

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION – TOPIC SUMMARY

Topic: Changing High School Requirements - Board Position Paper

Date: January 19, 2005

Staff/Office: Jan McComb, State Board of Education

Action Requested:

Information only Policy Discussion Policy Adoption Policy Adoption/Consent Calendar
 Policy Discussion Signal Field Stakeholder Input Bd. Learnings Identified Stakeholder Input Policy Decision

Priority:

Alignment 3 R's Assessment Resources/Accountability Communication
 Access Accountability Governance Success for All Students System Integration

ISSUE BEFORE THE BOARD: Review survey responses for purpose of possibly amending the board's policy leanings regarding revising high school graduation requirements and assessments.

BACKGROUND: Following lengthy discussions, the board published a paper outlining their concerns and suggested changes to the system. The paper containing these concerns was formally adopted in September 2005, and the request was made for feedback from educators and the public.

Request for comments appeared at the State Board of Education website; Oregonian newspaper, Sept. 16 (325,000); Associated Press, Sept. 16-17 (580,000); ODE Superintendent distribution list (2,000); Corvallis Gazette Times newspaper (12,000); Statesman Journal newspaper, Sept. 22 (52,000); Pipeline – Castillo column, article, Oct 3 (14,000); Oregon legislators (mailed paper) Oct. (90); Statesman Journal newspaper, Oct. 10, (52,000); Superintendent's Update e-mail, Oct. 14 (12,000).

Feedback has come via group discussions with individual board members, through the board's on-line survey, and through mailed correspondence to the board. Following this round of input, the board is expected to refine its recommendations and get additional feedback on those ideas.

290 responses were received (50 hard copies, 240 on-line survey), each containing several suggestions for each of the five questions. ODE staff or board members have talked to 916 people about the concepts found in the board's position paper. Over 1 million people have been reached with our request

The board asked five questions:

1. What knowledge and skills do all Oregon students need in order to be successful in the 21st Century?
2. What should be included in high school diploma requirements? What can we do to improve Oregon's high school credentials (Diploma, Oregon Honors Diploma, CIM, CAM, GED, others)?
3. What can we do to improve Oregon's standards and assessments?
4. How can you or your organization contribute to the success of this initiative? What do you see as your role?
5. After reading this paper, what other comments do you have?

Plan/Timeline

- Write/Approve policy paper (June 2005-Sept. 2005)
- Request for Comments via board website (Sept. 2005 – Dec. 16, 2005)
- Request for Comments via news releases/editorials (Sept. 2005 – April 2006)
- Request for Comments via education stakeholders; continue request for comments from additional stakeholder groups: OSBA, COSA, OEA, OSEA, CCWD, OUS, OSAC, Governor, OBC, AOI, OBA, Metropolitan Hispanic Chamber, Urban League of Portland, Oregon Indian Education Association, Others? (Sept. 2005-April 2006)
- Evaluate feedback (Dec. 16 – Jan 10 for web results; other-ongoing)
- Revise plan
- Distribute revised plan for input
- Evaluate feedback, change plan as necessary
- Draft rules, legislation, as needed (April – Dec. 2006)

ALIGNMENT & ADEQUACY OF OREGON'S EDUCATION STANDARDS, REQUIREMENTS, AND ASSESSMENTS WITHIN K-12, BETWEEN K-12 AND POSTSECONDARY LEVEL

SURVEY RESULTS SEPT 19 – DEC. 16, 2005

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2005, the State Board of Education began its work to improve high schools and increase the knowledge and skills of high school graduates.

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Every student needs to graduate with the skills, knowledge and habits of mind needed to be college-ready. We define college-ready as ready to enroll and succeed in a credit-bearing course at a community college or four-year college or university, trade school, or technical school.

Rene Leger
E3 Executive Director

We believe that the stepping stone for all paths is the development of the skills necessary for active citizenship. . . One example of what effective civic education looks like is where students examine the

WHAT KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS DO ALL OREGON STUDENTS NEED?

Responses to this first question fell roughly into three areas: traditional academic courses, workforce skills, and critical thinking/adaptive behavior/innovative abilities as they pertain to both academic areas and workforce needs.

Also mentioned were over a dozen personality traits or characteristics that are often not directly addressed in traditional school curriculum, but some may be encompassed under existing Certificate of Advanced Mastery standards and new graduation requirements (*see High School Diploma Requirements*).

And while "seat-time" credits were often mentioned (particularly in terms of diploma requirements), many remarked that evidence of subject area proficiencies should be an option.

Many questioned the use of the word, "all." Many wanted to ensure that the

meaning of the U.S. Constitution when it was drafted and apply that to current news events such as controversy surrounding the USA Patriot Act.

Oregon Coalition for the Civic Mission of Schools

To be successful in the 21st Century, obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue wellness is literally critical.

Oregon Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

First and foremost, a person must be technologically competent to be a productive member of the future workforce. Furthermore, the second major skill that we have identified is problem solving; workers and educators in our state must be able to analyze data and think critically.

Mt. Hood Community College Board

We would like to see work ethic skills developed in high school and even earlier grades. We also support new and innovative programs like Expanded Options, which provides eligible high school students early entry into post-secondary education and emphasizes specific provisions and priorities for at risk students.

Business Retention and Expansion Program of Grants Pass and Josephine County

Standards-based health and physical education courses that focus on building lifelong skills for healthy eating and regular physical activity will provide students an

board was not just thinking in terms of a four-year college for high school graduates (9), but that the system need to address the needs of all students (2), and if a focus was solely on college, the result would be fewer electives that keep students engaged (23).

Hampering the ability to transmit knowledge and skills, respondents cited large class sizes, inadequate funding, and inadequate teacher preparation.

Knowledge & Skills

Most respondents stated that traditional academic knowledge and skills are needed by students, but within those subject areas there was a division among respondents, with many concerned about a lack of basic everyday English and math skills rather than advanced concepts (11).

While some respondents were detailed (“sculpture”), others were not (“math”).

Knowledge and skills¹ identified, in order of respondent identification² are set forth below (for entire list, see p. 27).

Knowledge

Math: 77
Reading Literacy: 55
The Arts 54
Technology/computers 53
Second Languages: 47
PE/Health 34
English: 34
Science: 38
Writing: 51
History: 25
Personal Finance: 14
Social Science: 13
Research: 6

Skills

Critical/Analytic/Logical Thinking: 68
Technology: 53
Problem Solving: 41
Interpersonal Skills: 36
Communication: 38
Creativity: 20
Workforce skills, generally: 18
Work Ethic: 12
Cultural Understanding: 8
Decision-making: 5
Adaptability: 5
Teamwork: 5

Personality Traits/Attributes

There were a number of skills that are commonly thought of as personal attributes, although many can be affected by the classroom throughout a student’s academic years and many are embedded in existing CAM standards and the new graduation requirements.

work ethic ♦ tolerance ♦ ability to be present ♦ life-long learner ♦ self-esteem ♦ motivation ♦ goal setting ♦ persistence ♦ ability to cope ♦ metacognition ♦ accuracy ♦ ability to accept critical feedback ♦ creativity ♦ imagination ♦ innovation ♦ flexibility ♦ emotional intelligence ♦ perseverance ♦ compassion ♦ empathy ♦ courage ♦ hope ♦ awareness ♦ generosity ♦ ethics ♦ ability to delay gratification ♦ ability to love ♦ desire to search for truth ♦ ability to make connections between disciplines

¹ In some subject areas, “knowledge” and “skills” are difficult to distinguish; I’ve listed them as described by respondents.

² Numbers are approximate, due to overlapping subjects.

opportunity to maintain their health in adulthood.

Healthy Kids Learn Better Coalition

In terms of this goal being appropriate for all students, the Leaders Roundtable supports the recognition that reaching rigorous standards can only be achieved if the achievement and the postsecondary preparation gap among low-income and minority students is closed.

Leaders Roundtable

As the board examines career learning frameworks, we urge that it consider replacing it with a role of citizen framework.

Classroom Law Project

By standardizing these diploma options, high school completion documents in Oregon would provide greater information to employers and postsecondary institutions; without devaluing the significant effort that many students, who do not achieve the CIM, put into their high school education.

Beth Brown, Co-Director of Federal Programs, North Santiam School District

Changing the diploma requirements without addressing curriculum changes will not solve the problem and as stated above may only worsen the dropout situation.

Oregon Community College Association

Students should be given opportunities and options to demonstrate proficiency through community service, volunteer work, career related internships, and self-directed learning projects. Annual work samples in writing, speaking, math,

Sample Policy Questions

- What knowledge and skills are currently addressed in state standards?
- Should content of courses be specified?
- Should students have the option of determining what math class/content to take (applied math v. Algebra II for example)?
- Does the existing model still work in the information age?
- Are there adequate numbers of teachers to teach additional courses? If not, should the state encourage creation of more of these subject area teachers?
- If more core classes are required, what will the electives?
- Will credit by proficiency allow for additional required coursework with less impact on the system?
- What can be implemented without additional funding?

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS

Current Requirements

Current graduation requirements in Oregon Administrative Rule require a minimum of 22 credits, three of which must be in English and social sciences, two in math and science, and one each in health education, physical education, and second languages or applied or fine arts.

Beginning with 2006-07 graduates, administrative rule requires each student to develop an education plan and profile; evidence of extended application; demonstrate career-related knowledge and skills in the areas of personal management, problem solving, communication, teamwork, employment foundations, and career development; and must participate in career-related learning experiences outlined in the education plan.

The 1995 Legislature enacted HB 3129, that required students graduating in 2010 to earn at least 24 credits, four of which must be in English and three in math.

Survey Responses

Many (25) expressed a concern that the board's position paper focused too much on students attending a four-year college and that different post secondary paths required different skills. However, some (10) disagreed, and believed all students needed to be prepared college ready, even if they did not choose to go directly to college. Several (5) agreed that the diploma should have value to higher education and employers.

Some thought the state should set the standards for a single diploma; area endorsements, similar to the current CIM/CAM system, could be added. Many (11) thought the diploma should be aligned with higher education

social studies, and science should also be required and presented through student-developed portfolios.

Dr. Tom Chenoweth & students, Portland State University Graduate School of Education

If we don't align diploma requirements with entrance levels at next level (workforce entry or college admission) then why have a diploma?

PAVTEC High School
Principal

We believe that additional mathematics courses could well be applications or extensions of current courses. Calculus is not appropriate for all students, nor is endless repetition of algebra.

The Oregon Mathematics Education Council

Since the Personal Finance class was eliminated from the high school curriculum a few years ago, the consumer finance industry has noted a steady decline in consumer acumen regarding financial matters.

Oregon Financial Services Association

Recognizing that innovation drives economic success, one of the greatest drivers of innovation is a strong foundation in science and technology.

Lane Workforce Partnership

Credentials should have value to students, to employers and institutions of higher education, including vocational schools and apprentice programs.

Oregon Council of Teachers of Mathematics

standards or other next steps. However, students should have multiple pathways to demonstrate their proficiency (11).

Tiered Diploma: Many (26) thought a tiered diploma would better meet the needs of a diverse student body, while others suggested that the state set a basic level and districts could create additional diplomas (2). Many options exist for a tiered diploma. North Clackamas was identified as an example of a current tiered diploma system.

- Honors Diploma (CIM + 26 credits)
- Standard Diploma (district determined standards on state tests)
- Modified Diploma (26 credits, w/ modifications as determined by IEP or PEP)
- Basic Diploma (22 credits, w/ district determined work samples in writing, speaking, and math; students must be in an alternative program of study, OR be one year behind their cohort class, OR have exceptional circumstances)

CIM/CAM: A number of issues were identified with the certificates of initial and advanced mastery: more teacher training was needed (2); there needed to be incentives, such as financial incentives or college acceptance (6); certificates should be uncoupled (1); certificates should be a diploma requirement (8); certificates should not be a diploma requirement (1); certificates should either be a requirement or dropped (2); both certificates should be kept (6); both certificates should be eliminated (23).

Career-Related Learning Standards: Many (17) were supportive of the work done on career-related frameworks, however some noted that experiences were not available to all students (3), not adequately funded (1), and required more guidance and clearer definition for teachers (3).

Individual Education Plan: Many were very supportive of this requirement (12), but noted that lack of uniformity may make inter-district transfer difficult (1), and should include a portfolio of student work (1).

Proficiency by Credit: Many (11) expressed support for credit by proficiency. Others (9) wondered if higher education institutions would accept such credit and voiced a need for a common standard (9). Multiple approaches are needed to demonstrate proficiency (4). Leadership by the state in this area is needed (1).

Additional Credits: Several respondents articulated the need for more credits (8). Some expressed concern that additional credits would lead to students dropping out (2). Others expressed concern that additional mandated credits in areas of disinterest would alienate students (9) or would come at the expense of electives or "applied learning" opportunities (4).

Exit Exams: More people opposed exit exams (4) than supported them (1), though eight thought the CIM/CAM (or CIM/CAM standards) should be required for graduation. Two thought exams should be given at the end of courses or at the end of the year. Four people thought exit exams were not

Oregon high school diploma requirements must include ... demonstrated mastery of reading, speaking, writing, and math. Mastery should be at a level that is generally accepted entry level for a wide range of employers- particularly manufacturing.

Oregon Workforce
Investment Board

The OWEAC is concerned that the last two years of high school English experience have been erased because CIM targets the tenth grade level and seniors can take college level (and credit) courses while they are still in high school. We strongly object to the message that if a student is competent at the tenth grade level, she is ready for college.

Oregon Writing and English
Advisory Committee

Proficiency attainments based upon summative assessments have serious limitations in their ability to accurately inform the learning and development process for students. State assessments in their current form are but one small tool used by educators and parents to fully judge student progress.

Oregon Small Schools
Association

One of the main difficulties we have with assessments is that the tests are in grade 10 and many of the skills are not taught until grade 11, principally in math.

needed if SAT/ACT were used or if there were standards that must be met.

PASS: Pass standards were described as cumbersome (2), with too little teacher training (2); and if retained, should be calibrated to the SAT or ACT (1) or the curriculum should be designed around the standards (1). Pass would doom many students if made a requirement (9), said some.

Sample Policy Issues

- What alignment could be done with community colleges? OUS?
- Is there a way to align to community colleges without doing harm to community colleges' open door policy?
- Should change be encouraged with a carrot (benefits with higher achievement) or a stick (failure will be punished with no diploma)?
- Will students need to show a level of proficiency to obtain diploma, such as through an exit exam or work samples?
- Should there be a single diploma or multiple options?
- If single, will endorsements, or "honors" by subject be included?
- If multiple, should the options be:
 - Honors Diploma – more credits/proficiencies/GPA
 - Chancellor's diploma – aligned with OUS entry standards
 - Standard – fewer credits?
 - Career-focused diploma?
 - Modified – for those with learning disabilities?
 - Other?
- Should the state set minimum diploma requirements, define all options, or allow districts to design their own optional diplomas?
- What system best meets needs of individual students, yet is not so complicated employers, higher education, the public understand do not understand it?

IMPROVING OREGON'S STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS

STANDARDS

There was no overwhelming consensus on changing Oregon's standards, but rather many individuals with discrete suggestions.

- Students need a variety of ways to meet standards (13).
- Standards should be aligned with higher ed (12).
- Second languages should not be included with the Arts (12).
- CIM-level standards should be required (10).
- Standards should be reduced and deepened (5).
- There should be more Honors, AP, IB courses (4).
- Standards should be developed for 2-11 grades or 11th and 12th grades (4).
- Educators need training to teach to standards (3).
- Standards should be continuously evaluated (3).
- Standards need to be high (3).
- Standards should be aligned among K-12 schools (2).
- Educators should help in the developing of standards (2).
- Career-related frameworks need more definition (2).

Diana Van Driesche
CIM Coordinator
Jefferson High School

If I were king, we would have state assessments required at every grade level 3-11.

Gene Carlson,
Condon SD Superintendent

Designing an assessment system without a clear, prioritized purpose, is a bit like having a solution in search of a problem.

Bill Auty, Michael Dalton,
Wayne Neuburger,
Former Assoc.
Superintendents for
Assessment and Evaluation,
ODE

The ODE should develop a statewide policy regarding best practices and legal requirements that meet the instructional needs of ELL students.

Oregon Assn. of School
Executives

The focus needs to change from 10th grade standards to 12th grade standards.

Hermiston School District
Administration

The Oregon Education Association supports high educational standards and achievement in all schools and for all students in Oregon. The OEA supports the Certificates of Mastery where they can be shown to lead to both higher standards and higher achievement.

Oregon Education Assn.

- Communicate standards; examples of strong and weak work (2).
- Classrooms should be monitored to ensure the teaching of standards (1).
- Standards should be aligned with textbook adoption cycle (1).
- District-scored subjects should be reported to the state (1).
- Standards should be broader and deeper (1).
- Arts standards are too broad (1).
- Standards should have skill/knowledge outcomes (1).

ASSESSMENTS

Oregon assessments need to be *accurate* and *meaningful/useful*. There was not a great deal of criticism about the assessments themselves, except some concern that testing has gained too much importance over actual instruction. Those who accept assessments want those assessments to accurately measure student knowledge and be as useful as possible for students and teachers to inform instruction.

Top responses (see p. 27 for complete list):

- Should be aligned with college entry (ACT, SAT) (17).
- Should be changed to growth model (10).
- Should be useful to guide learning (10).
- Need multiple approaches to reach benchmarks (e.g work samples) (6).
- Should be project-based, portfolio, performance assessment (5).
- Good as they are (4).
- Reduce testing (4).
- Need to be accurate, reliable (4)
- Need to be timely (4).
- Move 10th grade test to later grade (3).
- Need assessments at all grade levels (3)
- Math problem-solving needs to be reinstated (3).

Sample Policy Issues:

- Can Oregon assessments be changed such that they are useful for college admission?
- Can Oregon assessments be changed to measure individual student growth?
- Do existing assessments inform instruction? And if not, can they be made to do so? At what financial cost?
- Should state assessments stand alone, or augment other student work?
- Should there be 11th and/or 12th grade standards and assessments?
- Should there be standards and/or assessments for K, 1, 2 grades?
- Should promotion be based on skill and knowledge proficiency?
- Should math problem-solving be reinstated? If so, what can be done to make the assessment reliable?
- What can be done to assist educators teach to standards?
- Should standards be reassessed and simplified or reduced? If so, how should this be done?

With minimal financial support, we believe we could effectively serve as a conduit for high school, community college, and university-level input into this initiative.

Oregon Writing & English
Advisory Committee

If such an initiative is to be successful it will need the "buy-in" of boards all around the state. OSBA is the ideal partner to join a statewide effort. We can facilitate meetings of local board during the development as well as the implementation phases.

Oregon School Boards Assn.

As an ESD, our role is to serve and sometimes represent our districts. We will contribute by proactively becoming involved and informed to provide the best assistance possible to our districts as they implement Oregon standards and conduct needed assessments.

Umatilla-Morrow ESD

An "educational delivery system that brings all students up to rigorous standards of skill and knowledge" must of necessity include in its design the assurance of teachers who are highly productive of student learning—not just teachers who meet the "highly qualified" designation of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Del Schalock, Teaching
Research Institute, Western
Oregon University

Each time a statewide policy is changed, it is difficult to predict how the changes

WHAT MY ORGANIZATION CAN DO

Not surprisingly, many of the survey respondents are already making contributions to the education system. Answers largely depended on the organization responding to the questions. For example, the Oregon Small Schools Initiative is writing a position paper articulating rural education capacities, capabilities and conditions, and will generate basic requirements for student access and success. The association plans to have this document completed for dissemination by early Fall, 2006.

Many educators stated that they were actively engaged in making schools places of learning for students, using state standards and innovative curriculum. Many volunteered to serve on committees to reevaluate standards, assessments, and any other proposals. Some stated that they were politically involved and fight to make education a priority. Educators stressed that their input was valuable and should be considered prior to any requirements being imposed. Specialists in the area of music, second languages, the arts were especially active in supporting these areas that are often cut in favor of core academics.

Citizens and parents were less concrete in suggesting what they could do, but included volunteering in schools, promoting strategies for more stable funding, voting for legislators who made education a priority, and being a good, supportive parent. Some stated that they would be more supportive of local tax levies if the education system was more in touch with the needs of students and the community. Many are working in their community with at-risk youth. Others point to their payment of taxes as their support. Gaining more concrete support from business sector was mentioned, as a way to get more parental involvement in schools.

Many asked the board for direction on what they could do to improve schools.

OTHER COMMENTS

Funding

Lack of funding was also noted for a number of needed tools, such as computers for online assessment and data transfer; smaller class sizes; up-to-date texts; more specialized teachers, more electives such as music and art, and individualized instruction to better meet the needs of special education students, talented and gifted students, and English language learners.

For example, the Portland Community College Board stated that it agrees that each student must receive personalized guidance and counseling whether they plan to go to college or to enter a career pathway, "but a state mandate without adequate funding is a recipe for failure and frustration."

Quality teachers/instruction

Many pointed out that the most important factor in a classroom is the

affect the school districts around the state. The requirements that seem commonplace in big schools can be next to impossible for small rural districts.

Anne Morter
School Board member

We believe Oregon's tax structure will require fundamental change if we plan to provide a sound education for grades K-12, pre-K, and high education along with other vital public services like health care and public safety.

Oregon Education
Association

Without added resources in schools, changes such as those proposed in the white paper will not make a significant difference in the quality of students' achievement or experiences.

Oregon Community College
Association

TESA is an important vehicle, but resources are not always available to purchase equipment for assessment labs.

Superintendents from
Southern Oregon

The PCC Board believes there should be agreement among Oregon community colleges and the OUS system on how to assess placement of students. We are aware of the discrepancies facing students with advanced placement test scores.

PCC Board

Districts and teachers need tools to help them implement and track the implementation of standards in the classroom.

Instructional Services

teacher. Without addressing the college curriculum teachers receive, and licensing requirements, some teachers will continue to struggle with such important concepts as the teaching to standards, the teaching of reading at all levels, using data, and assessing students.

Education Continuum

Several respondents pointed out that high schools must work with who the middle schools send to them, and the elementary schools before them. Each segment must be involved in making students engaged in learning and helping them master foundational skills and concepts.

Engage Citizens and Educators

Several mentioned that a flaw in the creation and implementation of the Education Act for the 21st Century was a lack of involvement of teachers in its creation, and a lack of "buy-in" from parents, students, colleges, and industry. They urged the board to involve all constituents prior to the board making changes to graduation requirements.

CIM/CAM Standards

Many expressed support for the standards embedded in the two certificates, and hoped that any changes would consider the existing standards, even if the certificates were eliminated.

Data Management

Teachers need the means and training to track student data over time, from one classroom, school, or district to another.

Best Practices

Many urged the board to look at others around the country have done to increase student learning and base any changes on researched best practices.

OTHER COMMENTS

- Plan a system that recognizes skills/abilities of all students.
- Work together on a common vision.
- Cutting Fine Arts is short-sighted.
- Two credits of Fine Arts should be required to graduate.
- Foreign language is not a Fine Art.
- Don't over emphasize that a 4-year college is only viable option for students.
- Understand the financial impact of new mandates.
- Keep it simple.
- Consider creating more alternative placements for high school students.
- Poverty must be addressed before all children can be successful.
- Merely increasing graduation requirements may not guarantee rigor and achievement.
- Individualize instruction.
- NCLB dooms our schools to failure.
- Reading literacy must be a focus.
- A realistic system must be created for those who may fall through

Division, Umatilla-Morrow
ESD

the cracks.

- Schools need to be relevant to students.
- Teachers need less bureaucracy and more time to teach.
- Technology is the future.
- Real life is not about passing tests.