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CREATING STRONG SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES

Regional Promise Grants (2014–2015) Final Evaluation Report

June 2016

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Ashley Pierson
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About Education Northwest

Founded as a nonprofit corporation in 1966, Education Northwest builds capacity in schools, families, and communities through applied research and development.

This report, which details the results of an evaluation of the 2014–2015 Regional Promise grants, is submitted at the request of the Oregon Department of Education.

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Executive Summary

To help achieve Oregon's high school and postsecondary education completion goals, the state has been expanding its investment in accelerated college credit (ACC) options that give high school students the opportunity to earn college credit. A growing body of literature has linked ACC with improved student outcomes such as grades, high school graduation, college completion, and a shorter time to college degree completion (Karp, Calcagno, Hughes, Jeong, & Bailey, 2007; An, 2013; Adelman, 2004).

In fall 2013, the Oregon State Legislature allocated $1.7 million to support and expand Eastern Promise during the 2013–14 and 2014–15 school years. The Eastern Promise program seeks to expand access to dual credit course offerings at eastern Oregon high schools and encourage a college-going culture in all eastern Oregon schools.

Building on the success of Eastern Promise's model, the Oregon State Legislature allocated additional funding in 2014–15 and 2015–17 to "replicate" the Eastern Promise model and increase the number of high school students completing college courses and high school teachers eligible to teach college credit courses. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) is administering these grants, which were disbursed to five regional consortia composed of school districts, educational service districts (ESDs), and local postsecondary institutions.

Education Northwest, a nonprofit organization based in Portland, Oregon, contracted with the Oregon Department of Education to evaluate the 2014–15 Regional Promise grants. This report contains the results of the evaluation of the 2014–15 grant program. The evaluators organized the research questions around the five pillars of the Regional Promise and Eastern Promise programs:

- *Equity* is a commitment to ensuring historically underserved student populations have access to, and enroll in, accelerated college-credit opportunities
- *College-going culture* is a commitment to building a school culture that increases the college-going knowledge of all students and their families
- *Accelerated college credit* is a commitment to improving and expanding the variety of accelerated college credit course offerings in the region
- *Cross-sector partnerships* is a commitment to collaboration between school districts, ESDs, and postsecondary institutions to achieve program goals
- *Cross-sector professional learning communities* is a commitment to developing opportunities for faculty from postsecondary institutions and teachers from high schools to come together to establish an appropriate curriculum and shared assessments for dual-credit classes

This evaluation used multiple sources of data: namely, administrative data from ODE, community colleges, and data from the consortia themselves. We calculated descriptive statistics, performed regression analysis, and summarized grantee report information to answer all research questions for this evaluation.

Results

Selected results from the evaluation are included below.

Pillars 1 & 3: Equity and Expanding ACC participation

Four Regional Promise consortia included in this study offered new ACC classes through the grant (Willamette Promise, Oregon Metro Connects, Southern Oregon Promise, and Cascades Commitment).

Course offerings

- 632 different classes were offered at Regional Promise high schools
- ACC courses were offered in a variety of subjects, including math, English language arts, speech, and science

Regional Promise schools

- In 2014–15, twenty-one percent of all students in Oregon attended a Regional Promise school and 5 percent of Oregon students took a Regional Promise class
- Within Regional Promise schools, 22 percent of high school students took a Regional Promise course, 19 percent took an AP course, 16 percent registered for dual credit at a community college (which may have been the same course as the Regional Promise course), and 4 percent took an IB course

ACC expansion

- Within the Regional Promise consortia schools, ACC coursetaking increased by 226 percent from 2013–14 to 2014–15. This includes students taking AP, IB, dual credit at a community college, and RP courses
- Since Regional Promise courses were not available in 2013–14, increases in ACC participation at Regional Promise schools can be partly attributed to increases in ACC offerings through grant-funded dual credit and AP courses
- Among schools that did not offer Regional Promise, there was an increase of only 84 percent during the same time period

Equity – student demographic characteristics

- The Regional Promise high schools in 2014–15 served a more diverse student body than the state of Oregon as a whole, serving a larger percent of students eligible for FRPL and fewer White students compared to state averages
- Regional Promise schools had an increase in students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, Hispanic students, and students who were eligible for English language learner services from 2013–14 compared to the state during the same time period
- Students who enrolled in Regional Promise courses at their high school were demographically similar for most characteristics[1] to the overall high school student body in Regional Promise

[1] Students who had an individualized education plan (IEP) were underrepresented in Regional Promise courses while White students were overrepresented.

schools, indicating that Regional Promise coursework reached an approximately representative portion of the student body in grantee high schools

- Regional Promise schools increased the percentage of students taking ACC (AP or IB courses, dual credit at a community college, or Regional Promise courses) in all demographic categories, except female and White, from 2013–14 to 2014–15. The largest increases were for male students, students who had an individualized education plan (IEP), and students who were eligible for FRPL
- Male students often enroll at lower rates than females in ACC. From 2013–14 and 2014–15, the percent of male ACC enrollment increased in Regional Promise schools and across the state, but in Regional Promise schools, we found a larger increase (1.9 percent), indicating Regional Promise made greater strides than the state in enrolling male students in ACC
- Regional Promise schools also exceeded the state increase in the percent of students who took any ACC who were eligible for FRPL by 1.6 percent and for students who had an IEP by 1.8 percent
- All types of ACC, except Regional Promise, served similar or higher percentages of White students compared to the state average of 64 percent, indicating that compared to other forms of ACC, Regional Promise served a higher percentage of students from historically underserved groups
- We found that Regional Promise ACC has a much higher participation rate of students eligible for FRPL compared to other types of ACC
- The percentage of students eligible for FRPL who took a Regional Promise course is equal to the percentage of students eligible for FRPL at the Regional Promise schools. This means that low-income students were well-represented in the ACC population, and on average, Regional Promise high schools successfully expanded access to ACC to low-income students

Equity - rural schools

- Among rural schools, Regional Promise seemed to positively impact the percentage of students taking accelerated college credit
- Rural schools participating in Regional Promise saw a large jump in the percentage of students enrolling in any form of ACC—from 2013–14 to 2014–15, 18 to 54 percent, a 200-percent increase
- In rural non-Regional Promise schools across the state, there was only an increase from 13 to 18 percent in the percent of students enrolling in ACC—a 38-percent increase

Student outcomes[2]

- The percentage of 12th-grade students who graduated was higher for students who took any of the ACC types (including Regional Promise) than the overall Oregon high school population in 2014–2015

[2] We examined the relationship of participation in ACC types, including Regional Promise, to high school graduation and attendance. These analyses should not be considered causal, as choosing to enroll in ACC courses is likely related to a motivation to graduate from high school and overall engagement in school/high attendance.

- Logistic regression analysis confirmed that Regional Promise students were more likely to graduate from high school than students who did not take Regional Promise courses
- A student eligible for FRPL who took a Regional Promise course had a 13-percent increase in the likelihood of graduation compared to a student eligible for FRPL who did not take Regional Promise, holding all other factors constant at the mean
- Over 70 percent of students who took any of the ACC options (except IB exam-takers) included in the study had an average attendance rate of 90 percent or higher in 2014–15; this is in contrast to the 45 percent of all Oregon students who met this threshold
- Logistic regression analysis confirmed that Regional Promise coursetakers were more likely to have attendance rates of 90 percent or higher than those who did not take Regional Promise courses

Pillar 2: College-going culture

Regional Promise sites worked toward increasing college-going culture through a variety of activities, promotional events, and materials. Grantees promoted college-going culture activities and college and career success classes for high school students. Some consortia instituted college success programs such as AVID for middle-school students.

- Approximately 1,510 students in 5th-8th grade and 1,797 students in high school participated in college-going culture activities funded by the Regional Promise grants
- Nine college and career success classes occurred, with 983 students enrolled

Pillar 4: Cross-sector partnerships

The Regional Promise program relies on cross-sector partnerships to achieve the other four pillars – cross-sector partnerships are necessary for functioning PLCs, expanding a college-going culture, expanding dual credit, and achieving equity in accelerated coursework.

- Three of these consortia worked together to successfully apply for the 2015–17 Regional Promise grants—the cross-sector partnerships they had formed from the initial grant were stable and sustainable
- Many of the partners strengthened existing relationships with local agencies through the grant
- Each site reported plans to continue implementation of ACC-related activities across sectors

Pillar 5: Professional learning communities and teachers

A core activity for the Regional Promise sites during the 2014–15 school year was the continued development of PLCs composed of high school teachers and college faculty.

- A total of 72 PLCs were formed, covering 47 courses and involving 310 high school teachers and 134 postsecondary faculty members (from community colleges and four-year institutions)
- Approximately 135 high school teachers were newly-qualified to teach ACC through the grant-funded PLCs
- The 2014–15 grants achieved the goal of expanding the number of cross-sector PLCs and the number of eligible teachers in Regional Promise high schools

Conclusion

We find that the 2014–15 Regional Promise program successfully increased the number of ACC classes available to students, expanded ACC enrollment for all students, increased the number of teachers eligible to teach dual-credit courses, and reached historically underserved populations in greater numbers than traditional dual-credit programs. These results from the first year of the program indicate that this strategy is achieving its short-term goals and may help Oregon achieve its ultimate goals of high school and postsecondary completion.

Understanding Regional Promise's impact on high school graduation, college enrollment, persistence, and completion—the ultimate goals of Oregon's educational investments—are not possible to estimate until additional years of data are available. We recommend that any evaluation of the 2015–17 Regional Promise grants continue to track the impact of the 2014–15 grants through time.

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Introduction

Regional Promise Grant program background

Oregon's high school and postsecondary education completion goals, adopted in 2011, are, that by 2025, all adult Oregonians will hold a high school diploma or equivalent, 40 percent will hold a bachelor's degree or higher, and 40 percent will hold an associate's degree or postsecondary certificate (S. 253, Or. 2011). To help achieve this goal, the state has been expanding its investment in accelerated college credit (ACC) options that give high school students the opportunity to earn college credit. These options include Advanced Placement (AP) courses; International Baccalaureate (IB) courses; and dual-credit and expanded options classes. Within the state, dual credit refers to classes articulated with a public university or college taken at the high school, while expanded options refers to classes taken at the college by high school students.

ACC programs are connected with improvements in high school and postsecondary educational outcomes. These programs increase the rigor of high school courses; help to prepare students for college-level coursework; orient students to college systems, such as registration and placement testing; and may lessen the time it takes for a student to earn a degree after high school by accumulating college credits prior to graduation. Evaluating ACC in a rigorous manner to prove a causal link between ACC participation and improved outcomes is challenging due to the association between motivation to participate in ACC options and motivation to succeed in high school and postsecondary education. However, a growing body of literature has linked ACC with improved student outcomes such as grades, high school graduation, college completion, and a shorter time to college degree completion (Karp, Calcagno, Hughes, Jeong, & Bailey, 2007; An, 2013; Adelman, 2004).

Eastern Promise

The Eastern Promise program seeks to expand access to dual credit course offerings at eastern Oregon high schools and encourage a college-going culture in all eastern Oregon schools. The program originated in fall 2011, when leaders from Eastern Oregon University (EOU), Blue Mountain Community College (BMCC), Treasure Valley Community College (TVCC), and the InterMountain and Malheur Education Service Districts (IMESD and MESD, respectively) drafted a proposal to create a new pathway for students to earn college credit while in high school. This new pathway would connect high school teachers with college faculty in their subject area in professional learning communities (PLCs). These PLCs would support the high school teachers as they taught dual credit courses at their local high school (articulated with one of the participating postsecondary institutions). Under this framework, the typical requirement that a high school teacher must have a Master's degree in the content area in order to teach dual credit was waived. In rural or low-income areas in particular, there may be few teachers with a Master's degree, much less a Master's in the content area (e.g., a Master's degree in math). This leads to fewer dual-credit offerings at these schools under the typical requirement. Thus, the new pathway was intended to expand certification to teach dual credit courses to many more teachers.

The Eastern Promise program launched in early 2012 with a single credit-by-proficiency math course. The following school year, Eastern Promise expanded this pilot to nine different college courses offered under the auspices of six disciplinary PLCs across 20 high schools. The 2012–2013 school year also marked the beginning of the Academic Momentum Program, aimed at building a college-going culture beginning in grade 5. This second strand of the program, which initially started in a single school district, also includes programming that helps students transition from middle to high school. In fall 2013, the Oregon State Legislature allocated $1.7 million to support and expand Eastern Promise during the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 school years.

As of the 2014–2015 school year, Eastern Promise offered dual credit courses to 2865 students. In the same school year, 35 percent of eastern Oregon high school students earned college credit through dual credit, Eastern Promise, or other college-credit classes (Eastern Promise, 2015). The program has closed the opportunity gap for Hispanic/Latino students participating in accelerated learning courses and significantly narrowed the gap for American Indian and students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Participation is associated with higher graduation and postsecondary enrollment rates (Eastern Promise, 2016).

Regional Promise

Building on the success of Eastern Promise's model, the Oregon State Legislature allocated additional funding in the 2014–2015 school years to "replicate" the Eastern Promise model and increase the number of high school students completing college courses and high school teachers eligible to teach college credit courses. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) administered these grants, which were and were originally called the Eastern Promise Replication grants. Later renamed the Regional Promise grants to avoid confusion with the original program, these grants were disbursed to five regional consortia composed of school districts, ESDs, and local postsecondary institutions.

Five groups of school districts, community colleges, four-year universities, and educational service districts (ESDs) were awarded Regional Promise grants during the 2014–2015 academic year (Figure 1). The five consortia received funding varying from $250,000 to $500,000, with the award announced in April 2014 and ending in late September 2015. The five sites were Willamette Promise (received $500,000); Oregon Metro Connects (received $445,000); Cascades Commitment (receiving $445,000); Connected Lane Pathways (receiving $250,000); and Southern Oregon Promise (receiving $250,000). Three of the consortia received additional monies in the 2015–2017 Regional Promise grant competition: Cascades Commitment, Willamette Promise, and Southern Oregon Promise.[3]

[3] The legislature approved additional funding for the Regional Promise program for the 2015–2017 biennium, with the original five Regional Promise grantees eligible for continuation funding. Willamette Promise shifted its postsecondary partnerships between the 2014–2015 and 2015–2017 grants. Oregon Metro Connects and Connected Lane Pathways are no longer in existence, though some Oregon Metro Connects schools are now part of the Northwest Promise and the East County Pathways to Success, new consortia for the 2015–2017 grant cycle.

Figure 1. Location of Regional Promise consortia and Eastern Promise in the state

The Regional Promise program centers on five pillars developed by the Eastern Promise program. These pillars are equity, college-going culture, accelerated college credit, cross-sector partnerships, and cross-sector PLCs.

- Equity is a commitment to ensuring historically underserved student populations have access to, and enroll in, accelerated college-credit opportunities
- College-going culture is a commitment to building a school culture that increases the college-going knowledge of all students and their families
- Accelerated college credit is a commitment to improving and expanding the variety of accelerated college credit course offerings in the region
- Cross-sector partnerships is a commitment to collaboration between school districts, ESDs, and postsecondary institutions to achieve program goals
- Cross-sector PLCs is a commitment to developing opportunities for faculty and teachers from postsecondary institutions and high schools to come together to establish an appropriate curriculum and shared assessments for dual-credit classes

Each of the consortia have a different model to achieve success in expanding dual credit and a college-going culture, and, particularly in the 2014–2015 grants, some consortia focused more on certain pillars than others.

Evaluation

Education Northwest, a nonprofit organization based in Portland, Oregon, contracted with the Oregon Department of Education to evaluate the 2014–2015 Regional Promise grants. Education Northwest

worked with ODE to help develop reporting templates that grantees used to provide information to ODE for the required initial, interim, and final grant reports, as well as summarized information contained in those reports for ODE. Education Northwest also gathered data from each of the five sites regarding the classes offered in the 2014–2015 school year that were supported by grant funds; they also conducted a quantitative analysis using a variety of available administrative data sources to determine the grant's reach and impact. This report contains the results of the evaluation of the 2014–2015 grant program.

Regional Promise consortia

Individual Regional Promise sites approached the implementation of the Regional Promise grants in unique ways. Each site submitted a timeline in their final report submissions. Common keystone events among the sites are reported below:

- Following notification of grant receipt, each site initiated planning during the summer of 2014.
- Four of five sites reported offering teacher professional development focused on ACC courses during August 2014.
- Three of five sites reported students beginning classes in September 2014.
- Each site reported continued planning for course development; alignment of curriculum, assessments, and performance evaluation; and promotion of college-going culture occurring throughout fall, winter, and spring 2014–2015. These planning events included PLC convening and college-going culture activities engaging students and the community.
- Each site reported preparation activities for the 2015–2016 school year occurring in June 2015. Reported activities included ACC instructor professional development.

Oregon Metro Connects

The Oregon Metro Connects consortium was centered on the Portland metropolitan area.

2014–2015 model

Oregon Metro Connects sought to increase high school and college completion in both Multnomah and Washington counties. Initial efforts during summer 2014 centered on teacher training with the aim of increasing accelerated college credit (ACC) offerings through new math dual-credit courses at multiple schools, enrollment in Portland State University interdisciplinary courses, and "college success" dual credit courses that provide students with fundamental study skills. Two learning workgroups were formed to align outcomes for two math classes offered this fall. A program promoting college-going culture targeted students in grades 5–8, while a grade 9 class offered at five high schools focused on career and academic planning for the future. Workshops on financial planning for postsecondary education were held for parents of middle school and high school students.

2014–2015 partners

Multnomah Education Service District and nine school districts partnered with Mount Hood Community College (MHCC), Portland Community College (PCC), and Portland State University (PSU).

Cascades Commitment

Cascades Commitment focuses its efforts on central Oregon, with six participating school districts located in or near the Bend-LaPine area.

2014–2015 model

During the 2014–2015 grant year, this consortium (an initiative of Better Together, which is a collective impact group in the region) aimed to provide five targeted college-level courses in high school in a dual-credit model that would allow students in all six participating school districts to move toward earning an associate, transfer, or bachelor's degree. In addition, the program supported three smaller school districts in expanding their Advanced Placement (AP) offerings. To increase the college-going culture of the region, the grant funded initial training and materials to expand AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination, a college-readiness program) to six middle schools and one high school. AVID uses research-based strategies to prepare students for success in high school, college, and careers with a focus on students who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education. Efforts funded by the grant complemented various initiatives of the Better Together Regional Achievement Collaborative (RAC) grant, such as the 8 + 9 mentoring program that pairs at-risk eighth- and ninth-graders to aid in the transition from middle to high school.

2014–2015 partners

The High Desert Education Service District and six school districts partnered with Oregon State University–Cascades Campus (OSU) and Central Oregon Community College (COCC).

Willamette Promise

The Willamette Promise consortium focuses on the mid-Willamette Valley area, which includes Salem and surrounding areas.

2014–2015 model

In 2014–2015, this consortium aimed to ensure that high school students in 20 districts have the opportunity to complete 45 credit hours within the Oregon Transfer Module before graduation, which allows transfer of a year of coursework to any public Oregon college/university. The program also provided students with more opportunities to complete career and technical education (CTE) courses. To increase opportunities for students to take dual credit courses in high school, Willamette Promise implemented seven professional learning communities (PLCs) in different subject areas. Within the PLCs, secondary teachers and postsecondary faculty worked together to align courses and enable high school teachers to become certified to teach dual credit classes. To engender a college-going culture, a specialist worked with middle and high school counselors and staff members to promote campus tours and provide information about college.

2014–2015 partners

Willamette Education Service District and 21 school districts partnered with the Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT), Western Oregon University (WOU), Corban University (CU), and Chemeketa Community College (CCC). All college credit for dual credit classes was provided through WOU.

Southern Oregon Promise

The Southern Oregon Promise consortium focuses on four counties in southern Oregon: Jackson Josephine, Klamath, and Lake. This consortium includes the communities of Medford, Klamath Falls, and Ashland.

2014–2015 model

In 2014–2015, Southern Oregon Promise aimed to increase college success and promote a college-going culture in its region. It created professional learning communities (PLCs) of secondary teachers and postsecondary faculty who will work together to support expansion of dual credit classes in area high schools. To increase college-going, the program funded teacher training in AVID, (Advancement via Individual Determination, a college-readiness program) but was not able to implement AVID as planned due to lower-than-expected grant monies. However, Southern Oregon Promise aligned their efforts with other regional initiatives, including those of the local Regional Achievement Collaborative (a collective impact effort in the area), which also aims to increase college-going culture.

2014–2015 partners

Southern Oregon Education Service District, Lake County Education Service District, and 10 school districts partnered with Klamath Community College (KCC), Rogue Community College (RCC), Southern Oregon University (SOU), and Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT). Two nonprofit organizations, College Dreams (CD) and Citizens for Safe Schools (CSS), were also part of the consortium.

Connected Lane Pathways

The Connected Lane Pathways consortium focused on Lane County (including Eugene and surrounding communities).

2014–2015 model

This consortium focused on creating innovative locally- and culturally-relevant programming to help grades 7–9 students explore their strengths and interests and to connect them to resources and mentors related to their college and career aspirations. Connected Lane Pathways coordinated with the "Bridge" groups of the Connected Lane County Regional Achievement Collaborative (a local collective impact organization), which focused on the transitions between elementary, middle, and high school, and postsecondary education. However, Connected Lane Pathways did not offer any dual-credit courses during the 2014–2015 school year.

2014–2015 partners

Lane Education Service District and 16 school districts partnered with Lane Community College (LCC) and the University of Oregon (UO).

Data and methods

Research questions

Evaluators organized research questions around the five pillars of the Regional Promise and Eastern Promise programs.

1. *Pillar 1 – Equity:* Did the Promise grants increase the participation of historically underrepresented students in ACC coursework?
2. *Pillar 2 – College-going culture:* Did the Promise grants increase the number of college-going culture activities available to students, families, and the community, as well as the numbers of students participating in these activities?
3. *Pillar 3 – Expanding ACC participation:* Did the Promise grants increase the number of students taking and earning credit for at least three ACC courses, and in particular those students from historically underrepresented populations, as well as increase the variety of ACC offerings (including CTE)?
4. *Pillar 3 – Expanding ACC participation:* How was participation in ACC related to student outcomes such as attendance and graduation (overall and by student group and ACC type)?
5. *Pillar 4 – Cross-sector partnerships*: Did consortia form stable and sustainable cross-sector partnerships?
6. *Pillar 5 – PLCs:* Which PLCs were formed and which classes were offered as a result of the Promise grants?
7. *Pillar 5 – PLCs:* Did consortia increase the number of teachers eligible to teach college credit courses in their high schools?

Data sources

This evaluation used multiple sources of data: namely, administrative data from ODE and data from the consortia themselves (self-reported numbers and narrative from the grantee reports and a list of grant-funded courses). Additional data sources include community college data from the Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD), Advanced Placement (AP) data from the College Board, and International Baccalaureate (IB) data from IB. We include a description of the methods used to answer each research question below.

Grantee reports and data

Each of the five sites submitted an initial, interim, and a final report detailing grant planning, progress, and outcomes to ODE. The initial report was due in August 2014 and focused on grantees' plans and logic models for the program. The interim report, due in October 2014, collected information about early successes and barriers to program implementation as well as the number of teachers and students involved in program activities to date. The final report was submitted at the end of June 2015 (the planned end date of the funds). However, funding was extended through September 2015. The final reports collected data from sites on program successes and challenges, changes to their logic model, sustainability of the program after the 2014–2015 grant cycle, and final numbers of teachers and students participating in program activities. These grantee reports served as sources in answering selected research questions.

Grantees also submitted lists of the Regional Promise-funded courses that were offered through their consortia in the 2014–2015 school year to Education Northwest. These lists contained information, where available, on the teacher's name, high school name, district name, and course name and number.

Administrative data

This evaluation used statewide data from ODE on students who attended an Oregon high school and were enrolled in grades 9–12 in the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 school years linked to data submitted by grantees on Regional Promise-funded courses. We matched the Regional Promise course lists by course name, teacher name, and high school name so that we could identify Regional Promise-funded courses in the ODE class roster data.

We used three additional data sources for this evaluation. We used data from CCWD to identify public high schools students who enrolled in dual credits courses from the 17 Oregon community colleges. We also used data from the College Board on AP exam participation and scores and data from IB Americas on IB exam participation and scores to understand AP and IB exam-taking patterns and compare these to "traditional" (non-Regional Promise community college) dual credit and Regional Promise-funded dual credit.

To link ODE data with CCWD, AP, and IB data, the evaluation team used student name, birthdate, and demographic characteristics.

Data issues

We encountered three data issues. First, data quality differed between the data sources. The Regional Promise course lists provided by the site were particularly variable and, thus, some sites had much higher match rates than others. If evaluation efforts coordinated by ODE continue, we would suggest efforts to collect course information from each site each semester of the program rather than waiting until the end of the grant period, as data on course offerings were challenging for some sites to gather after the end of the grant period.

Second, there was no common student identification number available across data sources. We matched data sources using name and birthdate, a method which introduces more error than linking with a common identification number; thus, results reported here may differ if matching is reproduced or conducted again prior to re-analysis.

Third, some data were not available at the time of this evaluation report in June 2016. First, ODE class roster data were available for 2014–2015 only. As a result, we could not identify AP or IB course enrollments in 2013–2014. Second, college enrollment data from the National Student Clearinghouse were not ready in time to track the 2014–2015 students into college. Third, data from the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) on dual credit participation and grades from all four-year postsecondary institutions exist at the state level, but were not available for inclusion in this report. These data would include Regional Promise registrations from PSU and SOU. Regional Promise course registrations for Willamette Promise (through WOU) were not included in this data source; data from WOU were not available by June 2016.

Analytic methods

We detail methods used for each research question below. We answered questions for pillars 1 and 3 using administrative data and some information from grantee reports; we answered questions for pillars 2, 4, and 5 only using information from grantee reports.

1. ***Pillar 1 – Equity****:* Did the Promise grants increase the participation of historically underrepresented students in ACC coursework?

This question was addressed by analyzing student demographic characteristics. Demographics include:

- Eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch (FRPL)
- Eligible for English Learner (EL) services
- Received a suspension (i.e., an in-school or out-of-school suspension)
- Had an Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Race/ethnicity (American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic/Latino, Multiracial, and White)
- Gender

We compared the characteristics of student who took an ACC course to students who attended a school in the Regional Promise consortia and all students in the state. (All students in the state include students who participated in Eastern Promise course.) We also examined how select characteristics of students at Regional Promise schools and all Oregon high schools changed from 2013–14 to 2014–15, and compared select characteristics of students who took an ACC course who attended a rural school in the Regional Promise consortia and a rural school not in the Regional Promise consortia. These comparisons help identify to what extent Regional Promise closed gaps in ACC participation across different student characteristics.

2. ***Pillar 2 – College-going culture****:* Did the Promise grants increase the number of college-going culture activities available to students, families, and the community, as well as the number of students participating in these activities?

We addressed this question using grantee reports of college-going culture activities provided on the interim and final reports.

3. ***Pillar 3 – Expanding ACC participation***: Did the Promise grants increase the number of students, particularly from historically underrepresented populations, taking and earning credit for at least three ACC courses, as well as increase the variety of ACC offerings (including CTE)?

To address this research question, we first summarize efforts by grantees to expand ACC participation that they described in the interim and final reports.

We then present the number and percent of students who attended the Regional Promise schools and took a Regional Promise course and other ACC types (AP course, AP exam, IB course, IB exam, and

dual credit from the community colleges).We present Regional Promise course enrollments by Regional Promise consortia and postsecondary partner. Finally, we examine the variety of Regional Promise offerings by presenting participation rates by course subject.

4. Pillar 3 – Expanding ACC participation: How was participation in ACC related to student outcomes such as attendance and graduation (overall and by student group and ACC type)?

For this question, we used logistic regression analysis to examine the relationship between participation in different ACC options to attendance and high school graduation. Attendance was analyzed using a 90 percent threshold—meaning students attended 90 percent of the school days—as this measure is a predictor of college completion (Hein, Smerdon, & Samboldt, 2013).

5. ***Pillar 4 – Cross-sector partnerships***: Did consortia form stable and sustainable cross-sector partnerships?

We addressed this question using grantee reports of cross-sector partnerships provided on the final report as well as observations made by the authors and ODE after the end-of-the-grant period. These observations included whether the consortium partners continued to work together and offer classes after the end-of-the-grant period. One indication of this was if the consortium submitted an application for continued funding in the 2015–17 grant cycle.

6. ***Pillar 5 – PLCs:*** Which PLCs were formed and which classes offered as a result of the Promise grants?

We used the information on PLC formation and classes provided by grantees in the interim and final reports to answer this question in tandem with the self-reported course data collected at the end of the grant period.

7. ***Pillar 5 – PLCs:*** Did consortia increase the number of teachers eligible to teach college credit courses in their high schools?

For this research question, we used grantee reports on the number of teachers eligible to teach college credit from the interim and final reports.

Findings

The following sections detail the results within each pillar of the program. Prior to examining the results for each pillar, we calculated basic descriptive statistics for students participating in different ACC types across the state to understand the landscape of ACC (Table 1). Twenty-one percent of all students in Oregon attended a Regional Promise school, and in 2014–2015, 5 percent of Oregon students took a Regional Promise class. In 2014–2015, taking an AP course seemed to be the most popular form of ACC across the state, represented by 15 percent of students, while community college dual credit was the second-most popular, represented by 10 percent.

Table 1. Percentage and number of students participating in ACC types, 2013–2014 and 2014–2015

	2013–2014		2014–2015	
Demographic	Percent of students	Number of students	Percent of students	Number of students
All Oregon high school students	-	291,192	-	287,530
Attended school in Regional Promise consortia	21%	61,292	21%	61,491
Took a Regional Promise course	N/A	-	5%	14,018
Took AP course	No data	-	15%	26,033
Took AP exam	5%	14,876	6%	16,442
Took IB course	No data	-	4%	7,694
Took IB exam	1%	1,826	1%	1,677
Took dual credit at community college	9%	25,661	10%	28,999

Note: No data were available for AP and IB courses in 2013–2014; Regional Promise courses were not offered until 2014–2015.

Pillars 1 & 3: Equity and expanding ACC participation

Each site worked to expand ACC offerings throughout the year, though Connected Lane Pathways did not offer any courses for college credit during the 2014–2015 school year. All sites, including Connected Lane Pathways, engaged in course offering planning in the early stages of the grant to determine what ACC courses to offer. For example, Willamette Promise (Willamette Promise) identified 18 courses in seven unique content areas to make available for students.

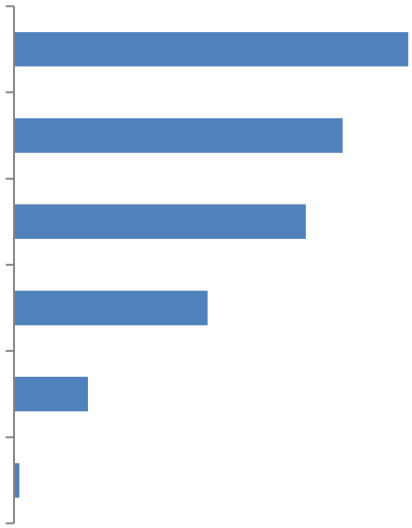
To increase student and family exposure to ACC opportunities, sites invested in marketing materials. Willamette Promise collaborated with a marketing firm to develop an informational video. The video was produced in English, Spanish, and English with subtitles. Concurrently, Willamette Promise developed an official Willamette Promise brand and associated print marketing materials. Southern Oregon Promise produced a promotional flier to highlight ACC activities. Sites translated many of these materials into languages other than English to reach historically underserved populations of students and their families.

Number of students taking ACC

Within the Regional Promise consortia schools, the total number of students who took an AP course, IB course, or dual credit at a community college in 2013–2014 was 8,503. In 2014–2015, the total number of students taking AP, IB, dual credit at a community college, and RP courses was 27,720—an increase of 226 percent. Among schools that did not offer Regional Promise, 17,308 students took ACC in 2013–2014 compared to 31,764 in 2014–2015—an increase of only 84 percent.

Within Regional Promise schools, 22 percent of high school students took a Regional Promise course, 19 percent took an AP course, and 16 percent registered for dual credit at a community college (which may have been the same course as the Regional Promise course). Eleven percent of students took an AP exam, but only 4 percent took an IB course, and less than 1 percent took an IB exam (Figure 2; Table A1). Sixty-two percent of Regional Promise coursetakers took only a Regional Promise course and did not also take an AP or IB course or exam or register at a community college for dual credit (Table A2). Twenty-one percent of Regional Promise coursetakers also took an AP course, while 14 percent also took an AP exam. Examining only AP courses and exams, we found that 59 percent of students who took an AP course attempted an exam in 2014–2015.

Figure 2. Enrollment of students from Regional Promise schools in ACC types, 2014–2015



Across Oregon, about 4.9 percent (14,018) students took a Regional Promise course in 2014–2015. Of those students, over three-fourths (78%) took one Regional Promise course, and less than one fifth (17%) took two Regional Promise courses. The remaining 4 percent of students took three to six Regional Promise courses.

In the four Regional Promise consortia included in this study that offered new ACC classes through the grant (Willamette Promise, Oregon Metro Connects, Southern Oregon Promise, and Cascades Commitment), nearly one in two Regional Promise course-taking students (44%) were at a Willamette Promise school, one of three students (36%t) were at an Oregon Metro Connects school, 13 percent

were at a Southern Oregon Promise school, and 5 percent were at a Cascades Commitment school (Table 2).

Table 2. Regional Promise course enrollment by consortia, 2014–2015

Consortium	Count of Students	Percent
Willamette Promise	6,136	44%
Oregon Metro Connects	4,829	36%
Southern Oregon Promise	2,377	13%
Cascades Commitment	676	5%
Total	14,018	100%

Of all of the postsecondary partner colleges where these courses were offered, Western Oregon University (46%) and Portland Community College (21%) had the largest student enrollment, followed by Mount Hood Community College (14%), Klamath Community College (10%), Central Oregon Community College (5%), Southern Oregon University (3%), and Portland State University (1%; Table 3).

Table 3. Regional Promise course enrollment by postsecondary partner

Postsecondary Partner	Regional Promise Consortium	Count	Percent
Western Oregon University	Willamette Promise	6,136	44%
Portland Community College	Oregon Metro Connects	2,850	20%
Mount Hood Community College	Oregon Metro Connects	1,838	13%
Klamath Community College	Southern Oregon Promise	1,295	9%
Rogue Community College	Southern Oregon Promise	729	5%
Central Oregon Community College	Cascades Commitment	676	5%
Southern Oregon University	Southern Oregon Promise	353	3%
Portland State University	Oregon Metro Connects	141	1%
Total		14,018	100%

Variety of ACC courses

ACC courses were offered in a variety of subjects. According to the records provided by each Regional Promise site, 632 different classes were offered at Regional Promise high schools by different teachers. According to the sites, the following courses were offered through PLCs in 2014–2015 at each consortium. Additional ACC courses that are not listed here may also have been funded partially or completely through the grant (e.g., AP courses, senior inquiry courses, or dual credit taught by an eligible teacher not in a PLC).

- Cascades Commitment: Writing 121, Writing 122, Math 111
- Connected Lane Pathways: None
- Oregon Metro Connects: Math 95, Math 111, Math 112, CG 100, CG 105, CG 130, EL 115C, HD100C, HD110

- Southern Oregon Promise: GS 104 Physics, Biology 101/102/103, Chemistry 104, Speech 111, Business 131 (Business Computing), Health Occupations 101, Health Occupations 102, Math 60, Math 65, Writing 121, Writing 122
- Willamette Promise: Biology 101/102, Chemistry 104/150, Math 111, Math 70/95, Spanish 101-103, Spanish 201-203, Writing 115/121/122, Communications 111, Computer Science 124

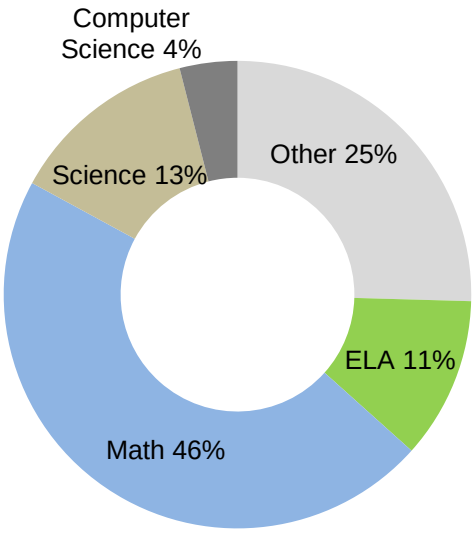
The course list provided by the Regional Promise consortia matched to 303 individual courses in the ODE course roster data. This linking allowed us to determine which students took the Regional Promise courses. However, 132 classes provided by Regional Promise sites did not have a corresponding record in the ODE course roster data. Some of this difference in the numbers of matching classes is represented by issues with matching records, but much of this is due to collapsing what are considered separate courses at the college level to a single class within ODE (e.g., Spanish 101, 102, and 103 are three classes under the Regional Promise records but correspond to a single ODE Spanish class).

A total of 17,818 Regional Promise student course enrollments were found in the ODE data that corresponded to these 303 different courses. Forty-six percent of all Regional Promise course enrollments were for math classes, while ELA formed only 11 percent, science 13 percent, computer science a scant 4 percent, and other subjects 25 percent (Figure 2; table A3). These "other" subjects included health, speech/communications, and Spanish language instruction. When considering other ACC enrollment, we found that there were 41,251 course enrollments in AP courses, with over 44 percent of these in the "other" subject category, 25 percent in ELA, 16 percent in science, and 13 percent in math.

Career and technical education (CTE) courses were offered in the following subjects:

- Health (e.g., first aid basics, anatomy, medical terminology)
- Architecture/construction/engineering (e.g., design, drafting)
- Early childhood education (e.g., child services)
- Business/computer science (e.g., web design, basic business)

Figure 3. Regional Promise coursetaking by subject classification (from ODE data)



Note: Other courses include history/humanities, architecture/construction/engineering, career exploration, child care, drafting, economics, health care, French, horticulture, German, library sciences, metalworking, Spanish, and study skills classes.

Expanding ACC to historically underserved students

Examining student demographic characteristics, we find that the Regional Promise high schools in 2014–2015 served a more diverse student body than the state of Oregon as a whole. Regional Promise high schools served a larger percent of students eligible for FRPL and fewer White students compared to state averages (Figure 4, Table A4). In fact, Regional Promise schools had an increase in students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, Hispanic students, and students who were eligible for EL services from 2013–2014 compared to the state during the same time period (Figure 5, Table A5).

Examining Regional Promise coursetaking, we find that students who enrolled in Regional Promise courses at their high school were demographically similar for most characteristics to the overall high school student body in Regional Promise schools (Figure 4; Table A4). However, Regional Promise courses served a smaller percentage of students who had an IEP than the overall student body in Regional Promise high schools (a difference of 2.8%) and a higher percentage of White students (2 percent). All other differences were less than 1 percent. This indicates that Regional Promise coursework reached an approximately representative portion of the student body in grantee high schools.

Figure 4. Demographic characteristics of all Oregon and Regional Promise (RP) high school students compared to those who took Regional Promise courses, 2014–2015

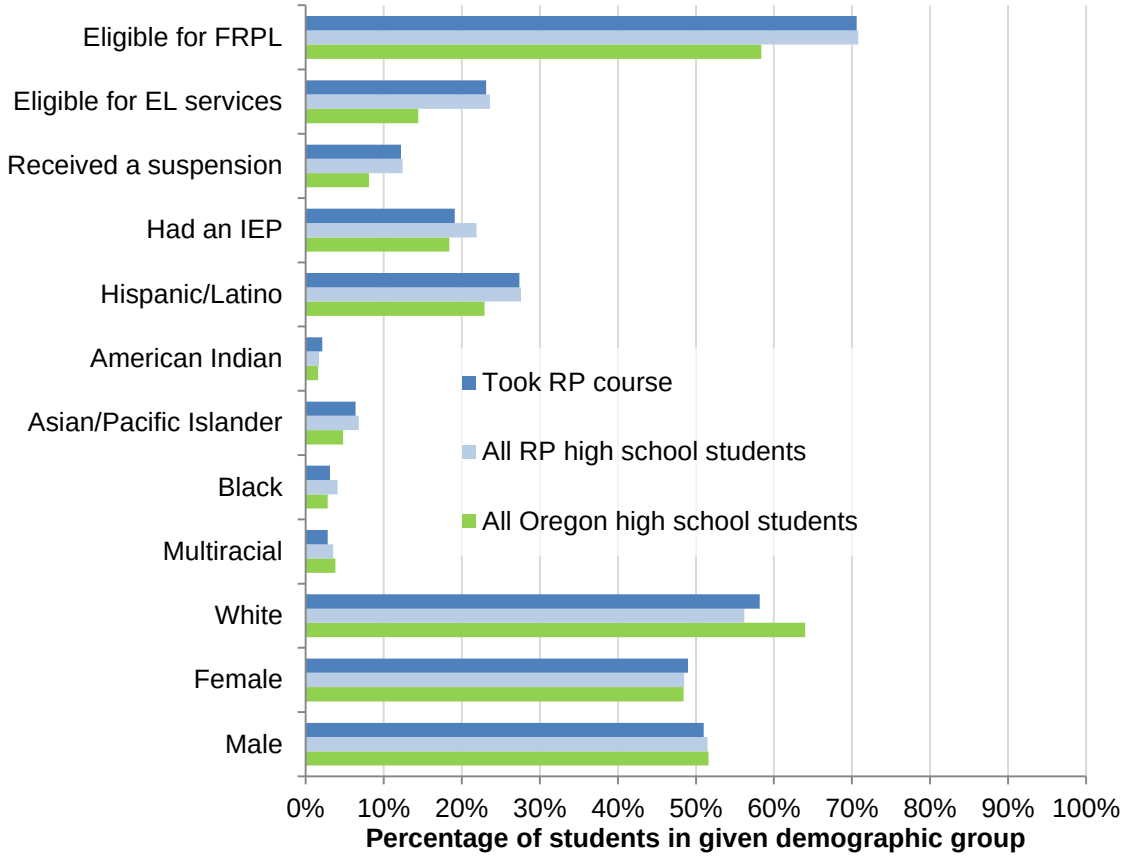
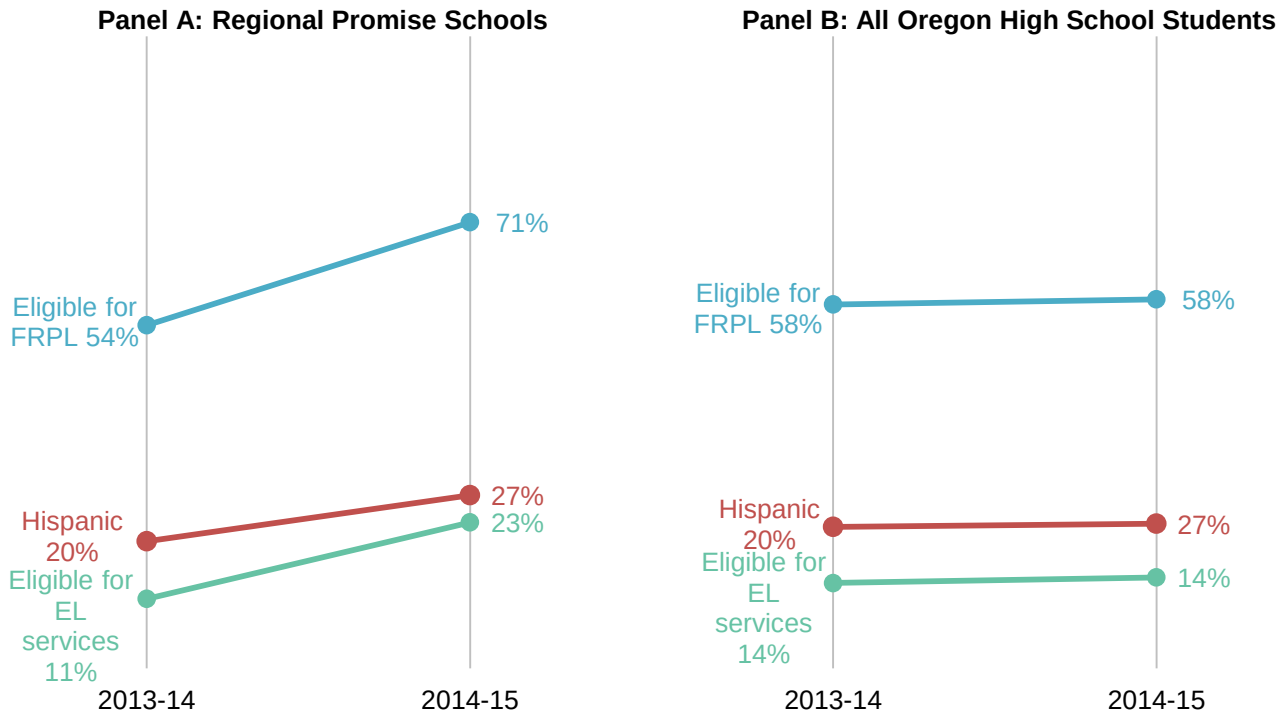


Figure 5. Demographic characteristics of all Oregon and Regional Promise (RP) high school students from 2013–2014 to 2014–2015

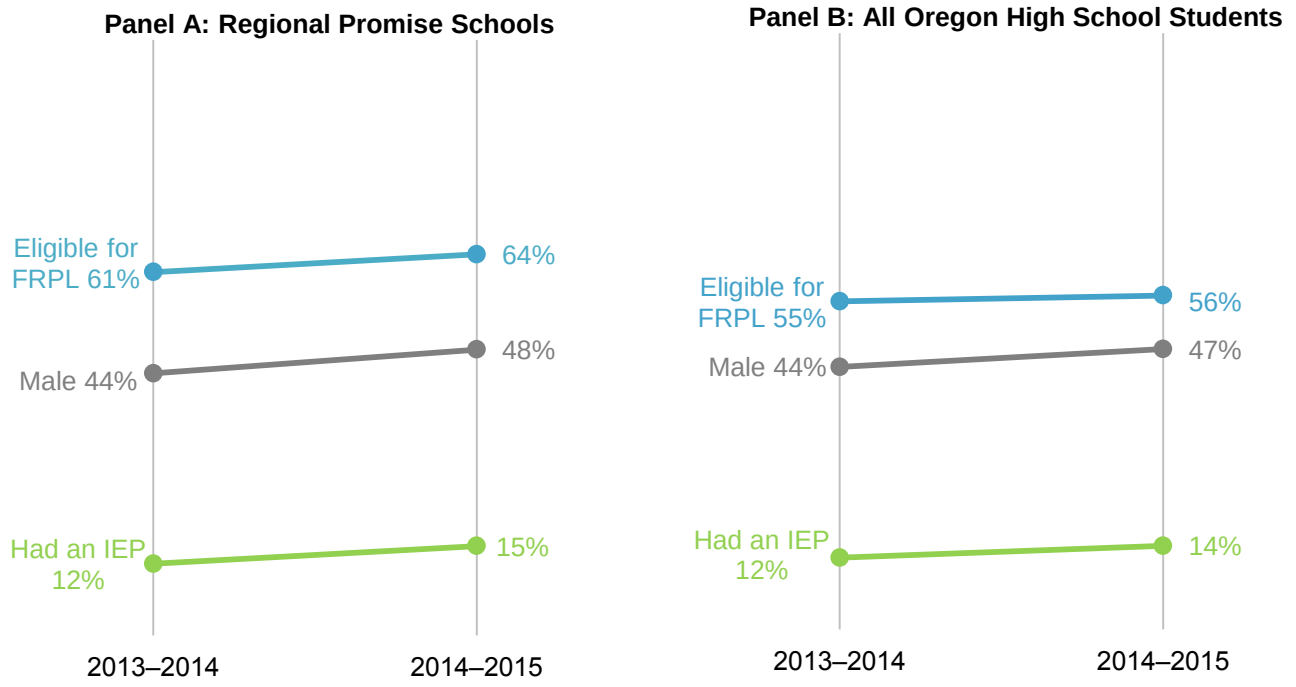


We examined the demographic characteristics of students who took AP or IB courses, dual credit at a community college, or Regional Promise courses across two years (2013–2014 and 2014–2015). Since Regional Promise courses were not available in 2013–2014, increases in ACC participation at Regional Promise schools can be partly attributed to increases in ACC offerings through grant-funded dual credit and AP courses.

We found that Regional Promise schools increased the percentage of students taking ACC in all demographic categories, except female and White (Table A6). The largest increases were for male students, students who had an IEP, and students who were eligible for FRPL. Specifically, Regional Promise schools increased the percentage of male students taking these ACC types by 4.1 percent. Regional Promise schools also had increases of 3 percent or more for Hispanic/Latino students, students who had an IEP, were eligible for EL services, received a suspension, and students eligible for FRPL.

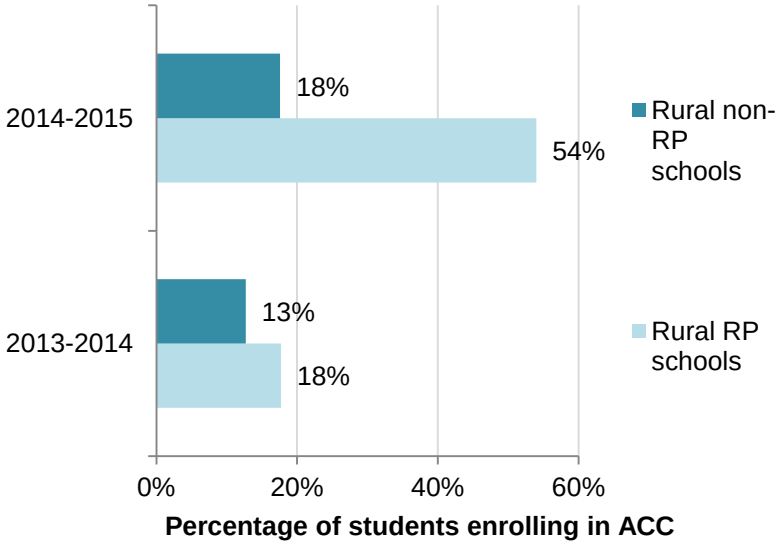
Male students often enroll at lower rates than females in ACC. The percent of male ACC enrollment increased in Regional Promise schools and across the state, but in Regional Promise schools, we found an increase larger by 1.9 percent, indicating Regional Promise made greater strides than the state in enrolling male students in ACC (Figure 6). Regional Promise schools also exceeded the state increase in the percent of students who took any ACC who were eligible for FRPL by 1.6 percent, and for students who had an IEP by 1.8 percent.

Figure 6. Percentage of students enrolled in AP, IB, dual credit at community college, and Regional Promise course in 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 at Regional Promise schools and across the state



We also examined Regional Promise expansion in rural schools (Figure 7). Rural schools participating in Regional Promise saw a large jump in the percentage of students enrolling in any form of ACC—from 2013–2014 to 2014–2015, a 200-percent increase from 18 to 54 percent. In rural non-Regional Promise schools across the state, there was only an increase from 13 to 18 percent in the percent of students enrolling in ACC, a 38-percent increase. This indicates that among rural schools, Regional Promise seemed to positively impact the percentage of students taking accelerated college credit.

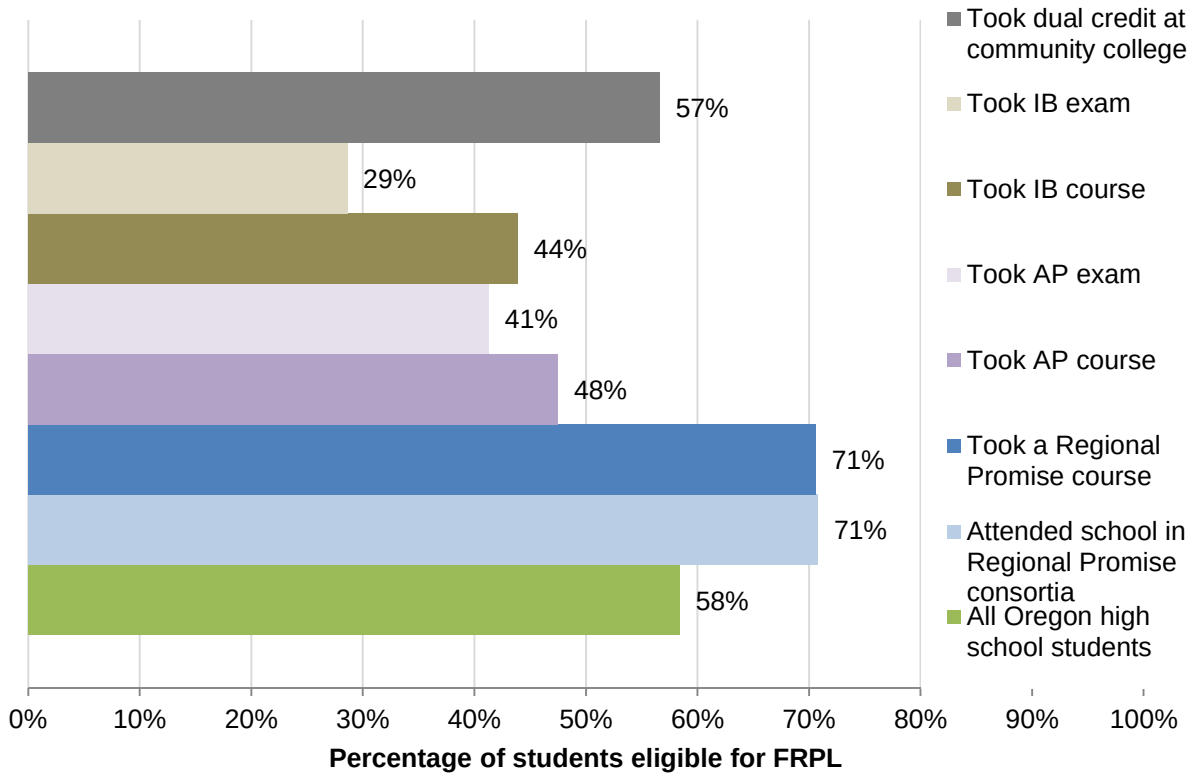
Figure 7. Percentage of students enrolled in AP, IB, dual credit at community college, and Regional Promise course in 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 at rural Regional Promise schools and rural non-Regional Promise schools



We also examined student demographics within each type of ACC (Table A7). All types of ACC, except Regional Promise, served similar or higher percentages of White students compared to the state average of 64 percent, indicating that compared to other forms of ACC, Regional Promise served a higher percentage of students from historically underserved groups.

We found that Regional Promise ACC has a much higher participation rate of students eligible for FRPL compared to other types of ACC (Figure 8). Additionally, the percentage of students eligible for FRPL who took a Regional Promise course is equal to the percentage of students eligible for FRPL at the Regional Promise schools. This means that low-income students were well-represented in the ACC population, and on average, Regional Promise high schools did a good job of expanding access to ACC to low-income students.

Figure 8. Percentage of students eligible for FRPL of total students taking the specified ACC type or school grouping, 2014–2015



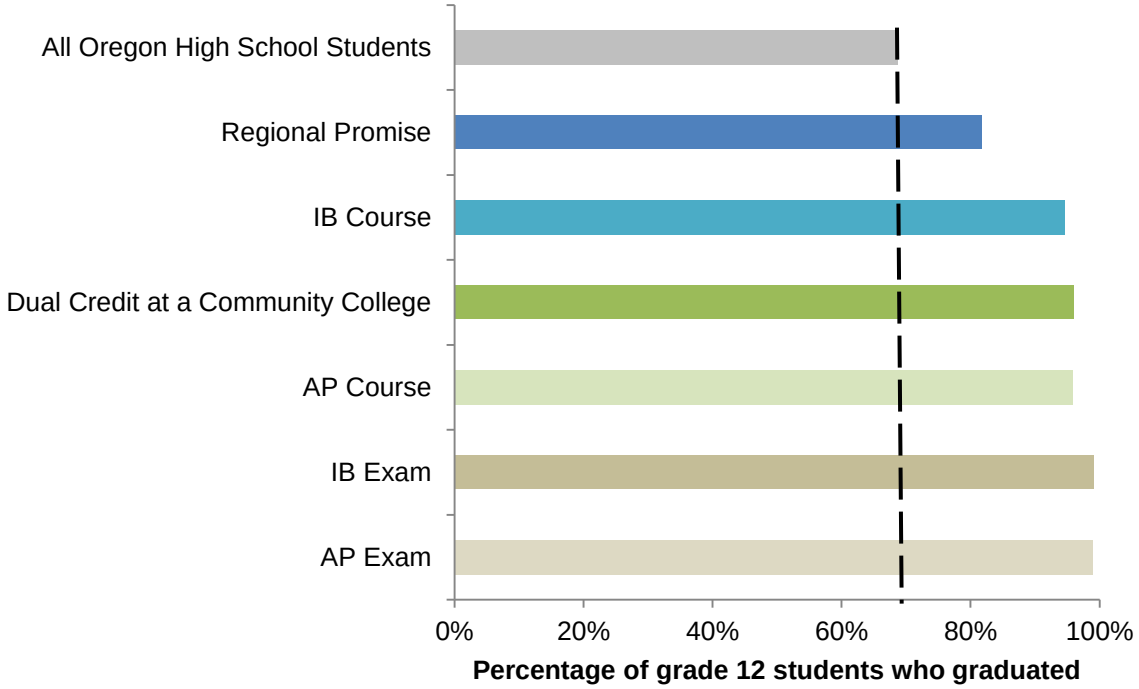
Relationship of ACC Participation to High School Graduation and Attendance Outcomes

We examined the relationship of participation in ACC types, including Regional Promise, to high school graduation and attendance. These analyses should not be considered causal, as choosing to enroll in ACC courses is likely related to a motivation to graduate from high school and overall engagement in school/high attendance.

High School Graduation

The percentage of grade 12 students who graduated was higher for students who took any of the ACC types (including Regional Promise) than the overall Oregon high school population in 2014–2015 (Figure 9; Table A8). The dashed black line displays the marker for where the graduation rate for all Oregon students lies relative to the students who took any one of the ACC options. Given that Regional Promise served a demographically different group of students, the relatively lower graduation rate of Regional Promise participants compared to other forms of ACC is not surprising. However, Regional Promise participants still had a higher grade 12 graduation rate than the overall state rate.

Figure 9. Percent of grade 12 students who graduated in 2014–2015, by ACC type



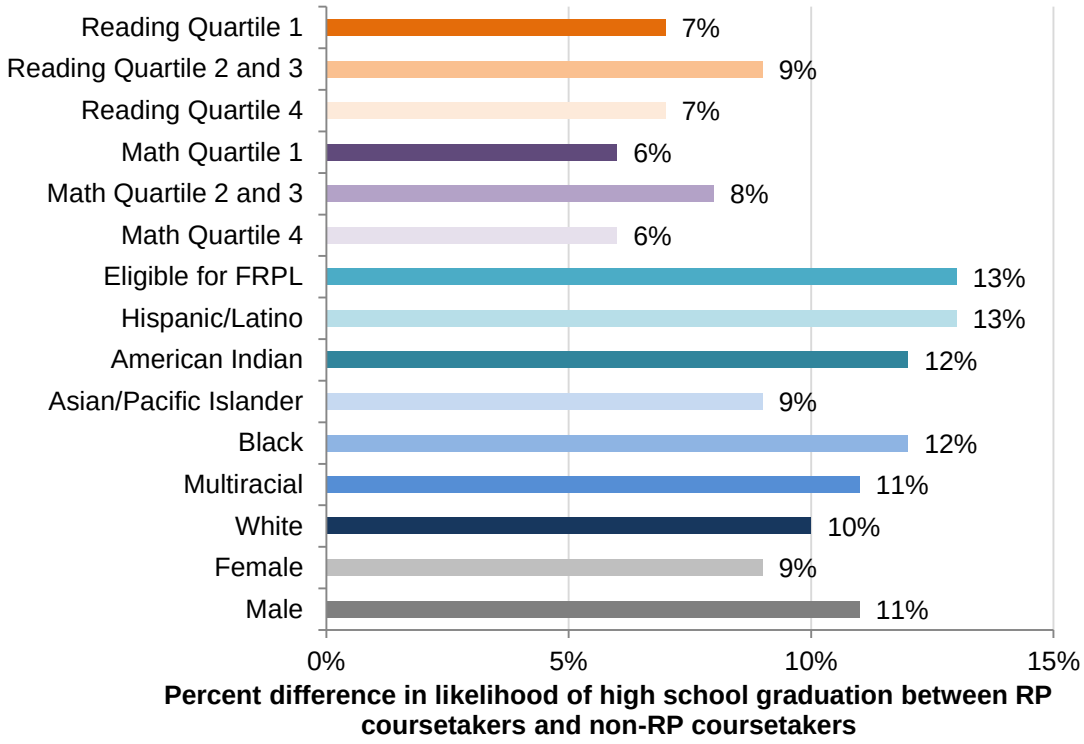
Note: The percent of grade 12 students who graduated does not refer to the four-year cohort rate and will not match published rates from ODE. This percentage takes the total number of grade 12 students who graduated in 2014–2015 over the total number of students who were in grade 12 in that school year.

Logistic regression analysis confirmed that Regional Promise students were more likely to graduate from high school than students who did not take Regional Promise courses, which is not surprising considering the expected relationship between participation in any ACC option and high school graduation. The relationship between high school graduation and Regional Promise course enrollment was considered statistically significant (Tables A9 and A11).

Examining the predicted likelihood of graduation from the logistic regression model, we found that the relationship of Regional Promise coursetaking with graduation varied among different student characteristics (Figure 10). A student in the second or third math or reading quartiles (middle achievers) had, on average, a higher likelihood of graduating high school after taking a Regional

Promise course than their counterparts in the lowest or highest quartiles. Students eligible for FRPL and Hispanic students have the largest jump in the likelihood of graduation at 13 percent. This signifies, for example, a student eligible for FRPL who took Regional Promise had a 13-percent increase in the likelihood of graduation compared to a student eligible for FRPL who did not take Regional Promise (holding all other factors constant at the mean).

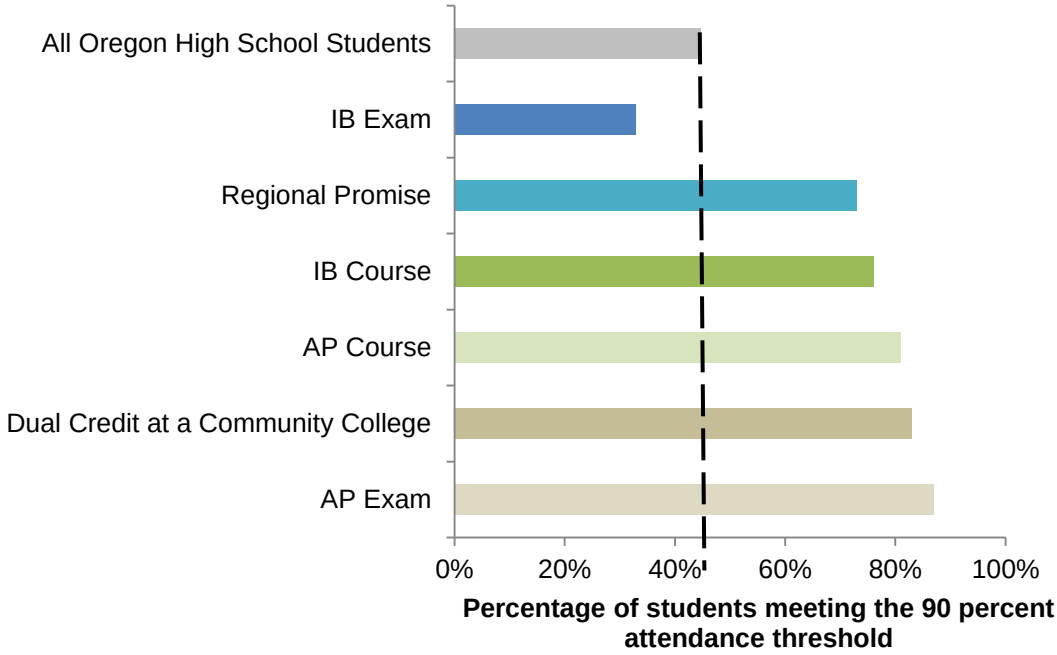
Figure 10. Difference in percent likelihood of graduation between Regional Promise coursetakers and non-Regional Promise coursetakers in Regional Promise schools, 2014–2015



Attendance

Over 70 percent of students had an average attendance rate of 90 percent or higher in 2014–2015 in each of the ACC options, except for students who took an IB exam (Figure 11; Table A10); this is in contrast to the 45 percent of all Oregon students who met this threshold. As with the percent of grade 12 students who graduated, the result for Regional Promise participants is slightly lower than that of other forms of ACC; but given the different demographic population of these schools and participants, this slightly lower result is not surprising.

Figure 11. Percent of students who met the 90 percent attendance threshold in 2014–2015, by ACC type



Logistic regression analysis confirmed that Regional Promise students were more likely to have attendance rates of 90 percent or higher. The relationship between school attendance and Regional Promise course enrollment was considered statistically significant (Tables A9 and A11). We also examined the predicted probabilities of having attendance rates over 90 percent by different student demographic groups, but the difference between Regional Promise coursetakers and those who did not take Regional Promise courses was between 2 and 4 percentage points among all student groups. This indicates a similar relationship between Regional Promise coursetaking and attendance regardless of a student's demographic characteristics or test scores.

Pillar 2: College-going culture

Overall, Regional Promise sites reported teacher, principal, and district staff excitement about the potential transformative nature of building a college-going culture, though sites expressed difficulty in connecting, engaging, and developing cohesion around college-going among the educational institutions and the community. Southern Oregon Promise reported that due to the limited funding

provided by their Regional Promise grant, a heavy focus was not placed on increasing the college-going culture. At least one site reported that increasing ACC had a secondary effect on college-going culture—Willamette Promise high school faculty reporting that the newly-offered ACC courses were somewhat effective in increasing student interest and motivation to attend college. This effect may have also occurred at the other consortia where new ACC courses were offered (Southern Oregon Promise, Oregon Metro Connects, and Cascades Commitment).

Sites worked toward increasing college-going culture through a variety of activities, promotional events, and materials. Oregon Metro Connects facilitated a college-going culture workshop that convened on five occasions. Oregon Metro Connects also developed and helped conduct a career and college readiness counselor symposium and a visit by middle school students to PCC. In Washington County, Oregon Metro Connects facilitated four parent/guardian nights focused on career-and college-related learning experiences. Connected Lane Pathways convened a focus group of high school students to re-design the college visit. To better prepare students prior to their visit, an associated college-visit curriculum module was also developed. Willamette Promise developed CTE and university advising sheets for each affiliated college and university to assist students with exploration and communication with school counselors or advisors. Willamette Promise also partnered with Oregon GEAR UP and other partners to develop a specific 2015–2016 college-going culture plan and a seven-year plan for the future focusing on grades 6–12.

In an effort to maximize the relevance of college-going culture programming, Connected Lane Pathways collaborated with EPIC, local districts, and higher education institutions to develop a multiple-pathways program model. This iterative program model reimagined approaches to college planning and career counseling through culturally and locally relevant lenses. In collaboration with high school counselors, Willamette Promise also developed a college-going framework.

Increased focus on college-going through curriculum and instruction within middle and high schools also occurred. Cascades Commitment facilitated this through the adoption and expansion of the AVID, 8+9, and Paso a Paso programs. Connected Lane Pathways addressed identified shortcomings within their current curriculum by developing new interactive curriculum modules. Connected Lane Pathway designed these modules with input from the community to ensure the addressed individual and collective needs and that the modules were culturally responsive.

Grantees reported the number of participants in college-going culture activities, as well as college and career success classes for high school students (Table 4). Other consortia, such as Cascades Commitment, instituted college success programs such as AVID, geared toward middle-school students; participant numbers for these other programs are included in the college-going culture activity totals. Approximately 1,510 students in grades 5–8 and 1,797 students in high school were affected by college-going culture activities funded by the Regional Promise grants. Nine college and career success classes occurred—including Academic Success Strategies, Career Planning, Financial Survival for College Students, Scholarships: $$ for College, and Stress Management—with 983 students enrolled through Oregon Metro Connects.

Table 4. College-going culture activities by consortium, 2014–2015

	College-going culture activities		College and career success classes	
Consortium	**Grades 5–8 participants**	**Grades 9–12 participants**	**Classes**	**Students enrolled**
Cascades Commitment	382[a]	0	0	0
Connected Lane Pathways	464	172	0	0
Oregon Metro Connects	609[a]	1,000[a]	9	983
Southern Oregon Promise	0	125	0	0
Willamette Promise	55[a]	500[a]	0	0
Total	**1,510**	**1,797**	**9**	**983**

[a]Approximate.

Pillar 4: Cross-sector partnerships

The Regional Promise program relies on cross-sector partnerships to achieve the other four pillars—cross-sector partnerships are necessary for functioning PLCs, expanding a college-going culture, expanding dual credit, and achieving equity in accelerated coursework. Prospective grantees were required to create a cross-sector group of partners in order to apply for the grant, with school districts, educational service districts, and colleges required for each grant consortium. Some consortia worked with multiple colleges, others had a wide variety of districts—but all had cross-sector partnerships.

When considering whether these cross-sector partnerships were stable and sustainable, we can turn to the fact that three of these consortia worked together to successfully apply for the 2015–2017 Regional Promise grants—the cross-sector partnerships they had formed from the initial grant were strong. One of these sites did have a shift in partners, but the districts and other regional partners are the same.

As for sustainability, many of the partners strengthened existing relationships with local agencies through the grant. For example, Connected Lane Pathways planned to build new partnerships with local trade unions, public and private professional organizations, and chambers of commerce to increase the career experiences and pathways available to students.

Each site reported plans to continue implementation of ACC-related activities across sectors. Oregon Metro Connects reported the increased number of available high school math instructors, which resulted from revised PCC instructor qualifications, will support future sustainability. In addition, ACC opportunities will be supported by the new 1.0 FTE dual credit coordinator position at PCC. Future planned work would focus on increasing middle school involvement. Cascades Commitment's model initially focused on the development of teacher proficiency. As a result, a trained cadre is in place to sustain program implementation for the immediate future. Cascades Commitment will continue to support PLC development of additional class offerings and High Desert ESD has set aside funds to provide stipends and substitutes to support this work. Cascades Commitment will also continue to seek additional funds for further support and sustainability. Southern Oregon Promise reported the planned continuation of bi-monthly PLC meetings to further refine ACC plans, and that

current partnerships between districts and community colleges will continue. Southern Oregon Promise plans to strengthen the relationship with SOU and Oregon Tech.

Despite plans in place, sites stated at the end of the grant period in 2015 that sustaining funding would be the biggest challenge. To address funding challenges, at least one site will begin charging districts for courses. Willamette Promise has developed a plan for each district to pay approximately $3.50 for each student enrollment in Willamette Promise to continue participation in Willamette Promise courses and college and career advising. Assisting Willamette Promise to sustain, Northwest Regional ESD will provide ACC support to associated districts, and Willamette ESD districts have provided some financial support.

Pillar 5: Professional learning communities and teachers

A core activity for the Regional Promise sites during the 2014–2015 school year was the continued development of PLCs composed of high school teachers and college faculty. Site PLCs worked toward course alignment and to develop foundational plans/progressions for ACC courses. An additional common undertaking of PLCs was to align course curriculum and assessment through collaborative development and scoring.

Specifically, in Oregon Metro Connects, Portland Community College (PCC), through their PLCs, established a degree map development plan, identified 10 disciplines that have common math requirements, and created approximately 12 transfer articulation degree maps. Connected Lane Pathways (Connected Lane Pathways) PLCs initiated development of an inter-institutional career and technical education (CTE) pathway and the programmatic foundations for ACCs.

A second common action among sites to proliferate student opportunity and access to ACCs was to increase the number of qualified instructors. For example, Cascade Commitment (CC) partnered with local higher education institutions, High Desert ESD, and six local school districts to offer an alternative pathway for teachers to become qualified to teach ACC courses. As a result, every high school in central Oregon now has a qualified ACC teacher.

Oregon Metro Connects partner PCC worked with local districts to offer a discipline-specific summer institute where attending teachers gained ACC instructor qualification. Furthermore, PCC developed an Instructor of Record (IOR) model. In this model, an IOR was placed in a high school, allowing exemplary teachers who did not meet instructor requirements to teach ACC classes.

In rural southern Oregon, through Southern Oregon Promise, classes were provided electronically from a distance to remote districts via V-tel technology, and Klamath Community College offered synchronized distance classes at its remote Lakeview campus. The offering of synchronized classes allowed six students from the Lakeview area to complete associates' degrees upon high school graduation in June 2015.

PLCs formed and teacher eligibility

Grantee reports documented a total of 72 formed PLCs (Table 5). These 72 PLCs covered 47 courses and involved 310 high school teachers and 134 postsecondary faculty members (from community colleges and four-year institutions). Approximately 135 high school teachers were newly-qualified to teach ACC through the grant-funded PLCs. Based on these reports, the 2014–2015 grants achieved the goal of expanding the number of cross-sector PLCs and the number of eligible teachers in Regional Promise high schools.

Table 5. PLC, teacher, and faculty information by consortium, 2014–2015

Consortium	PLCs	Courses	HS teachers participating	College faculty participating	Newly-qualified ACC teachers
Cascades Commitment	3	3	46	9	27
Connected Lane Pathways	0	0	0	0	0
Oregon Metro Connects	21	25	102	95	50
Southern Oregon Promise	40	11	47	11	2
Willamette Promise	8	8	115	19	56[a]
Total	**72**	**47**	**310**	**134**	**135**

[a]Approximate.

Conclusion

We conclude the evaluation report with a brief summary of implementation challenges, data challenges and recommendations, and final thoughts regarding the impact of the Regional Promise program.

Implementation challenges

In their reports to ODE, grantees discussed three main challenges they encountered while administering the 2014–2015 grants. A consistently reported challenge was determining how best to utilize funding. Sites reported having to make difficult funding decisions between investing in programming, staff, or materials. Sites also reported challenges in coordinating the different educational entities involved in the grant. ODE might consider providing support to sites in terms of coordination and overcoming communication barriers between secondary and postsecondary stakeholders during the 2015–2017 grants. A third challenge reported from sites is trepidation from higher education faculty about an unsustainable increase in workload due the increase in ACC offerings. ODE can facilitate discussions between the grantees to share ideas about how to mitigate this issue.

Each site reported plans to continue implementation of ACC-related activities after the 2014–2015 grants. At that time, sites had not applied for, or received, notice for an award of the 2015–2017 grants. A commonly mentioned strategy to continue ACC activities was to seek external funding or find ways to share costs among the stakeholders in the program. Despite plans in place, sites stated that sustaining funding would be the biggest challenge after the grants end, but hoped the activities conducted in 2014–2015 and cost estimates from these activities would facilitate future budget planning.

Data recommendations

In conducting this evaluation for ODE, we encountered a number of data challenges. Through mitigating these challenges in order to estimate the impact of the program, we have developed a number of data recommendations to ODE, CCWD, Regional Promise grantees, and other state and local agencies that are detailed here.

Issue 1: Linking data with no common identifier

In order to link individual data sources with no common identifier (e.g., a student identification number), we use an algorithm to identify matches based on student name, birthdate, and demographic characteristics. This "fuzzy matching" introduces error into the process, as not all students in a given dataset will match. For example, we were unable to match a small percentage of students who took the AP exam with ODE student record data, though they are most likely ODE students.

One solution to this issue would be to have a common identification number for all students in the state of Oregon, whether they are in the K–12 or postsecondary system. This would assist with matching between ODE and CCWD. AP and IB tests could require students to list their common identification number on their test form; currently, AP and IB data contain some identification numbers, but many values are missing and/or do not match the ODE student identification number.

ODE and HECC would need to, at a minimum, develop and agree upon this common identification number. Use of the number by all public education institutions in the state would be helpful for research regarding high school and college transitions.

Issue 2: Grantee data collection

In some cases, grantees struggled to collect the minimal data requested to conduct this evaluation. On the interim and final reports, ODE requested approximate numbers of courses, PLCs, teachers, and students who participated in the program. In some cases, this took staff members at the Regional Promise sites a significant amount of time to record, particularly when the information was needed from the high schools and the consortium involved many schools. The information reported was often imprecise and challenging to coordinate across sites.

For future grants, we recommend that reporting requirements are made clear to grantees during the RFP process, that grantees are made aware of recommended data collection timelines and structures, and that data are submitted to ODE on a term-by-term basis in order to avoid issues of program staff members having to go back to prior terms or years to find information.

Issue 3: Lack of data to evaluate all aspects of program

Another data issue is a lack of the data needed to evaluate this program and other similar programs. For example, having access to student grade point average (GPA) would provide an important measure of student achievement that could be used as an alternative way to identify high- and low-achieving students (besides test scores) and could also be used as an outcome for the program (for example, if GPA increased or decreased after taking Regional Promise courses). Unfortunately, GPA is not collected at the state level but is stored individually by each district.

High school course registration data would also be useful for evaluating ACC and many other high school programs. ODE began collecting course roster data in 2013–2014, and the data became of high enough quality to share in 2014–2015. The data collection links students with teachers, but does not ask districts to identify which courses are ACC courses. Thus, we are unable to determine from the ODE data what, if any, dual credit courses a high school student takes, and must instead use college data. To mitigate this data issue, Education Northwest created AP and IB flags by analyzing the course name in the roster file and created a flag to identify Regional Promise courses based on lists the sites provided.

Requesting an additional field in the course roster data collection to mark ACC type (AP, IB, dual credit, Regional Promise) would be invaluable for assessing this type of program. Including grades in

the course registration file and implementing an annual or term-by-term GPA data collection would also be helpful.

Issue 4: Longer timeline needed to fully evaluate program

Finally, one of the main issues with evaluating this program and others to examine the effect on college outcomes is that many years are needed to allow students to enter college and complete a degree. Unfortunately, by that time, the program may no longer be in existence. For college completion, at least four years from time of enrollment in college (five years from high school graduation) are needed. For the Regional Promise program in 2014–2015, where mostly grade 11 and grade 12 students took courses, we would have to wait for data from the 2019–2020 academic year to see if students who took Regional Promise courses in grade 11 graduated from college four years after finishing high school. To mitigate this timeline issue, Education Northwest has provided ODE with a data file to flag the Regional Promise courses so that in future years, other evaluators would be able to estimate program impact as well.

There is also a lag between the end of an academic year and when student records are finalized and made available to researchers—in some cases, as much as eight months. For example, ODE does not finalize and release graduation data until late January or early February of the year following a student's graduation. This data lag is needed to give districts time to correct records and give ODE time to validate the data, but it adds time to the evaluation process.

Impacts and future evaluation work

Overall, the 2014–2015 Regional Promise program achieved its goals by increasing the number of ACC classes available to students, expanding ACC enrollment for all students, increasing the number of teachers eligible to teach dual-credit courses, and reaching historically underserved populations in greater numbers than traditional dual-credit programs. The innovative program model that emphasized collaboration between the K–12 and postsecondary education sectors may have contributed to the program's success. In addition, the explicit focus on reaching historically underserved populations ensured that grantees were mindful of expanding access to these groups during implementation.

The success of the Regional Promise program in the longer term—understanding its impact on college enrollment, persistence, and completion—will not be possible to estimate until additional years of data are available. Given that the Regional Promise grants continued in the 2015–2017 biennium, we recommend that the evaluation of this program continue in order to track the impact of the 2014–2015 grants on newly-available outcomes (e.g., college enrollment) as well as begin measuring the impact of the 2015–2017 grants.

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Appendix A

Table A1. Enrollment of students from Regional Promise schools in ACC types, 2013–2014 and 2014–2015

Demographic	2013–2014		2014–2015	
	Percent of students	Number of students	Percent of students	Number of students
Attended school in Regional Promise consortia	-	61,292	-	61,491
Took a Regional Promise course	N/A	N/A	22%	13,697
Took AP course	No data	No data	19%	10,707
Took AP exam	10%	5,922	11%	6,727
Took IB course	No data	No data	4%	2,414
Took IB exam	0%	229	0%	194
Took dual credit at community college	14%	8,502	16%	10,142

Note: N/A means not applicable and indicates that option was not available in the particular year. No data indicates the option was available to students but that no data was available for this study.

Table A2. Regional Promise school enrollment overlap in ACC types, 2014–2015

Type of ACC	Number of Regional Promise (RP) school students	Percent	Description
RP course only	8,486	62%	of RP coursetakers only took RP course
RP and AP course	2,863	21%	of RP coursetakers also took AP course
RP and AP exam	1,898	14%	of RP coursetakers also took AP exam
RP and IB course	465	0%	of RP coursetakers also took IB course
RP and IB exam	19	0%	of RP coursetakers also took IB exam
RP and dual credit	3,293	24%	of RP coursetakers also took dual credit at community college (either for the RP class or another class)
AP course and AP exam	6,370	59%	of AP coursetakers took an AP exam
IB course and IB exam	150	6%	of IB coursetakers took an IB exam
Dual credit and AP exam	2,382	23%	of dual credit coursetakers at a community college also took an AP exam
Dual credit and IB exam	53	1%	of dual credit coursetakers at a community college also took an IB exam
Any ACC	27,720		
Total students in RP schools	61,491		

Table A3. Student Regional Promise course records in ODE data, by subject in 2014–2015

Subject	Count	Percent
Other	4,534	25%
Computer Science	710	4%
Science	2,333	13%
ELA	1,993	11%
Math	8,248	46%
Total	17,818	100%

Table A4. Student demographic characteristics in Oregon high schools, Regional Promise high schools, and among Regional Promise coursetakers in 2014–2015

Student demographic characteristic	All Oregon high school students	All Regional Promise high school students	Took Regional Promise course
Male	51.6%	51.5%	51.0%
Female	48.4%	48.5%	49.0%
White	64.0%	56.2%	58.2%
Multiracial	3.8%	3.5%	2.8%
Black	2.8%	4.1%	3.1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4.8%	6.8%	6.4%
American Indian	1.6%	1.7%	2.1%
Hispanic/Latino	22.9%	27.6%	27.4%
Had an Individualized Education Program (IEP)	18.4%	21.9%	19.1%
Received a suspension	8.1%	12.4%	12.2%
Eligible for English Learner (EL) services	14.4%	23.6%	23.1%
Eligible for FRPL	58.4%	70.8%	70.6%

Table A5. Student demographic characteristics of students in Regional Promise (RP) schools compared to Oregon over the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 school years

	Regional Promise Schools			All Oregon Schools			
Demographics	Percent 2013–2014	Percent 2014–2015	Trend in percent, 2013–2014 to 2014–2015	Percent 2013–2014	Percent 2014–2015	Trend in percent, 2013–2014 to 2014–2015	Difference in trend between RP and all schools
Male	52%	51%	-0.8%	52%	52%	-0.1%	-0.7%
Female	48%	49%	0.8%	48%	48%	0.1%	0.7%
White	69%	58%	-10.4%	65%	64%	-0.9%	-9.5%
Multiracial	4%	3%	-0.8%	4%	4%	0.3%	-1.1%
Black	2%	3%	1.0%	3%	3%	0.0%	1.0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4%	6%	2.6%	5%	5%	0.0%	2.6%
American Indian	2%	2%	0.4%	2%	2%	-0.1%	0.5%
Hispanic/Latino	20%	27%	7.3%	22%	23%	0.5%	6.8%
Had an Individualized Education Program (IEP)	17%	19%	2.3%	18%	18%	0.6%	1.7%
Received a suspension	6%	12%	6.3%	7%	8%	0.9%	5.4%
Eligible for English Learner (EL) services	11%	23%	12.1%	14%	14%	0.9%	11.2%
Eligible for FRPL	54%	71%	16.3%	58%	58%	0.8%	15.5%

Table A6. Characteristics of students who took AP or IB courses, dual credit at a community college, or a Regional Promise (RP) course

	Regional Promise Schools			All Oregon Schools			
Student characteristic	Percent 2013–2014	Percent 2014–2015	Trend in percent, 2013–2014 to 2014–2015	Percent 2013–2014	Percent 2014–2015	Trend in percent, 2013–2014 to 2014–2015	Difference in trend between RP and all schools
Male	44%	48%	4.1%	44%	47%	2.2%	1.9%
Female	56%	52%	-4.1%	56%	54%	-2.2%	-1.9%
White	65%	59%	-5.1%	71%	66%	-5.0%	-0.1%
Multiracial	3%	3%	0.8%	3%	4%	0.4%	0.4%
Black	3%	3%	0.4%	2%	2%	0.6%	-0.2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	8%	9%	0.3%	6%	7%	1.4%	-1.1%
American Indian	1%	2%	0.5%	1%	1%	0.3%	0.2%
Hispanic/Latino	21%	24%	3.2%	18%	20%	2.3%	0.9%
Had an Individualized Education Program (IEP)	12%	15%	3.5%	12%	14%	1.7%	1.8%
Received a suspension	5%	8%	3.1%	5%	7%	2.0%	1.1%
Eligible for English Learner (EL) services	18%	22%	3.7%	13%	16%	3.1%	0.6%
Eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL)	61%	64%	3.0%	55%	56%	1.4%	1.6%

Table A7. Characteristics of students in Oregon high schools, Regional Promise high schools, and among different types of ACC

Panel A: 2013–2014

Student characteristic	All Oregon high school students	Attended school in Regional Promise consortia	Took AP exam	Took IB exam	Took dual credit at community college
Male	52%	51%	44%	44%	44%
Female	48%	49%	56%	56%	56%
White	65%	57%	70%	69%	71%
Multiracial	4%	3%	4%	5%	3%
Black	3%	4%	1%	1%	2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	5%	7%	11%	15%	6%
American Indian	2%	2%	1%	0%	1%
Hispanic/Latino	22%	27%	13%	10%	18%
Had an Individualized Education Program (IEP)	18%	22%	9%	8%	12%
Received a suspension	7%	12%	2%	1%	5%
Eligible for English Learner (EL) services	14%	23%	12%	9%	13%
Eligible for FRPL	58%	70%	40%	28%	55%

Table A7 (cont.). Characteristics of students in Oregon high schools, Regional Promise (RP) high schools, and among different types of ACC
Panel B: 2014–2015

Student characteristic	All Oregon high school students	Attended school in Regional Promise consortia	Took a Regional Promise course	Took AP course	Took AP exam	Took IB course	Took IB exam	Took dual credit at community college
Male	52%	52%	51%	44%	44%	46%	41%	44%
Female	48%	49%	49%	56%	56%	54%	59%	56%
White	64%	56%	58%	69%	69%	63%	67%	69%
Multiracial	4%	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%
Black	3%	4%	3%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	5%	7%	6%	9%	11%	10%	14%	6%
American Indian	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Hispanic/Latino	23%	28%	27%	16%	14%	21%	13%	18%
Had an Individualized Education Program (IEP)	18%	22%	19%	10%	9%	12%	8%	13%
Received a suspension	8%	12%	12%	4%	2%	5%	2%	5%
Eligible for English Learner (EL) services	14%	24%	23%	13%	13%	18%	10%	15%
Eligible for FRPL	58%	71%	71%	48%	41%	44%	29%	57%

Table A8. Percent of grade 12 students who graduated high school in 2014–2015, by ACC type

ACC type	Graduated high school	Total count of students	Grade 12 completion rate	Percent above state rate
AP exam attempted	5,419	5,476	99%	30%
AP course	9,683	10,098	96%	27%
IB exam attempted	735	742	99%	30%
IB course	2,771	2,930	95%	26%
Dual credit at community college	9,676	10,076	96%	27%
Regional Promise course	2,739	3,352	82%	13%
All Oregon grade 12 students	35,117	51,147	69%	-

Table A9. Logistic regression of taking a Regional Promise course on high school graduation and on attendance at 90 percent threshold, 2014–2015 school year

	High school graduation	Attendance at 90%
Took a Regional Promise course	0.841***	0.302***
	(0.0535)	(0.0212)
Female	0.454***	-0.156***
	(0.0211)	(0.0102)
American Indian	-0.699***	-0.421***
	(0.0743)	(0.0377)
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.298***	0.695***
	(0.0548)	(0.0284)
Black	-0.372***	-0.166***
	(0.0586)	(0.0297)
Hispanic/Latino	-0.140***	0.0347**
	(0.0259)	(0.0125)
Multiracial	-0.126*	-0.0403
	(0.0566)	(0.0266)
Eligible for FRPL	-0.997***	-0.850***
	(0.0259)	(0.0123)
Math No Score	0.756***	-0.309***
	(0.0393)	(0.0197)
Math Quartile 1	-1.309***	-0.541***
	(0.0442)	(0.0198)
Math Quartile 2	-0.293***	-0.225***
	(0.0408)	(0.0183)
Math Quartile 3	0.571***	0.0616***
	(0.0393)	(0.0173)
Reading No Score	0.694***	0.0251
	(0.0362)	(0.0171)
Reading Quartile 1	-0.278***	-0.0370
	(0.0475)	(0.0203)
Reading Quartile 2	0.463***	0.136***
	(0.0458)	(0.0194)
Reading Quartile 3	0.659***	0.259***
	(0.0418)	(0.0181)
Constant	1.199***	1.480***
	(0.0247)	(0.0123)
Observations	51,147	188,551

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Note: Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Table A10. Percent of students with 90% or higher average annual attendance in 2014–2015, by ACC type

ACC type	Count of students with 90% or higher attendance rates	Total count of students	Percent with 90% or higher attendance rates
AP exam attempted	14,271	16,442	87%
AP course	21,014	26,033	81%
IB exam attempted	558	1,677	33%
IB course	5,851	7,694	76%
Dual credit at community college	24,112	28,999	83%
Regional Promise course	10,229	14,018	73%
All Oregon high school students	128,601	287,350	45%

Table A11. Logistic regression of taking different ACC types on high school graduation and attendance at 90 percent threshold, 2014–2015 school year

	High school graduation	Attendance at 90%
Took a Regional Promise course	0.666***	0.222***
	(0.0579)	(0.0216)
Took a dual credit course at community college	2.227***	0.762***
	(0.0544)	(0.0174)
Took an expanded options course at community college	2.074***	0.475**
	(0.312)	(0.182)
Female	0.313***	-0.204***
	(0.0227)	(0.0103)
American Indian	-0.634***	-0.387***
	(0.0796)	(0.0381)
Asian/Pacific Islander	-0.0700	0.616***
	(0.0613)	(0.0288)
Black	-0.275***	-0.135***
	(0.0598)	(0.0299)
Hispanic/Latino	-0.140***	0.0453***
	(0.0272)	(0.0126)
Multiracial	-0.208***	-0.0410
	(0.0610)	(0.0269)
Eligible for FRPL	-0.708***	-0.762***
	(0.0277)	(0.0125)
Math No Score	0.565***	-0.429***
	(0.0477)	(0.0207)
Math Quartile 1	-0.996***	-0.494***
	(0.0486)	(0.0201)
Math Quartile 2	0.00977	-0.196***
	(0.0454)	(0.0187)
Math Quartile 3	0.734***	0.0175
	(0.0437)	(0.0179)
Reading No Score	0.774***	-0.0263
	(0.0419)	(0.0178)

Table A11 (cont.). Logistic regression of taking different ACC types on high school graduation and attendance at 90 percent threshold, 2014–2015 school year

	High school graduation	Attendance at 90%
Reading Quartile 1	-0.0443	0.00898
	(0.0507)	(0.0207)
Reading Quartile 2	0.645***	0.146***
	(0.0496)	(0.0199)
Reading Quartile 3	0.779***	0.210***
	(0.0472)	(0.0188)
Took an AP course	1.568***	0.00866
	(0.0577)	(0.0220)
Student attempted AP exam in year	2.373***	0.796***
	(0.141)	(0.0302)
Took an IB course	1.905***	0.204***
	(0.0872)	(0.0295)
Student attempted IB exam in year	2.389***	-0.233*
	(0.399)	(0.0921)
Constant	0.357***	1.300***
	(0.0279)	(0.0128)
Observations	51,147	188,551

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001
Note: Robust standard errors are in parentheses.