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### 3. Proposed Essential Skills and Sample Indicators for Discussion

State Board of Education Retreat  
August 23 - 25, 2006  
Oregon Department of Education



High School Diploma

The State Board of Education has proposed Essential Skills as a requirement for the diploma. These are skills that cut across the curriculum and are essential for preparing students for next steps - the workforce, higher education, private career schools, apprenticeships, or the military.

As per the State Board's request, ODE staff has developed sample indicators to provide greater clarity around the Board's proposed Essential Skills and what students would do to demonstrate proficiency. If the State Board adopts a policy concerning Essential Skills, ODE will engage stakeholders in a process to identify the skills and indicators. ODE suggests that Essential Skills may be derived from existing Oregon standards and assessments rather than creating a new set of skills or a new layer of assessment.

#### Background

Currently in Oregon Revised Statute 329.045 the State Board of Education is required to periodically review and revise the Essential Learning Skills. The current Essential Learning Skills, listed in Oregon Administrative Rule 581-022-0102 are:

- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics
- Listening
- Speaking
- Study Skills
- Reasoning (including the scientific method)

Oregon's content standards were originally developed, in part, to address these essential learning skills and there are numerous ties to these essential skills in the current content standards.

In addition, the State Board adopted Career-Related Learning Standards (CRLS) in December 1998. These standards were developed with business and industry partners through the workforce regions across the state. Demonstration of these standards is required for the diploma beginning with the class of 2007 and they consist of:

- Personal Management
- Problem Solving
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Employment Foundations
- Career Development

The State Board has been discussing Essential Skills for the diploma, and has arrived at the following *tentative* list for input:

- Read and interpret a variety of texts
- Write for a variety of purposes
- Public speaking and presentation
- Use of technology tools
- Apply critical and analytical thinking
- Creative and innovative thinking
- Problem solving
- Apply mathematics in a variety of settings
- Apply scientific inquiry
- Managing personal health and wellness
- Collaborative decision making and teamwork
- Civic and community responsibility
- Global literacy
- Financial literacy and planning

### State Board Proposed Essential Skills and Sample Indicators

**Key:** The following sample indicators have been taken or adapted from existing content standards and postsecondary preparation standards, or adapted from national essential skills lists, such as those from the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills. These sources are documented as follows:

21<sup>st</sup> = Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills  
 AR = The Arts CIM standards  
 CRLS = Career-Related Learning standards  
 ELA = English Language Arts CIM standards  
 HE = Health Education CIM standards  
 MA = Math CIM standards

PE= Physical Education CIM standards  
 PS = Postsecondary preparation standards (Ex: PS ELA means postsecondary prep in English)  
 SC = Science CIM standards  
 SS = Social Sciences CIM standards  
 Tech = Technology Common Curriculum Goals

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## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

### **Read and interpret a variety of texts**

- Read informational texts and identify key facts and information [ELA]
- Compare and contrast information on the same topic taken from several sources [SS]
- Analyze arguments for logic and validity [ELA]

### **Write for a variety of purposes**

- Write expository, persuasive and technical reports [ELA]
- Organize writing in coherent sentences, making connections and transitions among ideas [ELA, PS ELA]
- Develop, support and convey clear, focused ideas in a manner appropriate to the topic, audience and purpose [PS ELA]

### **Public speaking and presentation**

- Present and support a clear thesis statement, choosing a logical pattern of organization including an effective beginning, smooth transitions and a strong closure [ELA, PS ELA]
- Formulate rational arguments and apply the art of persuasion and debate [ELA]
- Effectively integrate forms of communication into multimedia presentations [PS ELA]

**Use of technology tools**

- Use a variety of informational access tools to locate, gather, and organize potential sources of information [21<sup>st</sup>]
- Demonstrate competency in using word processing software and spreadsheets [21<sup>st</sup> and Tech]
- Use technological tools to produce charts, tables and graphs [21<sup>st</sup>]

**THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS**

**Apply critical and analytical thinking**

- Identify and frame topics and questions and plan and conduct research [PS ELA]
- Gather evidence, using primary and secondary sources and distinguish among facts, inferences and opinions [SS]
- Differentiate among reasoning based on fact versus reasoning based on opinions, emotional appeals, or other persuasive techniques [ELA]
- Write research reports that support a thesis or convey information [ELA]

**Creative and innovative thinking**

- Develop, implement and communicate new ideas to others [21<sup>st</sup>]
- Explain choices made in the creative process when combining ideas, techniques and problem solving [AR]
- Be responsive to new and diverse perspectives [21<sup>st</sup>]

**Problem solving**

- Define and explain a complex event, issue, problem or phenomenon [SS, MA, SC]
- Locate and analyze information that may lead to solutions [CRLS]
- Consider and choose among various strategies, algorithms and concepts to select and explain a proposed solution or course of action [MA and CRLS]
- Develop a plan to implement the proposed solution and justify the approach [CRLS]
- Review the solution and judge its validity, effectiveness, and reasonableness [MA, SS]

**Apply mathematics in a variety of settings**

- Create charts, tables and graphs to display data, draw inferences and make predictions [PS MA]
- Know when and how to collect and analyze data, as well as understand and critique statistical arguments [PS MA]
- Use patterns and functions, including trigonometric and exponential functions, to represent relationships and to model and solve problems [PS MA]

**Apply scientific inquiry**

- Conduct careful observations and produce detailed descriptions of various phenomena [SC]
- Formulate a hypothesis to explain an observed phenomenon [SC]
- Use the hypothesis to predict the existence of other phenomena, or to predict quantitatively the results of new observations [SC]
- Design and perform experimental tests of the predictions [SC]
- Analyze and communicate results and modify the hypothesis, if necessary, based on the results of the experiments [SC]

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## INTERPERSONAL AND SELF-DIRECTIONAL SKILLS

### Managing personal health and wellness

- Assess and analyze personal health and wellness status [PE]
- Set and meet short- and long-term goals that promote healthy living [HE]
- Demonstrate personal responsibility to follow procedures that enhance health and reduce risk. [HE]

### Collaborative decision making and teamwork

- Demonstrate teamwork and leadership, including the skills of negotiation, compromise and consensus building [CRLS]
- Adapt to varied roles and responsibilities, work productively with others, and respect diverse perspectives [21<sup>st</sup>]
- Take responsibility for decisions and actions, and anticipate consequences of decisions and actions [CRLS]

### Civic and community responsibility

- Understand the civic responsibilities of U.S. citizens and how they are met [SS]
- Analyze and evaluate the impact of economic, cultural or environmental change [SS]
- Understand the local and global implications of civic decisions [21<sup>st</sup>]

### Global literacy

- Understand how various forms of government function in different situations. [SS]
- Understand the purposes and functions of major international organizations, both economic and political, and the role of the United States in them. [SS]
- Work collaboratively with others in a diverse workforce. [21<sup>st</sup>]
- Study a second language as a tool for understanding other nations and cultures [21<sup>st</sup>]

### Financial literacy and planning

- Understand the potential risks and returns of various investment opportunities [SS]
- Understand the risks and benefits to the use of credit [SS]
- Know how to make appropriate personal economic choices [21<sup>st</sup>]
- Understand the role of the economy and the role of business in the economy [21<sup>st</sup>]