its 2018 Oregon Promise Report (see Table 1).

Table 2: Oregon Promise Student Outcomes

	Cohort 1 (two full years)		Cohort 2 (one full year)	
Earned associate degree, including transfers	852	12.2%	56	1.0%
Earned career certificate, including transfers	131	1.9%	33	0.6%
Transferred to public university	1,274	18.3%	216	3.8%
with credential (also counted above)	444	6.4%	24	0.4%
without credential	830	11.9%	192	3.4%
Still enrolled at community college	2,593	37.2%	4,329	76.3%
with Oregon Promise	1,708	24.5%	4,016	70.8%
without Oregon Promise	885	12.7%	313	5.5%
No longer enrolled in public institution	2,565	36.8%	1,064	18.8%
Total	6,971		5,674	

(Source: Oregon Promise Report, 2018

<https://www.oregon.gov/highered/research/Documents/Reports/SB-81-Oregon-Promise-2018.pdf>

As shown, in the first Cohort of program, 36.8% students were no longer enrolled in a public institution, or not retained. Put another way, 63.2% of students in the first Cohort of the program were retained or earned a credential. In comparison, in the first Cohort of Tennessee's promise program, 47.8% of students dropped or stopped out – meaning 51.2% of students were retained or earned a credential.

Table 3: Tennessee Outcomes, Cohort 1 Students at Community Colleges, Fall 2015 through Fall 2017

	Count	Percent
Received an award	2,857	21.5%
Associate degree	2,424	18.2%
Certificate(s)	279	2.1%
Associate degree and certificate	154	1.2%
Still enrolled	2,739	20.6%
Transferred out	1,335	10.0%
Dropped or stopped out	6,356	47.8%
Total	13,287	

(Source: Tennessee Promise Report, 2018

<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/thcc/bureau/research/promise/TN%20Promise%20Report%20-%202018%20-%20Final.pdf>

If you have further questions, please contact Kyle Thomas, Director of Legislative and Policy Affairs, at kyle.thomas@state.or.us or at 503-480-9596.

Sincerely,

Ben Cannon
Executive Director

