



**To:** Oregon House Committee on Higher Education

**From:** John Chang, Executive Director, College Possible Oregon; Matt Biseck, Executive Director, Oregon TRIO; Melissa Cole, Vice President, AVID Western Region; Jasmine Winslow, AVID Area Center Director

**RE:** HB 4163, Establishment of permanent grant fund for college access and success organizations

**Date:** February 2024

In the last biennium budget, the State invested \$5 million in five college access and success organizations in the state, with the intended purpose of increasing support services for Oregon's historically underrepresented students and expanding the number of students served. With this investment, these organizations were able to maintain support for students by providing structured access to resources, mentoring, financial assistance and social-emotional support.

**In this session, we ask for your support of HB 4163 to establish a grant program for the purpose of expanding the scope and community reach of college access and success organizations.** A dedicated grant fund would allow programs like College Possible, Oregon TRIO and Avid to provide uninterrupted, future-ready support for students, including resources and guidance proven to help students enroll in and complete post-secondary education and enter the workforce.

A permanent grant fund will also empower organizations to strategically expand their reach across the state, particularly in Oregon's rural communities, to meet the growing demands of rising higher education costs, enrollment declines and a changing economy. College access and success programs contribute to meaningful progress toward Oregon's postsecondary goals for historically underserved students, translating to a more equitable and prosperous future for all Oregon residents. A growing body of research, including the Oregon Business Plan Strategy for the 2020s, outlines how educational equity and a well-trained labor force attract employers and retain talented workers who help fund essential public services and contribute to the local economy. With access to permanent funding, AVID, College Possible and Oregon Trio can continue to lead this important work and strengthen outcomes for students.

### **Represented Organizations**

**College Possible Oregon** supports students from junior year of high school until college completion, with near-peer mentoring designed to help students identify their best-fit college, prepare financially and academically, and explore career pathways in alignment with their degree. Partnering with six high schools in the Portland metro and rural students throughout Oregon, College Possible Oregon serves more than 1,700 high school and college students as they achieve college degrees.

**Oregon TRIO Association (OTA)** connects federal TRIO programs to communities in need and supports all TRIO programs statewide. OTA achieves its mission by securing federal TRIO grants for Oregon's educational institutions and non-profit organizations. There are fifty-five grants operating throughout the state. Our organization provides program management support, educational resources, and select opportunities for students to help them attain their educational goals.

**AVID's** (Advancement Via Individual Determination) mission is to close the opportunity gap by preparing all students for college and career readiness and success in a global society. AVID Center partners with K-12 educators to prepare students for postsecondary success in college by equipping them with the skills they need to successfully pursue post-secondary endeavors and providing access to rigorous courses for all students—especially students who have been historically underrepresented in college. AVID minimizes opportunity gaps by supporting schools in making positive change around instruction, systems, leadership, and culture—all which support raising expectations and high achievement for all.