

**OREGON'S DESIGN FOR 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS
AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING**

WORKING DRAFT

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Prepared for review and discussion by parents, teachers, school administrators, and interested others who wish to understand the impact of Oregon's new design for schools on teachers and students in classrooms. The paper is intended only as a point of departure in this regard, however, for coming to understand fully the meaning of standards-based schooling for those who live most closely with it will be a long process. The paper starts with an overview of the nature of the state's redesign for schools and its evolution from 1991 to the present.

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Preface

Nearly a decade has passed since the Oregon House and Senate Education Committees began their work on the redesign of schooling in Oregon. This work led to the adoption by the 1991 Legislative Assembly of HB 3565, which provided a blueprint of the new design. Much has happened since that time to refine that initial blueprint, and to prepare for its implementation, but we have not as yet given close attention to its consequences at the classroom level. *As of this writing there has not been a detailed analysis and description of the implications of the new design for teaching and learning.**

We are now approaching the time when the new design is to be implemented, and if implementation is to occur it will be done primarily in classrooms. And, for systemic change to occur in classrooms, both students and teachers must understand what the new design means for their work. They also must understand the consequences or obligations that accompany it. Parents, school administrators, school board members, and members of the community at large must have these understandings as well.

The purpose of this paper is to begin the analysis that so far has been missing, and to describe classroom implications in ways which parents, teachers, administrators, and others can understand. The present draft undoubtedly contains errors of omission, as well as commission in this regard, and language that obscures as much as it clarifies, but it is a start. During the course of the next several months we will be seeking suggestions for clarification and refinement.

The paper is offered as a report on "work-in-progress" rather than a defining summary. The early sections of the paper are largely descriptive and philosophical; the closing sections focus on applications and consequences. The paper draws upon the many literatures contributing to a standards-based design for teaching and learning, a long history of related work in Oregon, and the experience of a teacher actively engaged in standards-based teaching, but it is intended to be shaped in the future by the collective experience of persons so engaged--both in Oregon and elsewhere. We need to enlarge the boundaries of what is known about this still largely undefined conception of how students and teachers will work in schools designed around standards for learning rather than grades received in courses taken.

The paper as presented builds upon pieces and parts taken from other documents. Part I has been taken from a chapter prepared for a book titled *English Teaching and the New Work Place* (SUNY Press, in press), while Parts II through VI have been taken from papers prepared for a 1996 symposium sponsored by Western Oregon State College on standards-based teaching and learning. Our thanks to Mike Brott, former Superintendent in the Central and McMinnville school districts, and now co-director of the Office of Continued Professional Development at Western, and Joyce Reinke, former Assistant Superintendent for 21st Century Schools in the Oregon Department of Education and now retired, for their help in refining early drafts of our description of Oregon's design for 21st century schools. Our thanks also to Rick Dill, Christine Tell, and others within the Oregon State System of Higher Education Proficiency-Based Admission (PASS) projects for helping us understand more fully than previously the meaning of teaching and learning in the context of a standards-based system of education.

* A detailed analysis of the implications of the design for the *roles and responsibilities of teachers* was carried out several years ago as a basis for the redesign of teacher preparation and licensure in Oregon (the Western/TSPC studies of 1992 and 93), but this analysis did not extend to the specifics of teaching and learning.

PART I. An Introduction to Oregon's Design for 21st Century Schools

In June, 1991, Oregon joined the ranks of other front-running states in redesigning its schools for the 21st century. The redesign drew heavily on recommendations from then prominent national reports and from a previous decade of experience in Oregon with a "goal-based," and then "outcome-based" approach to schooling. The intent of the legislation establishing the new design (Oregon House Bill 3565) was to "...create the best educated and prepared workforce in America by the year 2000, and a workforce equal to any in the world by 2010."

With the passage of this legislation, thinking about the nature and purpose of schooling in Oregon changed dramatically. The high school diploma was to be replaced by Certificates of Initial (CIM) and Advanced (CAM) Mastery, with the CIM emphasizing general education and the CAM giving equal attention to college preparation and the transition from school to work. Expectations for student learning were to be elevated, and students were to be granted a CIM or CAM only after meeting rigorous intellectual standards. Moreover, schools were to operate on the premise that *all* students not seriously handicapped intellectually or emotionally are capable of achieving such high levels of accomplishment *if time for learning is flexible and instructional methods and resources for learning are appropriate.*

Dozens of other aspects of schooling also were to change. These included an emphasis on thinking and problem-solving by students, rather than on memory and recitation; the use of textbooks as resources for learning, rather than defining what is to be learned; and the design of assessments that ask students to apply what they have learned rather than asking them to recognize or recall answers to multiple choice items on paper and pencil tests. The state was to assemble and publish the results of these assessments, on a school-by-school basis, and then insist that schools improve instruction when student progress in learning was less than desired. Also, teachers and

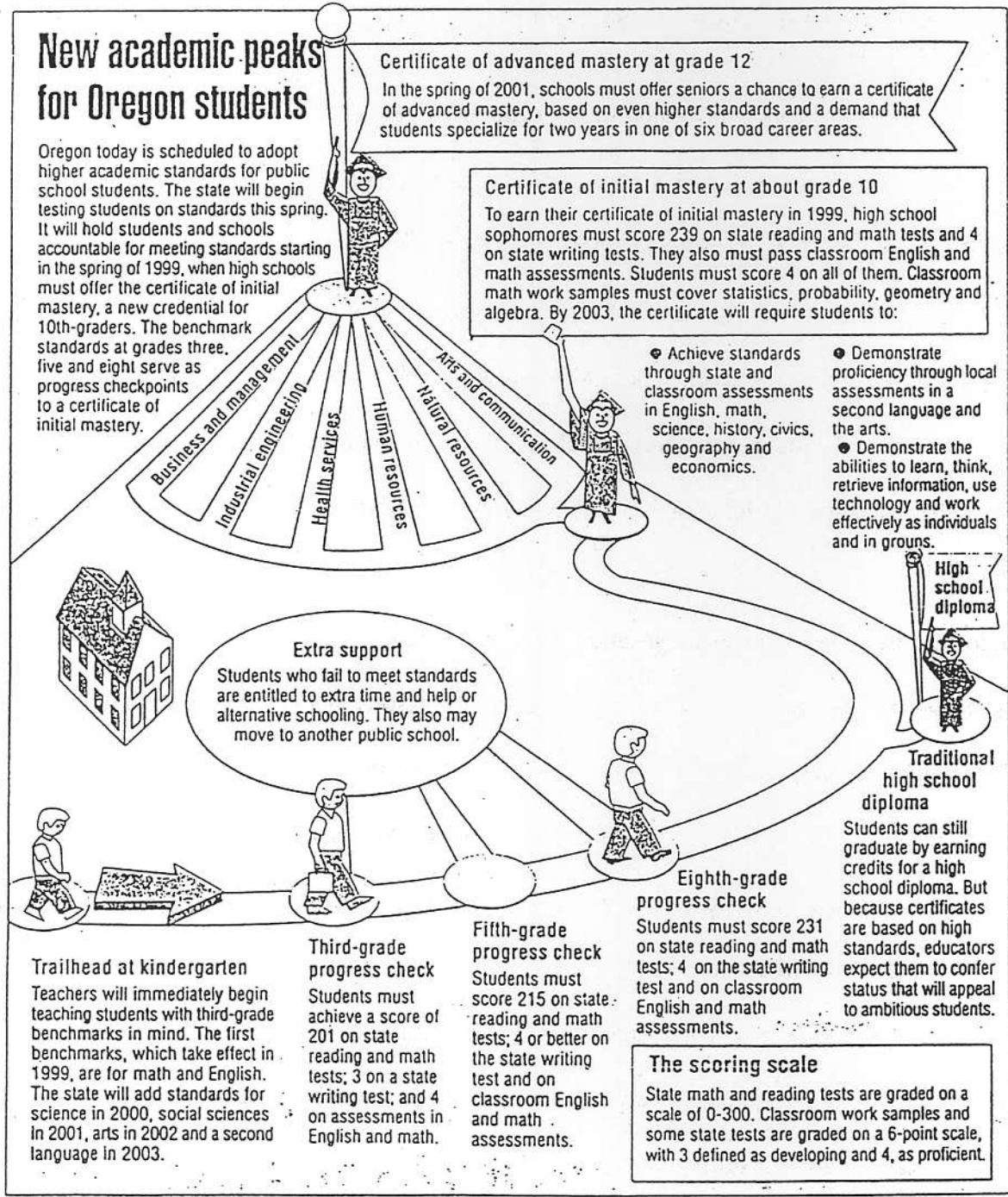
parents were to participate in decisions affecting all these matters as members of 21st century School Councils.

The greatest change of all, however, and by far the most difficult for students and teachers to grasp, was the redefinition of student learning in terms of clearly specified outcomes (proficiencies) with clearly defined performance standards (criteria) that were to be accomplished by students as they progress through school. In practical terms, this is the most fundamental meaning of a standards-based approach to schooling. This change meant that both students and teachers would have clearly defined targets for learning at particular "benchmarks" in the schooling process, and neither would be finished with their work until students had demonstrated the level of accomplishment desired. The pictorial overview of the new design shown in Figure 1, which was prepared by staff of the Oregonian this past fall (November __, 1996), captures well this essential feature of the new design.

Fortunately, the schedule of implementation established by the Legislature for the new design was staggered to accommodate the time demands of its various parts. Thus, some aspects of the design were to be implemented by 1993 (for example, 21st century School Councils), while others were not scheduled for implementation until 1997 (the CIM) or 1999 (the CAM).

As implementation progressed and the realities of the changes called for became clearer, the magnitude of the redesign also became clear. Teacher preparation and licensure had to be redesigned; curriculum from kindergarten through high school--and ultimately college--had to be restructured; and students, parents, teachers, and school administrators had to start thinking differently about the meaning of teaching and learning. Everyone involved had to start thinking in terms of *reaching designated performance standards for designated proficiencies* rather than

Figure 1



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receiving or bestowing an A, B, C, D, or F on the basis of how well one does in relation to the work of others.

The 1993 Addition of College Entry Proficiencies and Performance Standards

The 1991 design placed heavy emphasis on general education and workforce preparation, and de-emphasized the discipline-based study that characterizes most high schools today. As indicated previously the Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM) was to emphasize general education and the Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM) was to give equal attention to college preparation and the transition from school to work. The CAM also was to eliminate the "three-track system" (general, vocational, and college preparation tracks) that has characterized schools for the past hundred years by balancing emphasis on life-role preparation, workforce preparation, and college preparation.

Following passage of the new legislation the Oregon Board of Education began the task of translating the general design into specifics. For a variety of reasons they concentrated first on the CIM and the workforce preparation side of the CAM, and asked the state's higher education community to develop of the college preparation side of the CAM. As a point of departure in this task, college educators agreed to *define college entry-level proficiencies and performance standards* (the PASS system) as a bridge to a K-16 "seamless" system of education. These standards for college entry have been defined and are to go into effect by the year 2001. As of that date student admission to Oregon s publicly supported colleges and universities will begin to depend on proficiency demonstration, while courses taken, credit hours earned, GPAs, and SAT scores will begin to be phased out as criteria for entry.

The 1995 Return to Discipline-Anchored Proficiencies and Performance Standards

As elsewhere in the nation, the elections of 1994 changed the composition of Oregon's legislature, and conservative forces affecting school reform took root within the state. These forces changed Oregon's 1991 school redesign appreciably but, to the lasting credit of legislative leaders and the Governor, without sacrificing its many strengths. The concept of Certificates of Initial and Advanced Mastery were retained, as were their emphases on performance standards and applied learning, but districts must once again issue diplomas as evidence that students have completed their public school education. Course credits and grades (A, B, C, etc.) also were reinstated, and knowledge *acquisition* as well as knowledge *application* is to be emphasized.

Another major policy shift that occurred in 1995 called for *academic learning and achievement to replace workforce development and the prevention of human and social problems* as the primary purpose of Oregon's K-12 educational system. The 1991 emphasis on workforce preparation and the enhancement of human development are not excluded in the 1995 design, but they are not at its center.

Finally, in keeping with the standards-based movement nationally, traditional academic disciplines resume their primacy as frames of reference for curriculum, standard-setting, and assessment. Cross-disciplinary and applied learning outcomes are still part of the picture, but they do not dominate the design. The 1991 design had called for learning outcomes that deliberately blurred distinctions among disciplines. This renewed emphasis on the disciplines requires that learning outcomes now be structured around *academic content standards*. These parallel and reflect the various content standards being developed nationally, but include *process* outcomes as well. Speaking, listening, group problem-solving, and use of technology are examples.

In keeping with these changes, the 1995 Legislative Assembly also directed that the emerging statewide assessment system be modified to emphasize content-based assessments as well as performance-based assessments, and that a distinction be made between what students must *prove* they know in contrast to what they have only had *an opportunity* to learn and demonstrate they know. Also, districts must convey clearly to parents each year a student's progress toward achieving the content and performance standards that have been established.

A Glimpse at Proficiency Requirements

Space does not permit a full listing of the proficiencies students are to demonstrate to receive a CIM or a CAM, or gain admission to a publicly supported college or university, but these are illustrated in Appendix A and B.* Table 1 provides an overview of the subject areas in which these fall and how they are differentiated by what students need to *prove* in contrast to what they have an *opportunity* to learn and demonstrate. Proficiency requirements for a CAM are designed to add depth, breadth and higher performance standards to the same subject areas pursued for a CIM, but include proficiencies in the areas of life-role preparation and career related learning as well. Proficiency requirements for entry to a college or university parallel and extend all of the subject areas listed in Table 1. In combination, these areas of study represent a school curriculum far richer and more diverse than most students in Oregon now experience, and far more demanding when designated proficiencies within each subject area are to be demonstrated at clearly defined levels of accomplishment.

* Complete listings of the proficiencies involved at all levels of schooling are available upon request from the Oregon Department of Education.

Table 1. Student Performance & Curriculum Requirements, K-10, 1995*

CIM-Linked Requirements		Other Curriculum-Related Requirements
<p>What students must PROVE they know and can do in relation to state achievement standards:</p> <p><u>Key Academic Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read • Write • Problem Solve • Reason • Communicate <p><u>Subject-Area Content and Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics • Science • History • Geography • Civics • English • Economics • A Second Language ** 	<p>What students must HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN AND DEMONSTRATE THEY CAN DO, but not necessarily prove in terms of state achievement standards:</p> <p><u>General Academic Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn • Think • Retrieve information • Use technology • Work effectively as individuals and as an individual in a group setting 	<p>What students must RECEIVE INSTRUCTION in, but not necessarily prove or demonstrate in terms of state achievement standards:</p> <p><u>Individual and Life-Role Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge/skills in health and physical education and the arts • Knowledge/skills to live in a constitutional republic, a participatory democracy and in a multicultural nation and world • Knowledge/skills to succeed in the world of work, as members of families and as a citizen • Knowledge/skills to take responsibility for own decisions and choices

* Adapted from information prepared by Dr. Glen Fielding, Assistant to the Superintendent, Willamette Education Service.

** Prior to the end of the 2000-2001 school year, all students who have completed grade 12 shall have completed at least 2 years of second language instruction and shall demonstrate the level of proficiency required by local school boards. Individual students may be granted a waiver, however, based on criteria set by a local board.

The content standards illustrated in Appendix A and B provide only the broad framework within which specific proficiencies are specified and performance standards established. The content standards listed for Reading, for example, in addition to being assessed through multiple-choice items on state developed paper and pencil tests, have been translated into the proficiency statements and performance standards shown below. The mathematics example shown on the next page takes the same form and requires the same information about performance even though it draws on totally different content knowledge and skills. The scale used to score all *performance assessments* is the scale appearing at the bottom of page 9.

CIM-Linked Proficiencies and Performance Standards for Reading (approximately Grade 10)	Scale Score Needed To Meet The Standard	Scale Scores Exceeding the Standard
Read three literary and informative grade level selections. Show the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehend main ideas and supporting details and understand the overall meaning of the selection. • Relate the selection to personal experiences, other texts, issues, and events. • Analyze and evaluate the author s ideas and techniques. • Analyze and evaluate the selection’s relationship with historical, social, cultural and political events and issues 	4 4 4 4	5, 6 5, 6 5, 6 5, 6

CIM-Linked Proficiencies and Performance Standards for Mathematics (approximately Grade 10)	Scale Score Needed To Meet The Standard	Scale Scores Exceeding the Standard
<p>Within five mathematical problems, solve accurately and demonstrate understanding of statistics and probability, algebraic relationships and geometry. In each, show the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the mathematical concepts present in the problem. • Use of appropriate mathematical processes and strategies to solve the problem. • Review of the work and support for the reasonableness of the results. • Clear communication of the steps to the solutions(s). 	<p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p>	<p>5, 6</p> <p>5, 6</p> <p>5, 6</p> <p>5, 6</p>

Common Scale Used in Scoring Performance on All Assessment Tasks

- 6 Exemplary** Work at this level is both exceptional and memorable. It shows distinctive and sophisticated application of knowledge and skills.
- 5 Strong** Work at this level exceeds the standard. It shows a thorough and effective application of knowledge and skills.
- 4 Proficient** Work at this level meets the standard. It is acceptable work that demonstrates application of essential knowledge and skills. Minor errors or omissions do not detract from the overall quality.
- 3 Developing** Work at this level does not yet meet the standard. It shows basic, but inconsistent application of knowledge and skills. Minor errors or omissions detract from the overall quality. Work needs further development.
- 2 Emerging** Work at this level shows a partial application of knowledge and skills. It is superficial, fragmented, or incomplete and needs considerable development. Work at this level contains errors or omissions.
- 1 Beginning** Work at this level shows little or no application of knowledge and skills. It contains major errors or omissions.

As indicated, both multiple choice tests and performance examinations have been developed by the Oregon Board of Education to assess each proficiency to be demonstrated, with performance standards established separately for each form of assessment. "Cut scores" are established for performance on the multiple choice tests which meet the level of accomplishment desired. The six point scale shown on the previous page that is used to assess performance on applied performance tasks is used by teachers individually in their own classrooms and by the teams of teachers the Oregon Department of Education assembles each year to score state-administered performance tasks.

To insure students are able to meet the CIM standards by approximately the 10th grade, CIM-linked proficiencies and performance standards have been established for the "benchmark grades" of 3, 5, and 8. A proficiency-related assessment system also has been developed at these grade levels so that parents and teachers will be able to see clearly the learning progress being made by each child. While students are not required to meet standards at these benchmark grades to proceed with their education, failure to do so will bring special resources--and, if need be, place a child in an alternative learning environment--to assist in proficiency acquisition.

Special help for students encountering problems in learning is an important feature in the redesign. Oregon is committed to each student's success in learning, despite the state's high expectations and high standards. The failure of a student to meet learning standards in Oregon is viewed as a failure of a school or district.

Oregon's decision to define the success of schools in terms of each student departs significantly from definitions of success in most other state systems. Typically *the average achievement of students in a school* is used to label a school "successful". In the Oregon redesign, schools are labeled successful only if *each child* succeeds.

A Further Look at Proficiency Assessment

The emerging design for proficiency assessment in Oregon consists of three parts: a state-managed component; a district or school-managed component; and a teacher-managed component. These components are essentially independent in their operation, but function in a manner that makes them mutually supportive. This interdependence is possible because all parts of the system are based on the same set of proficiencies, on a common set of performance standards governing proficiency demonstration, and on a binding agreement that information from all parts of the assessment system be taken into account when evaluating a student's proficiency level.

The state-managed component. This component has been discussed previously, and little more needs to be said about it. It consists of annually administered examinations by the Oregon Board of Education at grades 3, 5, 8, 10, and 12 in all publicly supported schools. Approximately half of each examination consists of multiple choice questions that are machine scored; the other half consists of applied performance tasks of the kind previously discussed that teams of teachers score against detailed scoring guides ("rubrics"). The information coming from these examinations is reported to schools in three forms: Individual student profiles; student profiles for each classroom; and student profiles across classrooms at each benchmark level assessed for a school profile. School profile information is made available to the state as a whole in the form of an annual report card on the success of each school in fostering the level of learning desired in each subject area assessed. Information reported for individual students is to be included in the "portfolio" of evidence students are to assemble to inform proficiency decisions.

The district/school-managed component. This component consists of a common set of performance tasks developed by the Board of Education that districts/schools are to use to supplement the information they obtain on student progress through state-administered

examinations. Like the tasks appearing in the state examinations, these tasks also focus on the specific proficiencies to be developed within academic content areas, and are provided for grades 3, 5, 8, 10, and 12. While the number of such tasks to be administered by a school, the conditions governing their use (i.e., when and how often they are to be administered), and how and by whom they are to be scored have yet to be established, the intent is clear. They are to supplement the "common-base" of information each school has on the academic growth of its students, and help pinpoint the progress each student is making toward the proficiencies he or she must demonstrate to receive a CIM or a CAM, or be accepted into a college or university. Performance on each of these tasks is scored on the 6-point scale described previously, and must be a part of a student's "portfolio" of evidence assembled to inform proficiency related decisions.

The teacher-managed component. This component consists of evidence obtained through classroom tests, assignments, projects, etc., that bear upon the demonstration of a particular proficiency by a student. As presently planned multiple student work samples, along with an acceptable level of performance on state-administered examinations and school-administered performance tasks, will be required for the successful demonstration of a proficiency. These classroom-generated exhibitions of proficiency will form the third, and by far the largest, line of evidence assembled by a student in his or her portfolio of evidence supporting proficiency related decisions.

Notes on Performance Standards

With a proficiency assessment system consisting of three parts, and each part managed by a different entity, the question of who decides whether a student is or is not proficient quickly comes to the fore. As with other issues surrounding assessment and performance standards, we are not yet certain about who will be involved in this decision or how it will be made. Initial discussions,