

OREGON STATE TESTING POLICIES
PAST AND PRESENT

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Oregon State Testing Policies Past and Present

Over the past twelve years educational policy in the State of Oregon has had a strong emphasis on the use of testing information. In the early 1970s Oregon was the first state to require students to demonstrate minimum competence in basic skills in order to graduate from high school. A state-administered testing program has also been in place since 1974. This program has conducted an assessment of reading, writing and mathematics at Grades 4, 7 and 11. The assessment has been conducted with about a 15 percent sample on a 2-4 year cycle. Finally, since the mid-1970s the state has required local districts to assess individual students in the basic skills to determine their instructional needs and to evaluate instructional programs. Appendix A contains the standards that describe the requirements for minimum competence compliance, individual student assessment, instructional program assessment and the state policy for the state testing program. The emphasis of these policies was on a strong local determination of the outcomes to be assessed and the particular assessment tools to be used. The state's assessment program was more focused on looking at state performance trends on consensus educational goals.

The policy orientation outlined above was the state's official stance until the fall of 1983 when Verne Duncan, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, proposed a series of new policies. They included:

- .Establish a state-required curriculum in all basic academic programs, kindergarten through grade 12.*
- Assessing all students in grades 3, 6 and 10 in basic skills.*
- Establishing a state 8th grade examination for all students as they complete their grade school program with an individual program designed for students not passing the test.*

These proposals were presented to the State Board of Education, which is responsible for setting educational policy and requirements or standards for local districts. The State Board and Superintendent commissioned a series of task forces to review the Superintendent's proposals. These task forces consisted of teachers, administrators, university professors, business leaders, and school board members. From the recommendations of the task forces, the State Board generated the Oregon Action Plan for Excellence, which was adopted on June 28, 1984. A copy of the plan is included in Appendix B. This plan parallels the State Superintendent's initial proposal on testing but changed the grade levels to 3, 5, 8 and 11, and did not require an individual plan for students not passing the grade 8 test.

The initial challenge to this plan came when funds were requested for its implementation from the 1985 state legislature. Although the Governor supported the plan and its funding, the legislature was less impressed. There appeared to be a number of groups influencing the decision. The first key influence came when the Senate Education Committee recommended to the Ways and Means Committee that no funding be allocated for the testing portion of the plan. They listed as their reasons that the plan was not thought out well enough and they opposed the potential use of state testing information to compare local schools and districts. The groups that gave input to the Senate Education Committee included representatives from local school districts, the Oregon School Boards Association, the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators and the Oregon Education Association. The hearings before the Ways and Means Committee indicated that the attitude of the members of this committee were similar to the Senate Education Committee. The Ways and Means Committee also seemed to be committed to providing additional funding to higher education and there did not appear to be any funds left for additional elementary and secondary programs.

The inability of the Oregon Department of Education to obtain funds for their state testing program postponed the implementation of the Oregon Action Plan for Excellence. However, the Department was able to reallocate funds to support the development of the common curriculum goals proposed by the State Superintendent. In addition, the testing requirements for local districts are under review with changes to reflect local testing programs addressing individual students and programs related to the state's common curriculum goals. These changes could impact local testing programs, even if a state testing program was not implemented. These proposed new requirements are included in Appendix C.

Oregon has long had a reputation of strong local option in education. The state has played the role of providing broad general direction with local districts having many options for implementation of these requirements. This orientation has led to a wide variation in the programs that have been implemented by local districts. The larger districts have more consistently developed extensive testing programs. For example, the two largest districts, Portland and Salem, have developed their own tests to meet the requirements of the state. One of the big concerns by these districts is that the state's testing program will replace their own programs, taking away their control. On the other hand, small districts, which is the vast majority of districts in the state, have testing programs that are limited to publishers' tests. (There are six or seven publisher tests used in the state with no one test having a majority of use.) In a survey taken by the Department in the Spring of 1985, 85 percent of the larger districts opposed a state testing program that required the testing of all students at selected grade levels. However, 76 percent of the smaller districts supported the establishment of such a state testing program. There is an obvious split between smaller and larger districts in their support for a change in the state's testing proposals. However, the larger districts have more influence with the legislature.

The State Superintendent and State Board of Education have continued to work on furthering their intention to implement a state testing program. Since the legislature refused to fund the testing program, they have been active in preparation for the next session. The two major activities have been to develop anew policy for the state testing program and to revise their long range plan (see Appendix D). One change in their plan has been to include in their program a state minimum competency testing program for graduation for high school. Many local districts questioned the relationship between the state test at the high school level on the state's common curriculum goals and the requirements that local districts must assess student competence for graduation. The Superintendent and State Board have resolved the problem by recommending that the state's common curriculum goals should be the basis for determining if students have the necessary skills for graduation.

Another change in the plan was to allow local districts to administer a test from a list of approved tests at grades 3 and 5. The tests on the approved lists would represent major tests available to school districts that match reasonably well the state's common curriculum. This would allow local districts to continue to use the major tests being used by districts now. This approach was recommended by representatives from local districts and received support from some of the educational political organizations such as the Oregon School Boards Association and Confederation of Oregon School Administrators. The tests on this list would be scaled to a common scale, allowing for the results from these different tests to be combined. This approach was recently recommended by the Center for the Study of Evaluation as a means to compare test results among states.

Another development since the last legislative session has been the formation of an interim legislative committee to study educational reform in the state. This committee will be meeting during the spring of 1986. One of the topics possibly under consideration is the state testing program. The leaders of the House of Representatives and the Senate have expressed a concern over the Oregon legislature's lack of action on educational

reform issues. This committee will make recommendations to the next legislative session which meets again in the spring of 1987.

The course of the future of state testing in Oregon is yet to be determined. There are obviously a lot of political groups that can influence the future direction. However, the state legislature with its control over funds has the biggest impact on the State Department of Education's proposed testing program. Until all the pieces fall into place, it will be impossible to predict what will happen.

Oregon — Appendix A

<i>Standard 316(2)</i>	<i>Competence Requirements</i>
<i>Standard 602</i>	<i>Individual Student</i>
<i>Standard 606</i>	<i>Instructional Program</i>
<i>Board Policy 3125</i> <i>Improvement (Old Policy)</i>	<i>Assessment and Program</i>

Appendix A

Standard 316(2)

(2) Competence Requirements

(a) Each student shall demonstrate competence in:

- (A) Reading*
- (B) Writing*
- (C) Mathematics*
- (D) Speaking*
- (E) Listening*
- (F) Reasoning*

(b) Student Competence:

- (A) Shall be verified by measurement of student knowledge and skills or measurement of student ability to apply that knowledge and skill;*
- (B) May be verified through alternative means to meet individualized needs; however, the school district's standard of performance must not be reduced; and*
- (C) When verified in courses, shall be described in planned course statements; challenge tests and/or other appropriate procedures for verification of competencies assigned to courses must also be available.*

(c) In developing curriculum and criteria for verification, school districts should be guided by levels of performance required in life roles.

(d) Competence in reading, writing, mathematics, speaking, listening and reasoning shall be recorded on students' high school transcripts. Competence, when verified prior to grade 9, shall be recorded on high school transcripts.

Standard 602 Individual Student

The school district shall assure that educational programs and services support all students as they progress through school. It shall:

(1) Identify each student's educational progress, needs, and interests related to:

- (a) Basic skills attainment of the knowledge and skills expected of students at each grade, K/1 through 8,*
- (b) Completion of graduation requirements, and*
- (c) General educational development;*

(2) Provide instruction consistent with the desired achievement considering the needs and interests of each student;

(3) Maintain student progress records; and

(4) Report educational progress to parents and students at least annually and as appropriate in

- (a) Basic skills attainment,*
- (b) Achievement toward the fulfillment of graduation requirements, and*
- (c) General educational development*

Standard 606 Instructional Program

The school district shall maintain a process for evaluating and improving instructional programs. It shall:

- (1) Assess student performance annually in reading, writing and mathematics in at least two elementary grades and one secondary grade;*
- (2) Assess student performance on selected program goals in at least language arts, mathematics, science and social studies in two elementary grades and one secondary grade, prior to the selection of district textbooks and other instructional materials under rule 581-22-520 of these standards;*
- (3) Utilize appropriate measurement procedures in making such assessments and report results to the community;*
- (4) Identify needs based on assessment results and establish priorities for program improvement; and*
- (5) Make needed program improvement as identified in the needs identification process.*

Board Policy 3125 Assessment and Program Improvement

To determine the status of student achievement in areas related to State Board goals, student performance shall be assessed statewide and other types of data shall be reviewed. These data are to be analyzed for discrepancies between actual and expected levels of performance. If significant discrepancies exist, they will become a basis for Board priorities. Statewide assessment also is designed to provide information useful to school districts in making needed program improvements.

Oregon — Appendix B
Oregon Action Plan for Excellence

Oregon Action Plan for Excellence

Adopted by
State Board of Education
June 28, 1984

Introduction. . .

Americans live in a world characterized by *accelerating* social change which carries profound implications for education. While we Oregonians are justifiably proud of our public school system, we cannot afford to rest on what has been achieved to date. If we do, we can no longer assert *that we* are doing the job of preparing our children to cope with the demands they will encounter as adults in the 21st century. The schools of Oregon must equip students to be adaptable and self-motivated learners, able *to* acquire new knowledge and skills long after formal schooling is completed. The Oregon Action Plan has been *developed* in response to these concerns.

Why Make Changes Now?

Recent studies have shown that students in Oregon perform better than students nationally on basic skills tests, have higher levels of achievement as they leave high school, and those entering higher education are better prepared than students nationally. Students in Oregon who have prepared to enter the labor market directly also get *good* grades on their performance as new workers. The general level of education in the state is greater than the average across the country. Students in *the* schools tend to feel good about the education they are receiving and find schools to be an enjoyable and safe place to be.

Although schools in the state should be proud of such accomplishments, there is room for improvement. The future will demand that Students be lifelong learners, adapting to new job requirements, technological developments, and societal changes. A recent national study indicates that high *school* graduates who enter the work force directly need virtually the same skills and abilities as those going on to college. The fundamental skills of oral and written communication, problem solving and comprehension of written and mathematical information are needed for success in adulthood.

In Oregon, evidence points to similar conclusions. Employers have indicated that employees will need to be retrained as many as five times while working in one company. Furthermore, Oregon employers feel that schools must help all students in applying their school experience to real life situations and in developing skills and knowledge which enable them to solve problems on the job.

Another indicator of the need for school improvement is the concern that Schools are losing too many students before they graduate. Also of concern is the percentage of Oregon students entering college who must take remedial courses in math and English. Adapting instruction to the learning needs and characteristics of individual students must be educators' highest priority if such problems are to be alleviated.

Excellence for Every Student

The goal of the Oregon Action Plan for Excellence is to bring about the highest levels of performance and satisfaction of all students. Excellence is possible when learners are challenged to go beyond assumed limits and develop their talents and abilities to the utmost. Educators and parents must set high expectations for learning and, in turn, provide learning opportunities and support necessary for each student to meet those expectations.

Our student population has changed dramatically over the past 30 years. Family mobility, cultural diversity, and the need to serve the handicapped have increased the complexity of the schools' responsibility. However, when education is truly excellent, it does not vary in quality because of such variables. The State Board and Superintendent believe the goal of excellence for every student represents the highest form of commitment to equity in education.

Empowering the Schools

Actions to bring about excellence in education must focus on empowering schools to adapt instruction to the needs, learning styles and learning rates of individual students. Furthermore, such instruction should be directed toward mastery of understood and agreed-upon goals for learning. The energy and efforts of both teachers and *students* must be primarily oriented around achieving the fundamental learning skills and knowledge which establish a foundation for academic, occupational, and life success.

Skillful, competent teachers are the key persons in the schooling process. Actions on the part of school principals and others must support and enhance *the* capabilities of teachers to develop the

talents and abilities of all learners. The principal's role is to provide school leadership, to coordinate the instructional program, and to create the climate and Capacity for the self-direction and self-renewal necessary to achieve excellence.

The school board administrators, other district personnel (certificated and classified), and community groups all play important roles to support the key partners in the learning process—the student, the parent and the teacher. State, regional and local agencies need to assist local schools in doing their job by providing guidelines, models, research information, technical assistance, Support networks and financial resources.

Underlying Commitment

The Oregon Action Plan for Excellence establishes a framework for responding to the problems and challenges described above, building upon the existing strengths of the school system.

The State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Department of Education are committed to support educational excellence and effective stewardship of public funds in partnership with focal efforts. Incentives, assistance, encouragement, resources and flexibility will be provided to the maximum extent possible. Meanwhile, a stable and adequate system of school finance is essential. The commitment of the State Superintendent and the State Board to work with the Governor, Legislature and others toward this end is set forth as a primary strategy in this plan.

From the 1970s to the 1990s More Than a Decade of Progress

Since 1972, the State Board and Department of Education have been moving toward a system which focuses on student learning as opposed to the earlier emphasis on methods and means. The Oregon Action Plan for Excellence fits into a logical progression toward a student-based educational system that evolves through cycles of self-correction and improvement. Simply stated, the system will specify the results to be expected, periodically measure performance, take corrective action and begin the process again.

Setting Goals for 1990

While excellence is a worthwhile goal in the abstract, the Action Plan has been developed with the expectation of specific results which can be seen by our citizens and through which the performance of the state's educational system can be judged. These goals will specify, for example, that by 1990 there will be significant improvement in:

- . school productivity
- student achievement in the basic skills
- . employer and community satisfaction with students and schools
- student and parent satisfaction with schools
- school climate, as evidenced by less vandalism, class interruptions and absenteeism

- a reduced student dropout rate

The success of the Action Plan will be measured by how well these and other results are achieved.

Agreeing on Policies which Support the Goals

To *guide* Oregon schools in achieving the goals specified above, the State Board of Education has established the following policies for the Action Plan—

It is the policy of the State Board of Education and the Department of Education to:

- Establish standards for public schools designed to enable all students to successfully prepare for adult life after high school.
- Establish clear and high learning expectations for all students, allowing flexible means for students to achieve these expectations.
- Increase the capacity, incentives, and support for school and program improvement to ensure the best possible learning situation for students.
- . Assure Oregonians of the quality of their public schools.

“The Department will assemble a task force to develop these goals, and acquire *baseline data* to ascertain progress toward the goals.

A Framework for Action

Initial efforts to implement the Board's broad policies have been recommended by eight task forces which represent all major "stakeholder groups" in Oregon education. The work of these task forces was grounded in research on school effectiveness and organizational behavior tested by the practical experiences of teachers, administrators and community representatives. The action statements—which describe the work to be done—are set forth in the following pages.

The Oregon Action Plan for Excellence establishes basic expectations for all Oregon schools. Where excellent programs already exist, they will be encouraged to continue and grow. At the same time, the plan establishes a framework for action to encourage local school districts to move far beyond basic requirements to provide excellence in education for all students.

Actions for Excellence

1.0 Defining What Oregon Students Should Learn

1.1 Define the State Common Curriculum

The Oregon Department of Education, working with local school districts and higher education institutions, shall define the required common curriculum goals for elementary and secondary schools in terms of the learning skills and knowledge students are expected to possess as a result of their schooling experience. Goals will be specified at selected checkpoints.

Curriculum goals for all students shall be specified in:

(a) Learning skills: reading, writing, speaking, listening, mathematics, critical thinking, scientific method, and study skills.

(b) Knowledge and skills in: art, health education, language arts, mathematics, science, music, physical education, social studies, career development, personal finance, economics, and computer literacy.

Local school districts, with assistance from the Oregon Department of Education, shall be responsible for organizing the curriculum and delivering instruction to achieve the common curriculum goals.

1.2 Provide a Comprehensive Curriculum

Local school districts, with assistance from the Oregon Department of Education, shall provide a comprehensive instructional program beyond the common curriculum to advance each student's personal, educational and career goals.

The program will include opportunities for experiences in the visual and performing arts, foreign languages, vocational education and other applied arts, and advanced courses in the areas covered by the common curriculum.

Rationale

The statutory responsibilities of the State Board of Education are clear with respect to its role in establishing "a sound comprehensive curriculum, with particular emphasis on the highest practical scholarship standards . . ." (ORS 326.051). The guarantee of a high quality educational program for all students forms the cornerstone of the state's role in public education.

By taking a stronger role in defining expectations for student learning, the State Board and Department intend to: (1) provide leadership in establishing educational standards commensurate with the challenges today's students will encounter in the future; (2) focus public attention on the essential outcomes of schooling that are expected of all students; and (3) mobilize the energies of Oregon educators to provide learning experiences that motivate and engage all students.

It is recognized that an overly prescriptive approach to curriculum policy would deny schools the flexibility and capacity to capitalize on the inventiveness of teachers, principals and other instructional leaders. As research on effective schooling practices indicates, a strong commitment to school improvement depends in large part on the degree of local "ownership" of curriculum decisions and instructional practices. Thus, the intent is to define learner expectations in ways that allow for a variety of instructional approaches and options for local curriculum design. Nevertheless, the state will test students' attainment of the skills and knowledge expected at the major transition points in schooling to assure that learning expectations are being met.

Suggested Timeline

1984/435	Develop common learning skills
1985-87	Develop common curriculum in language arts, math, science, health, and foreign language
1987 & beyond	Continue to develop comprehensive curriculum guidelines in advance of state textbook selections

2.0 Increasing Expectations and Incentives for Student Achievement

2.1 Increase Graduation Requirements

The State Board of Education shall raise the standards for graduation from high school by increasing the units of credit required of all students from 21 to 23 in the following areas of study:

4 units of. English

2 units in mathematics

2 units in science

1 unit in United States history

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- 1 unit in government and economics
- 1 unit in world history, geography and culture
- 1 unit in health
- 1 unit in physical education
- 1/2 unit in career development
- 1/2 unit in personal finance

2 units of required electives in: vocational education/applied arts, visual and performing arts or foreign language

7 additional electives

With expectations of increased performance levels, schools must be increasingly prepared to meet individual learning needs and abilities. Alternative methods for meeting graduation requirements may be planned for the individual student. Methods to be considered by local school districts include:

- (a) Challenge tests for specific courses
- (b) Demonstrating achievement of specific goals through other educational and life experiences.

2.2 Establish an Honors Diploma

In order to challenge students to strive for educational excellence the state shall award an "honors" diploma to high school graduates meeting the following criteria:

- (a) A grade point average which indicates superior achievement
- (b) Demonstrated excellence in achievement in one or more of the following:
 - (1) academic areas
 - (2) vocational/applied arts
 - (3) visual or performing arts.

Rationale

Raising the number of units required for high school graduation signifies that more effort is expected of high school students, particularly in the subject areas of English, math and science. The complaints of employers and college officials that high school graduates lack skills in writing, mathematics and logical thinking adds legitimacy to increasing course requirements in these areas. Also, findings of the National Assessment of Educational Progress for 17-year-olds indicate that many high school students are poorly prepared in the fundamentals of literacy and numeracy, as well as in higher-order reasoning skills. “

Strengthened graduation standards must not lead to accelerated dropout rates, however. The challenge to Oregon's secondary schools is to

employ instructional practices and use new technologies to help all students succeed in meeting the revised graduation requirements.

In establishing a state honors diploma, the intent is to motivate students to strive for higher levels of educational achievement, recognizing not only superior performance in traditional academic subjects, but also in vocational and artistic areas.

Suggested Timeline

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1984-85 | Consider and adopt changes in high school graduation requirements |
| | Establish state honors diploma for the class of 1985 |
| 1985-87 | Provide assistance with optional ways to meet requirements |
| 1987 & beyond | Evaluate impact of changes in graduation requirements |

3.0 Measuring and Assessing Student Performance

3.1 Establish Standards and Measure Performance

The State Board of Education, with the help of local districts, shall establish standards and measure student performance at grades 3, 6, 8 and 11 on selected goals in the learning skills and knowledge specified in the common curriculum.

Most school districts currently have a local testing program in place. Every effort will be made to build the statewide testing program on existing excellent programs.

3.2 Require Local Testing Programs

Local school districts shall develop and implement programs for continuous monitoring of student progress toward the learning skills and knowledge specified in the common curriculum so that students can be assisted in making steady progress toward meeting the curriculum goals.

Models will be developed by the Oregon Department of Education for districts needing assistance in establishing the local testing program.

3.3 Assess Performance of Eighth Grade Students

The test to be administered to all 8th graders will assess students' success in mastering the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful in high school.

All tests used by the state in assessing student performance will be developed or selected cooperatively with representatives from local districts.

3.4 Monitor Academic Performance of Oregon Students

The Oregon Department of Education will monitor the academic performance of Oregon students by gathering assessment data from local school districts and reporting statewide results to the public.

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Rationale

Accurate information on student achievement of the learning goals defined by the state serves a number of purposes: (1) such test results reinforce the common curriculum, particularly when publicly reported; (2) information on the general pattern of student strengths and weaknesses provides guidance for improving curriculum and instruction; (3) *data on individual student performance* informs decisions on meeting learning needs, such as placement in programs designed to alleviate skill deficiencies; and (4) test results provide the public with an accurate accounting of how well students are achieving.

The proposed approach to statewide assessment will have a direct impact on education in Oregon because it will send a clear message to local boards and educators about expectations for learning, while allowing districts the freedom to determine how students progress toward them. Districts should begin to align curriculum and instruction with these standards, continuous monitoring of student performance should occur (beginning in the primary grades), and students should be assured of learning necessary skills as they progress toward the standards.

Suggested Timeline

1984-85	<i>Field test basic skills test for all 8th grade students, Spring 1985</i>
1985-87	<i>Annually test 8th grade students and field test assessment instruments at other grade levels</i>
1987 & beyond	<i>Conduct annual testing in areas of common learning and provide tests for program evaluation matching the curriculum revision and textbook selection schedules</i>

4.0 Improving the Effectiveness of Teachers and Administrators

4.1 Develop Performance Evaluation Systems

Local school districts shall improve the effectiveness of performance evaluation systems for all teachers and administrators.

4.2 Establish Staff Development Programs

Local school districts shall develop and implement effective staff development programs related to district evaluation systems and school improvement plans.

4.3 Provide Assistance

The Oregon Department of Education shall provide assistance in efforts to improve the effectiveness of teachers and administrators by:

(a) developing models for staff compensation which recognize contributions to improved pro-

gram and school performance, or assumption of increased responsibilities (e. g., career ladder plans)

(b) developing models for staff evaluation and staff development

(c) providing workshops, training and other staff development efforts

(d) developing a plan for seeking funding for scholarships and subsidies to encourage outstanding graduates to enter the teaching profession

(e) working with higher education to strengthen teacher and administrator training programs

(f) supporting research, development and dissemination activities focused on effective instruction.

Rationale

The quality of teachers is a concern that surfaces frequently in surveys of public perceptions of the schools. For example, in the 1983 annual Gallup poll on education, "difficulty getting good teachers" and "teachers' lack of interest" ranked fifth and sixth among the major problems confronting public schools. Quality of teaching was given a grade of C or below by 45 percent of the national sample. The survey also indicates public dissatisfaction with the level of teachers' salaries and the predominant compensation system. By nearly a two-to-one margin, the public favored basing a teacher's pay on the quality of his or her work, compared with paying all teachers on a standard-scale basis. Clearly, public regard for education hinges in large part on the perceived effectiveness of school personnel.

Many effective teachers and administrators in Oregon are committed to increasing their professional knowledge and skills. While these persons should be saluted, the State Board and Superintendent also believe the quality of instruction and school administration throughout the state can be enhanced by providing greater direction and opportunities for improvement.

The actions listed above address the following issues and concerns:

. Nonsystematic or incomplete planning of evaluation and staff development.

. cursory or formalistic evaluation rituals which result in no improvement in personnel performance.

. Unclear definitions of quality teaching or effective administration.

. All personnel not being evaluated, with many having little or no expectation of being helped by the process.

. Requests for help from teachers seen as admissions of weakness by some colleagues and administrators.

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. The general feeling, supported by an inadequate compensation system and lack of growth opportunities for individuals, that an educational career will not *be* rewarding or worthwhile.

Solutions to these problems are not sought through formal mandates; they're more likely found in strong local evaluation systems, continued staff development *and* adequate compensation systems. The state's role is to provide leadership to promote high standards of quality in teaching and to assist districts in developing and implementing systematic evaluation and staff development programs.

suggested Timeline

1984-85	<i>Begin to develop and field test model evaluation, compensation and staff development programs</i>
1985-87	<i>Develop, evaluate and provide models, guidelines assistance</i>
1987 & beyond	<i>Continue to provide technical assistance and update models and guidelines</i>

5.0 Improving School Effectiveness

5.1 Establish Educational Standards

The State Board of Education shall redefine the educational standards used to evaluate schools and districts, with an emphasis on student performance.

5.2 Monitor State Standards

The Department of Education shall monitor the performance of Oregon school districts in meeting state standards and provide technical assistance to those districts needing help in meeting standards.

5.3 Develop School Profiles

In addition to the standardization program, the Department of Education shall furnish each school district with periodic school profile to assist the district in its efforts for improvement. Profile information shall describe the school 'and its performance. The state will describe the basic format and content with opportunities given to districts to add information of local interest.

5.4 Give Recognition for Excellence

The Department of Education shall develop a plan for recognition and awards to schools and districts for outstanding and exemplary educational programs which contribute to excellence for Oregon students.

The Department of Education shall develop a plan for recognition and awards to individuals throughout Oregon who have made outstanding contributions to student achievement and educational excellence.

5.5 Encourage Local District Initiative

In order to encourage local district initiative in striving for excellence, the Department of Education shall:

. Develop plans for freeing districts from the constraints of standards which may inhibit creativity and initiative in developing innovative plans of action.

• Provide incentive, assistance and encouragement to a few districts willing to probe the frontiers of knowledge and practice.

Rationale

A commitment to continuing self-renewal and improvement is the hallmark of effective schools. A major ingredient in school improvement is the systematic monitoring of information on key performance variables, using such data to detect potential problems and taking corrective action. The intent of the actions listed above is to increase the capacity for local improvement by providing tools (e.g., school profiles), technical assistance and incentives.

The State Board and Superintendent recognize that meaningful efforts to improve school effectiveness originate from within the local system, as opposed to being externally directed or mandated. Thus, the Department will focus its efforts on assisting districts to make effective use of school performance data and providing incentives and support for innovative practices.

Suggested Timeline

1984-85	<i>Revise state standards to be consistent with Action Plan</i>
	<i>Develop and test profile, evaluation and school improvement models</i>
1985%7	<i>Recognize and reward excellence and improve profile, evaluation and school improvement models</i>
1987 & beyond	<i>Substitute school and program performance evaluation for much of the traditional evaluation of the means of schooling as the basis for standards compliance and school improvement</i>

6.0 Increasing the Use of Educational and Communications Technology

6.1 The Department of Education shall plan and direct statewide activities to:

(a) Provide technology-based instructional materials by locating and distributing existing materials through a clearinghouse on educational technology and through the development of high priority new materials. Also, provide guidelines to assist schools in evaluating software designed for instructional delivery and management.

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(b) Establish a comprehensive, readily-accessible, statewide communications network for education.

(c) Encourage the establishment of partnerships among individuals, industries, school districts, and community college districts to pursue appropriate uses of technology in education.

(d) Develop guidelines for evaluating new technologies and providing models and training for educators to better understand the appropriateness of technology, and how it may be incorporated with other media in the instructional program.

(e) Assure that all students in Oregon have equal access to all available technology-based instruction, including instructional television and computer-based instruction.

6.2 The State Board of Education, working with all other appropriate state agencies, shall establish a council on educational technology to coordinate efforts to apply educational technology in Oregon schools.

Rationale

The use of technology in education can substantially contribute to educational excellence in Oregon by assuring the development of human potential: by providing equitable access to educational resources across the state; by providing equal opportunity for all races, ethnic groups, economic groups, and both sexes; and by freeing staff and administrative personnel to attend to what is educationally essential. However, introduction of technology into education requires the simultaneous development of three interdependent aspects: compatible hardware; effective, relevant software; and skillful staff. Any one of these alone is useless without the others. It is important to ensure that harmony, balance, human values, and equity are included as we develop these new tools for education.

However, in the fall of 1963, there was approximately one computer for every 75 students in grades kindergarten through 12 in the state. Although this ratio may be sufficient to provide students with an experience using the computer, it does not allow students and teachers to incorporate technology into the classroom. In addition, only about 30 percent of the teachers in the state feel literate in the use of technology. These factors, along with the need for more and better software, make the use of technology for delivery and management of instruction a long-term goal that will require continued cooperative efforts in supplying the technology and developing skills to use it.

Suggested Timeline

1984-85 Take initial steps to establish an electronic network and clearinghouse for technology

1985-87 Provide models, guidelines and training and increase courseware available for use with technology

1987 & beyond Assure all students use and understand the impact of technology in their personal, social and work lives

Assure teachers are able to use technology to manage and deliver instruction

7.0 Improving the Use of Instructional Time

7.1 Use Existing Time More Effectively

The Department of Education shall provide leadership, incentives, assistance and regulatory flexibility to encourage school districts to use existing instructional time more efficiently and effectively.

It is the mutual responsibility of local and state agencies to free classrooms of interruptions and find creative approaches to more productive daily, weekly and annual school schedules and calendars.

7.2 Establish Minimum Instructional Days

The school district shall provide a minimum of 175 days of instruction annually. Time lost for temporary closures must be rescheduled by the school district.

Guidelines for length of the instructional day will be developed by the state.

Rationale

Several research studies in education have shown that the amount of time spent instructing students has a direct effect on how much students learn. This simple relationship has very significant implications for schools. Unnecessary interruptions rob students of the opportunity to increase their knowledge or skill.

In addition, studies have indicated that the relevance of what is learned and the quality of presentation contribute to learning. Consequently, it is imperative that schools protect the time available for instruction and ensure it is quality time as well. Through an analysis of current practices, schools should be able to identify where potential problems exist. Also, the sharing of effective practices can assist schools to find better ways of allocating and utilizing instructional time.

Suggested Timeline

1984-85 Develop awareness guidelines and assessment tools for increasing productive use of time

1985-87 Consider rule changes for the 175 day school year and continue to work for reduction of classroom interruptions

1987 & beyond Find, share and promote creative ways to use time

Strategy for Action

To carry out the plan, we propose a long-range, three-part strategy. The rationale for each strategy is presented below, along with some suggested next steps. The strategies are:

1. Providing Stability in School Finance

The most important ingredient necessary to enable schools to focus energy and resources to the achievement of excellence is a stable financial structure. Students, parents, teachers and administrators must not have their energy and time drained wondering whether school will open. No Oregon school should have to close its doors because of an unstable finance system. Incentives for effectiveness and productivity, however, would assure prudent stewardship of public funds.

Next Steps Include:

- Request the Governor to establish a blue ribbon committee to examine and recommend improvements in state policies and practices for financing schools and the tax structure to support such improvements.

2. Supporting Excellence

2.1 Assistance for Excellence

Many schools will require technical assistance, incentives and encouragement in striving toward excellence. The state has an important role in seeing that this support is available and accessible at a reasonable cost.

The state must also recognize and provide incentives to schools willing to introduce and test improvements which demonstrate cost-effective ways to obtain higher student and school performance.

Sufficient kinds of assistance and access to them will be possible only if we carefully use state and local resources, both public and private. Tax incentives, nonprofit foundations and cost-recovery enterprises all have the potential to multiply available and new resources to provide for the information, training and material needs of the schools.

Next Steps Include:

- Clarify the Department's role in providing leadership, direction and coordination of assistance for school improvement.

- Determine the feasibility of establishing an Oregon foundation for excellence to obtain private funds for research, development and evaluation related to the improvement of school effectiveness and productivity.

- Determine the feasibility of establishing a nonprofit public corporation, an Oregon center for instructional technology.

2.2 Partnerships for Excellence

Special bonds of cooperation must be fostered between schools and their communities to serve the best interests of students. The schools and the community as a whole. Groups at the local, regional, and state levels must join forces in to achieve excellence.

The state can recognize and support technical assistance centers in providing information and assistance directly to schools or through districts, ESDs or consortiums.

Regional and state consortiums and networks can emerge or be organized to provide fiscal, moral or technical support to meet school problems in the most effective and cost-effective way.

Next Steps Include:

- Involve existing advisory committees in the planning and implementation of the action plan and create new advisory committees as appropriate.

- Establish state and local education and work Councils

- Establish state policies which support the development and maintenance of technical assistance centers and regional school improvement consortiums.

- Establish a telecommunications network to reduce paperwork and enable educators to gain access to technical information files pertaining to curriculum, test items, and textbook and computer software evaluations.

2.3 Removing Barriers to Excellence

The Oregon Action Plan for Excellence holds a vision for assuring a quality education for all. That vision is referenced to what students must learn and what school should be like as we prepare for the next decade and approach the 21st century. (The graduating class of 2000 will enter kindergarten in 1987).

If schools are to be centers for improvement, all others at the local and state level must be certain that unnecessary constraints are eliminated. Until the elements of the proposed action plan are in place and operating, however, the state and local school districts may need to maintain the current level of control over the means of schooling. As the plan unfolds, those controls can be modified, reduced or eliminated to release the creativity, ingenuity and initiative of the students, staff and community of each school to reach excellence.

Next Steps Include:

- Examine all existing and proposed statutes and rules to eliminate barriers to effectiveness and productivity improvement.

2.4 Financing Proposals for Excellence

Some of the proposed improvements can be accomplished by reordering priorities for the use of existing local and state human and fiscal resources. Where new mandates require start-up or continuing costs, new state funds will be necessary. In addition, appropriate existing state and federal funds must be used to supplement local efforts.

The plan will require new partnerships to multiply resources. Efforts must be made to provide appropriate tax incentives for business and industry or to establish foundations and cost-recovery enterprises.

Next Steps Include:

- Submit special budget requests for the 1985 legislative assembly.

- Structure Department staff and budget to meet needs of the Action Plan.

- Plan for and recognize the significant in-kind contributions of state, regional and local agencies.

- Propose legislation authorizing tax incentives for business and industry to provide equipment, for training personnel, and for teachers to gain industrial experience.

3. Planning and Guiding Programs for Excellence

State and local educators as well as public members must join in monitoring and adjusting plans as the actions are developed, tested and implemented. Broad involvement will be needed to assure that the interests of the education community and the public are served. State programs for school evaluation will be managed to enhance local achievement and to organize regional and state resources to solve local problems.

Progress will be reported periodically to school districts, state policymakers and the public. The state must recognize schools, programs and individuals for their contributions to excellence. Schools and districts unable to reach expectations will be expected to work with ESDs, the state and others in building joint improvement efforts.

Next Steps Include:

- Revise the state standardization process to provide assistance for school and program improvement while assuring compliance with state standards for quality, equity and safety.

- Establish an Oregon council for excellence to assist the State Board and Department of Education in managing the Oregon Action Plan for Excellence.

Oregon— Appendix C

Proposed Standard 602

Proposed Standard 606

Proposed Standard 602 Individual Student

To ensure each student's educational success in school, school districts shall pay constant attention to individual student progress. Each district shall:

- (1) Use test *results*, classroom work, **grades, attendance, behavior and other evaluative information for identifying each student's educational progress, related to:**
 - (a) *Attainment of the Essential Learning Skills adopted by the State Board of Education,*
 - (b) *Attainment of the common knowledge and skills in instructional programs adopted by the State Board of Education,*
 - (c) *General educational progress in personal, social and career development, and*
 - (d) Completion of graduation requirements;
- (2) Record and maintain student records which allow for the review of test information, classroom information and other evaluative information to determine the instructional needs of each student;
- (3) Adapt instruction and curriculum when the needs, interests and learning styles of each student indicates an adaptation is needed; and
- (4) Report educational progress *to* parents and students at least annually on:
 - (a) Attainment of the Essential Learning Skills, **and the** common knowledge and skills adopted by the State Board of Education,
 - (b) Achievement toward the fulfillment of graduation requirements, if appropriate, and
 - (c) General educational progress in personal, social and career development.
- (5) Identify students who are having extreme difficulties in school, as indicated by:
 - (a) Erratic attendance;
 - (b) Academic problems leading to grade or credit deficits;
 - (c) Conduct or behavioral problems in school or out;
 - (d) Poor relationships with school personnel;
 - (e) Lack of good peer relationships; or
 - (f) Lack of self-esteem.
- (6) Design educational programs or propose placement in alternative education programs to meet the needs of students identified as having extreme difficulties in school.
- (7) Report at least annually to the local school board on the status and progress of students identified under section (5) of this rule.
- (8) Report to the Department of Education in the annual School Level Fall Report (Form No. 581-3174) the number of students who are identified as dropouts under the following definition: "A pupil who leaves a school, for any reason except death, before graduation or completion of a program of studies and without transferring to another school or educational program leading to a high school diploma or alternative certificate. "

Proposed Standard 606 Instructional Program

To ensure continual improvement of instructional programs, school districts shall review test results and other evaluative information to identify levels of performance. to recognize deficiencies, and to plan needed improvement. Each district shall:

- (1) Identify district, school and program needs by:
 - (a) Annually reviewing test results and other evaluative information collected for purposes of OAr 581-22-602;
 - (b) Conducting program evaluations periodically in language arts, mathematics, science, health education, social studies and vocational education. These evaluations should be consistent with state curriculum development and textbook selection timelines, and include the measurement of student performance on the appropriate common curriculum goals adopted by the State Board of Education;
- (2) Implement district, school and program improvements as identified;
- (3) Provide appropriate related staff development activities;
- (4) Annually report test results to the community; and
- (5) Annually report test results and progress on improvement plans to the Department of Education.

POLICY FOR TESTING IN OREGON

3125 Assessment

The basic purpose of educational assessment is to provide information that will help individuals make informed choices regarding educational alternatives. Assessment information is relevant to decisions made by students, parents, teachers, school and district administrators, state level decision makers, and citizens. The following policy is put forth to guide state and local education agencies in their assessment activities.

I. *Underlying Principles*

The assessment policy of the State Board of Education is based on the following principles:

- A. Educators at the classroom, school, district and state levels need adequate information to identify students' instructional needs and to guide instructional program efforts.
- B. *In order to inform decisionmakers, assessment information must be timely, relevant to the decision, and easy to understand.*
- c. The responsibility for interpreting and using assessment results belongs *at* the level at which decisions are made (i. e., individual student, classroom, school, district or state).
- D. Citizens of the state should be informed about the performance of schools in order to be informed participants in resolving education issues.

II. Student Assessment

In the elementary grades the educational experience of most students is based on a fairly common and uniform curriculum. This experience begins to differ among students as they progress through school. At the high school level this differentiation begins to increase dramatically, when students pursue courses that relate to their personal and career goals and interests. Nevertheless, there is a core body of knowledge and skills that all students should learn through a K-12 schooling experience. Any student assessment program should recognize and accommodate both the common learning goals expected of students and their differing needs and interests.

In carrying out its role to insure that the state maintains a system of modern schools, the State Board of Education will establish the common learning goals that all students must achieve in order to graduate from high school. These outcomes will specify the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to function as productive adults. The Board will also specify assessment procedures and the standards students must meet. In addition, students must meet unit of credit requirements for high school graduation, allowing for the differentiation *in student needs and interests.*

As students progress toward attaining the common knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for high school graduation, it is important that checkpoints be established to monitor students' progress. Teachers check on a student's progress

on a regular and frequent basis. Recognizing this ongoing monitoring system in schools, the state will establish several key points where a common system will be used to check students' progress.

A critical checkpoint is at the transition -from the elementary program to high school. At this point is is exceedingly important that students possess the requisite knowledge and skills to be successful in high school. The state will establish a performance standard at the eighth grade to identify students who may not be prepared for high school.

III. Program Assessment

To determine the effectiveness of instructional programs related to the Board's adopted common curriculum goals, student performance will be assessed statewide. These data will be used to identify curriculum strengths and weaknesses on a statewide basis and set targets for program improvement.

Information from the assessment of the state's common curriculum goals will be reported to policy makers and the public to inform them of educational achievement in the state.

In addition, local school districts will use assessment data in making needed program improvements and to convey to their public and the state *the status of student achievement in their schools*.

IV. State Standards

In order to insure that districts carry out their assessment responsibilities, the State Board of Education will adopt standards for public schools. These standards will be based on the most current research and knowledge of effective practices.

v. State Support

The Superintendent of Public Instruction will develop and maintain an ongoing program to assist local districts implement the assessment standards for elementary and secondary schools. This support will include sample assessment instruments, guidelines for their use and technical assistance in implementing a sound assessment program.

Oregon — Appendix D
Revised Board Policy 3125
Long Range Testing Plan

PROPOSED STATE TESTING PLAN

Purpose	Function Served	Description	Use of Data
Assure that all students receiving high school diploma possess required skills	Certify individual students' mastery of the essential skills required for graduation (581-22-316)	<p>State-developed tests of reading, math, writing and reasoning administered to all 10th graders in fall. (Skills in speaking and listening certified with locally-developed measures.)</p> <p>State establishes passing score in each skill area assessed by the state.</p> <p>Secure testing program, with items changed on every test administration (twice per year). New tests and passing scores equated to scale established in year 1 of program.</p> <p>Student must be re-tested in areas not passed (five opportunities).</p> <p>Local districts may assess skills beyond the state's assessment.</p>	<p>Student must pass tests in all skill areas before receiving high school diploma.</p> <p>Schools use test results to design instructional programs for students needing academic assistance.</p>
Assure that students who are not making satisfactory progress receive needed assistance.	Assist in the identification of students needing special academic assistance (581-22-602)	<p>State-developed tests of reading, math, writing and reasoning administered to all 8th graders.</p> <p>District-selected tests (from state-approved list equated to a common achievement scale) in reading, math, writing/language usage administered to all 3rd and 5th graders.</p> <p>State sets performance level at grades 3, 5 and 8 to predict whether students are making adequate progress towards passing the state test at grade 10.</p> <p>At grades K, 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 and 9, district selects tests/methods for identification of students who are not making expected progress.</p>	<p>School must determine if a special instructional program is needed for student who does not meet performance criteria.</p>

Purpose	University of Oregon	Department of Education	Use of Data
Improve instructional programs in each school.	Identify for teachers, administrators and local state policymakers any instructional program deficiencies affecting the acquisition of essential learning skills (581-22-606)	<p>State-developed tests of reading, math, writing and reasoning administered to all 8th graders.</p> <p>District-selected tests (from state-approved list equated to a common achievement scale) in reading, math and writing/language usage administered to all 3rd and 5th graders.</p> <p>Local assessment devices may also be used to determine program effectiveness.</p>	Test results analyzed by skill area determine pattern of strengths and weaknesses in school's instructional programs.
Improve instructional programs on a statewide basis.	Identify specific strengths and weaknesses in student performance statewide.	<p>State-developed tests of reading, math, writing and reasoning administered to all 8th and 10th graders and representative samples of 3rd and 5th graders.</p> <p>State-developed tests related to the common curriculum goals in instructional programs will also be administered to a sample of 3rd, 5th, 8th and 11th graders.</p>	<p>Interpretive panels identify strengths and weaknesses in student performance and possible causal factors.</p> <p>Department curriculum specialists implement curriculum improvement and training and technical assistance strategies to improve student performance.</p>
Provide information to the public and state policymakers regarding the effectiveness of all public schools in the state.	Identify the level of student performance in each school.	<p>State-developed tests of reading, math, writing and reasoning administered to all 8th and 10th graders and samples of 3rd and 5th graders.</p> <p>State collects local test results for students in grades 3 and 5 who are not tested with state-developed tests. These data are then transformed to a common achievement scale.</p>	<p>School test results are reported in school profile, including percentage students not meeting performance criteria in each skill area.</p> <p>Test results for students in Oregon reported to public, legislature, and other policymakers.</p>

SUMMARY OF
PROPOSED STATE TESTING PLAN

STATE
TESTING RESPONSIBILITIES

PURPOSE SERVED

State-developed high school completion tests administered, beginning in grade 10

Assure that all students receiving high school diploma possess required skills

Improve instructional programs on a school and statewide basis

Provide information to the public and state policymakers regarding the effectiveness of all public schools in the state

State tests administered to all 8th graders

Assure that all students who are not making satisfactory progress receive needed assistance

Improve instructional programs in each school

Improve instructional program on a statewide basis

Provide information to the public and state policymakers regarding the effectiveness of all public schools in the state

State tests administered to samples of students in grades 3, 5 and 11

Improve instructional programs on a statewide basis

Provide information to the public and state policymakers regarding the effectiveness of all public schools in the state.

DISTRICT
TESTING RESPONSIBILITIES

PURPOSE SERVED

Districts required to administer state-approved tests in grades 3 and 5; results reported to state

Assure that students who are not making satisfactory progress receive needed assistance

Improve instructional programs in each school

Provide information to the public and state policymakers regarding the effectiveness of all public schools in the state

District determines measures/methods for identifying students not making expected progress in grades K, 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 and 9

Assure that students who are not making satisfactory progress receive needed assistance

District determined measures for assessing program effectiveness

Improve instructional programs in each school

TIMELINES FOR STATE TESTING

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
1. Establish a state achievement scale at grades 3 and 5 for equating publishers' test Information to state achievement scale.	Spring 1986
2. Administer state-developed tests of Essential Learning Skills in reading, writing, mathematics and reasoning to a sample of 3rd, 5th and 8th graders.	Spring 1987
3. Collect local test data from all schools at grades 3 and 5.	Spring 1987 Annually thereafter
4. Administer state-developed high school completion test in reading, writing, mathematics and reasoning to a sample of 12th graders to establish criteria for passing.	Spring 1987
5. Administer state-developed test of Essential Learning Skills in reading, writing, mathematics and reasoning to a sample of 3rd and 5th and all 8th graders.	Spring 1988 Annually thereafter
6. Administer state-developed high school completion test to all 10th graders to go into effect with the class of 1992.	Fall 1988 Semi-annually thereafter
7. Begin to add additional curriculum areas to state developed tests to be given to samples of 3rd and 5th and 11th graders, and all 8th graders according to the following schedule:	
English/Language Arts	Spring 1989
Math/Science	Spring 1991
Health	Spring 1991
Social Studies	Spring 1993

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