

## OREGON SMALL SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

**Parent Organization:** Employers for Education Excellence (E3)

**Web Address:** <http://e3smallschools.org/>

**Grade/Age Levels:** High school

**Overview:** The Oregon Small Schools Initiative is a \$25 million, multi-year, statewide program to increase student achievement and graduation rates in Oregon high schools. It will help communities develop both restructured and new high schools that offer a rigorous, personalized education to all students, and which will serve as models for the rest of the state. A particular focus is on traditionally underserved students – those from low-income homes and students of color.

The Initiative will work with communities to:

- Restructure 12 or more large high schools into autonomous small schools, and
- Help local innovators, whether school districts or community groups, develop 12 or more new small high schools.

**Subjects Covered:** All high school curricula

**Size of Program:** Part of a nationwide initiative that includes 12 school partners in Oregon, who will serve as examples to future participants.

**Where Offered:** Crater HS, Lebanon HS, Liberty HS in Hillsboro, Madison HS, Marshall HS in Portland, Newberg HS, North Eugene HS, North Medford HS, South Medford HS, Roosevelt Campus, and Woodburn HS

**Time Spent by Students:** Time commitment is similar to the standard high school commitment.

**Partners/Sponsors:** Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Meyer Memorial Trust

**Format:** The format of each school may take a different form, but they must share some common characteristics. These include vision, mission and beliefs held by all stakeholders; the commitment of and opportunity for all stakeholders to be involved in the work of the school; small size (fewer than 100 students per grade); and seven key attributes:

- Common focus,
- High expectations,
- Personalized learning and environment,
- Respect and responsibility,
- Performance-based assessments,
- Time to collaborate, and
- Technology as a tool.

**Materials Available on Web and/or Purchase:** Links to research on small schools as well as more extensive information about the participating schools in Oregon.

**Training – Avail/Required:** The Initiative provides grant funds and intensive coaching and technical assistance to support school-wide planning, professional development for teachers and administrators, curriculum development, restructured governance, and improved family and community partnerships.

**Results to Date:** There is a growing body of evidence in support of small schools:

- Student achievement: Students in small schools have higher grade point averages and perform better on standardized tests.
- Graduation rates: Students in small schools are less likely to dropout and more likely to graduate.
- College readiness: Students in small schools, regardless of their race or family income, are more likely to go to college.
- Equity: Small schools reduce the achievement gap by creating an environment where all students—not just some—gain the knowledge and skills needed to pursue their dreams.
- Cost effectiveness: Although the cost per student may be higher in a small school, the cost per graduate is lower.
- Safety: Small schools are safer places to learn with dramatically fewer violent crimes, fights and weapons incidents than large schools

**Cost Structure:** The Initiative provides grant funds as well as coaching and technical assistance to its participating schools.

**Funding:** Initiative is funded by a \$25 million grant from the Meyer Memorial Trust and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.