

Southern Oregon Promise (concept proposal)

School district superintendents and college presidents are proposing a scholarship program which promises each high school graduate in Southern Oregon that meets or exceeds state standards (reading, writing, math and science) college tuition for four years at one of Oregon's state supported colleges or universities. The scholarship would be based on community college tuition levels (\$63/credit). Promise money would be capped at community college levels, but could be used toward tuition costs at any Oregon supported college or university. Promise money would be combined with Oregon Student Assistance Commission scholarships to complete the promise.

Oregon Student Assistance Commission scholarships are need-based on a sliding scale for up to \$1,200 per year. The Governor has proposed increasing OSAC scholarships by 30% in the next biennium. These need-based scholarships are available for families with up to \$60,000 income. In combination with a \$1,800 Promise scholarship this would pay tuition cost for a year.

The goals of this "promise" are:

- Rewards student achievement in high school
- Decreases the need for remedial college classes
- Increases enrollment and capacity of Oregon state supported higher education institutions
- Provides incentives to keep high performing students in-state and in-region.
- Increases our state's economic viability with a highly trained workforce
- Decreases debt burden of students and families
- Encourages students in science, math, engineering and technology (STEM) classes

The scholarships would continue if a student maintained a 3.0 cumulative grade point average completing at least 12 credits per term. Courses in science, math, engineering and computer science would be required to earn a 2.5 GPA to maintain their scholarships. Promise money is only guaranteed for five years following high school graduation and only supports 12 quarters of higher education classes.

A study should be completed to determine if the "Promise" program:

- Increases performance levels of high school students
- Increases college attendance rates
- Increases number of students who continue with post-secondary education
- Increases number of students taking STEM related classes

If the Promise program works in Southern Oregon, as demonstrated by the study, the program would expand to other regions of the state.