

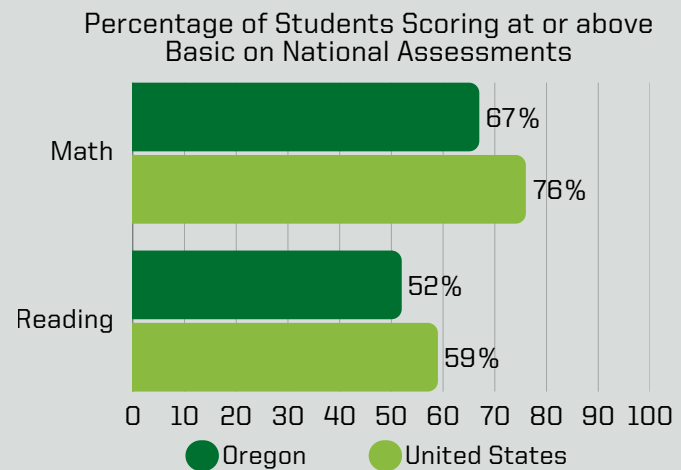


State Spotlight: Oregon

Findings from research on time in school & student outcomes

Compiled by: Lisa K. Chinn & Elizabeth Day

Oregon students have lower academic achievement and less required time in school compared to national averages.^{1,2} These things may be linked: recent research shows that more time in school is associated with higher academic achievement.³



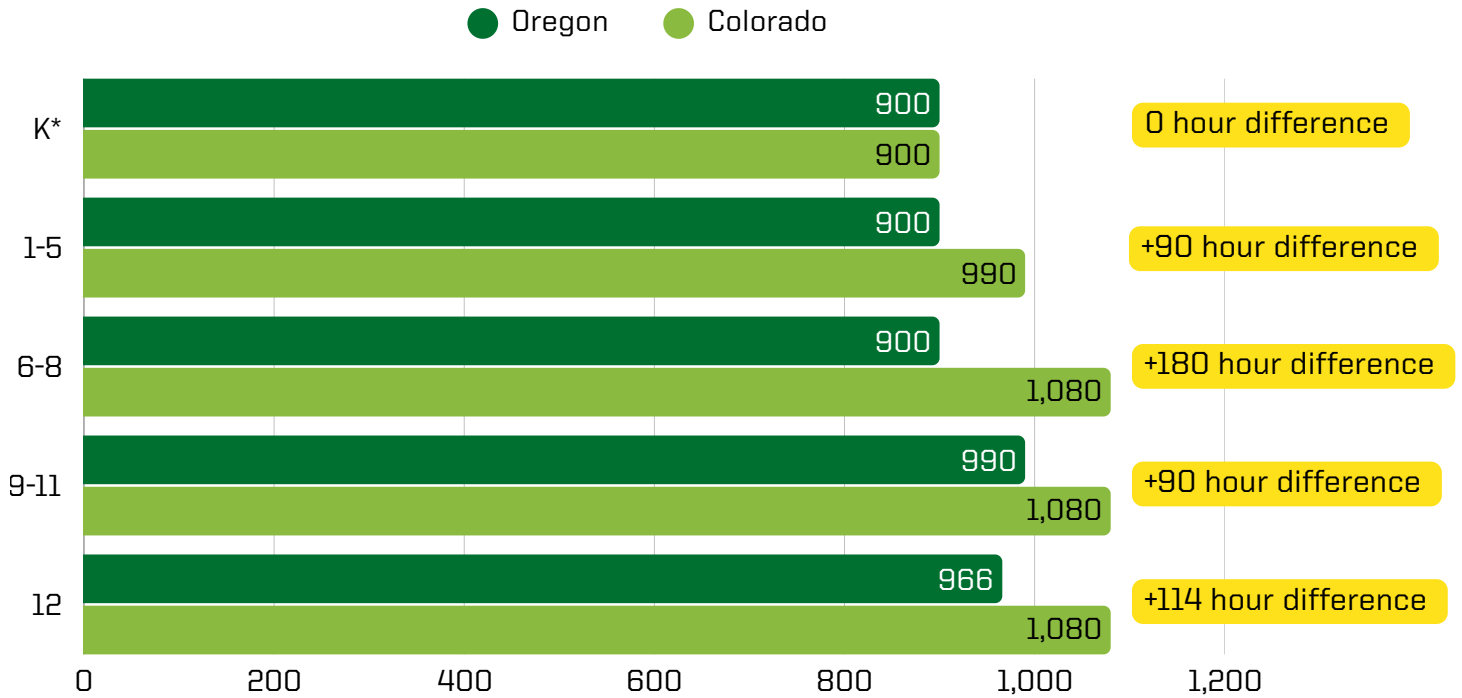
Recent media in Oregon has pointed to less time in school as a reason for achievement gaps.^{4,5} Although less time in school is a potential cause, Oregon-specific research on the direct link between school time and academic outcomes is limited.

Oregon time in school

Most U.S. states require K-12 schools to have a minimum number of school days per year, with 180 days being the most common.⁶

- Oregon has no state policy requiring a certain number of school days.
- Oregon has fewer required hours than most states, although actual time delivered varies by district.
- Throughout a K-12 education, Oregon students who attend the minimum amount of required school could spend 1184 fewer hours in school than students attending the minimum in neighboring Washington.
- In neighboring California and Idaho, grades 1-3 have fewer required hours than Oregon, while older students are required to have equivalent or more hours.

Required school hours were consistently higher in Colorado in 2023



*K half day hours are 450 for both states

Note: Colorado was selected for comparison due to demographic and size similarities. For additional comparison states, chosen due to proximity to Oregon, see Appendix.

Minimum hours from: <https://reports.ecs.org/comparisons/instructional-time-policies-2023-01>

Colorado had consistently higher percentages of students performing at or above basic than Oregon in 2024

Grade	Subject	% at or above basic		% at or above proficient	
		Oregon	Colorado	Oregon	Colorado
4	Math	67	+10% 77	31	+9 42
8	Math	55	+10% 65	24	+8 32
4	Reading	52	+13% 65	27	+9 36

Performance data from: nationsreportcard.gov

Additional considerations

In addition to low minimum requirements for time in school, Oregon also faces issues with chronic absenteeism. The Oregon Department of Education estimates that in the 2024-2025 school year, the statewide percent chronically absent in K-12 ranged from 25.5% to 52.5%.⁷

References

1. State Profiles. *The Nation's Report Card*
<https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile>
2. Instructional Time Policies 2023. <https://reports.ecs.org/comparisons/instructional-time-policies-2023-01>
3. Kraft, M. A. & Novicoff, S. Time in School: A Conceptual Framework, Synthesis of the Causal Research, and Empirical Exploration. *Am. Educ. Res. J.* 61, 724–766 (2024).
4. Silverman, J. Oregon’s classroom hours among lowest in nation, experts tell lawmakers. *oregonlive* (2026). <https://www.oregonlive.com/education/2026/01/oregons-classroom-hours-among-lowest-in-nation-experts-tell-lawmakers.html>
5. Miller, E. Low attendance and a short school year undermine success of Oregon students, according to new analysis. OPB (2026).
6. DeSilver, D. *In the U.S., 180 Days of School Is Most Common, but Length of School Day Varies by State*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/09/07/in-the-u-s-180-days-of-school-is-most-common-but-length-of-school-day-varies-by-state/> (2023).
7. Oregon Department of Education. *Attendance and Absenteeism*. <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/reports-and-data/students/Pages/Attendance-and-Absenteeism.aspx> (2024).

Appendix

Other state comparisons based on geographic proximity to Oregon

2023 minimum number of required school hours in neighboring states vs. Oregon

Grade	California	Idaho	Washington
K (half-day)	*	*	0
K	*	*	*
1-3	-60	-90	+100
4-8	0	0	+100
9-11	+90	0	+90
12	+114	+13	+114

Note: + indicates more required hours than Oregon, - indicates fewer required hours than Oregon. *kindergarten requirements were not directly comparable in all states due to differences in half- vs. full-day programs, two-year transitional program offerings, etc. Minimum hours from: <https://reports.ecs.org/comparisons/instructional-time-policies-2023-01>