

# 134 Accountability for Student Achievement in the Oregon School District

## Board of Education Position Paper

September, 2003

Once transformational philosophy and practices become accepted behaviors of teachers, there emerges a need to reorganize the school environment and align the policies and practices that support it. This, then, perpetuates the journey toward *continuous improvement*. The goal of the Oregon School system is to develop as a *collaborative team* and to accept that the idea of change should not be viewed with apprehension but rather as status quo.

Curriculum Coordinating Council Position Paper, adopted by the Oregon Board of Education, 8/92 (emphasis added)

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Oregon School District has a long history of setting high academic expectations. We believe the District has been successful in meeting these expectations. Defining “success” in a public school system, however, is hard to do and is currently the subject of much national debate. In the last few years, federal and state governments have increased their roles in defining and measuring accountability in public schools. The current public focus on educational success often fixates solely on the results of standardized testing.

The Oregon School Board and our community believe that educational success means much more than simply scores on standardized tests. The purpose of this paper is to define success within the context of our District and how we will measure it.

The District began consideration of this task in 1989, resulting in the adoption of a standards-based curriculum and a commitment toward a process of continuous improvement. The essence of this process is reflected in the statement which heads this paper and we affirm the principle embodied in it; namely, that “accountability” in our District is best defined and understood as a process and not by fixed, arbitrary targets.

Our “continuous improvement” model defines “accountability” as a collaborative process. In this sense, the analysis of “accountability” begins with the understanding that the Board, administration, site councils, teachers and staff, students, parents and

community each have a specific role in building and sustaining our commitment to student success in the District. We are all accountable within the process of continuously improving the education of our children. A further goal of this paper is to identify the roles each of us plays in the process.

## **II. THE STATUS OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN THE DISTRICT**

In 1988, the Oregon School District started a purposeful and progressive journey toward “continuous improvement” as the vehicle upon which our mission is driven. In 1992, the Board identified the following elements as important to the continuous improvement process:

1. A clearly defined mission statement shared by all members of the District;
2. Clearly defined exit outcomes and curricula designed to ensure achievement of the outcomes;
3. Methods for assessment that are aligned with the outcomes;
4. A commitment to collect and analyze data;
5. A long-term view of the improvement process;
6. Involvement by all staff;
7. Available resources to train staff in data collection and analysis and curriculum development and effective teaching practices; and,
8. A willingness to scrutinize and change.

       In 1988, the District addressed the first element of continuous improvement through a strategic planning committee. It collaborated to write a District Mission Statement that was adopted by the Board in 1989:

The mission of the Oregon School District is to educate the student by helping students acquire the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to achieve their individual potential, to contribute to a changing society and to be receptive to learning as a lifelong process. The mission will be accomplished by delivering a high quality program through the joint efforts of students, staff, parents and community.

In 1992, the Board adopted “Outcome Based Education” as the philosophical model for the delivery of curriculum. This change to a standards-based delivery system permitted the District to create K-12 aligned District and curricular outcomes for the

assessment of student achievement (point number two from above). In May 1994, the Board approved District Exit Outcomes and followed their adoption by creating in October 1996 a list of expectations that included the directive that District students achieve proficiency in all curricular outcomes. Since 1996, the District has been in the process of adopting outcomes for all courses in the District and further aligning its curriculum with state mandated standards. That task is now complete.

The “continuous improvement” model (points 3, 4 and 5) anticipates that student achievement data will be collected, analyzed and reported to the administration, Board and community. The purpose of that data collection and analysis is to aid in the continuous improvement of student achievement by informing curricular change, instructional practices and budget allocations.

The District currently collects a significant amount of data on student achievement. In addition, governmental agencies have also mandated the collection of student achievement data, primarily in the form of standardized test results, to measure student achievement and to provide a measure of “accountability” to the public. This latter data includes the state mandated Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations, which were not in place at the start of our continuous improvement process. The federal government has recently mandated annual testing for grades three through eight to begin in 2005. The Board annually receives data from the District schools in their building profiles as well as from the administration in periodic reports of standardized test results for our students.

Because of increasing external pressure to hold districts accountable for student performance, the assessment of data and its analysis has become critical in improving student achievement. In our journey towards continuous improvement and the development of this paper, we have come to understand that the District has not yet addressed:

1. The data measurements it believes are relevant and significant to the assessment of student achievement in the District, as defined by our Mission and Outcomes; (points 3, 4, and 5); and,
2. How those measurements should be tied to decision-making within the District (points 5, 6, 7 and 8).

In order to determine which data measurements are relevant and how they tie in with District decision-making, we need to answer one question: What constitutes success in our District?

### **III. WHAT IS SUCCESS IN THE OREGON SCHOOL DISTRICT?**

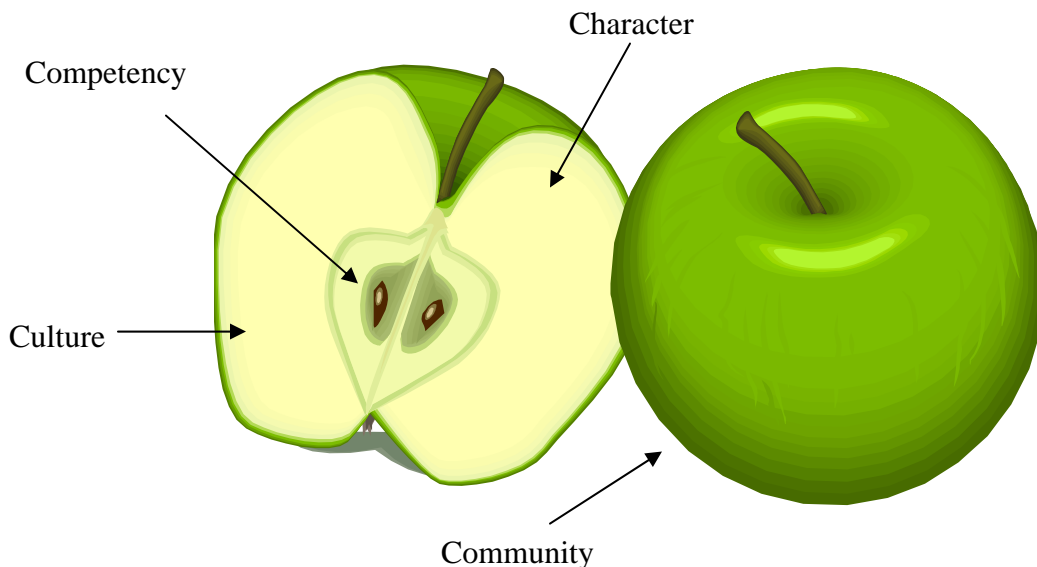
Organizational effectiveness is determined by the extent to which an organization achieves its mission. Attempting to measure the success of the Oregon School District in light of its Mission Statement, therefore, means more than simply assessing acquisition of

knowledge and skills. With this in mind, the Board created an Accountability Task Force in 2002. Its charge included the identification of potential indicators of District success. Review of the District Mission Statement and the Exit Outcomes served as a starting point as it began its work. After careful consideration, the Task Force concluded the District's Mission Statement and Exit Outcomes continued to be viable statements of our community's values. The Board similarly reaffirmed these documents as the core indicators of success in the District.

Focusing on these documents, the Task Force developed four categories of indicators of success at the District level:

1. Competency - particularly in the areas of reading, math, and writing;
2. Culture - defined as a safe environment within which to support learning and help children make good, healthy, safe, and respectful choices;
3. Character - defined as honesty, integrity, respect, responsible behavior, and appropriate social skills; and
4. Community - defined by the ways in which the community and the District support each other.

The Board understands that these four categories are interrelated in a complex way. We choose to place Competency as the core indicator of success. Character and Culture are directly supportive of Competency. Since we have less direct control over the Community indicators, we view them differently. We reaffirm, however, that schools, homes and community are interrelated. One way to visualize this relationship is to use an "apple of learning":



In this model, Competency is the core around which the whole fruit grows. Character and Culture surround, support and nourish that core. Community support is the skin of the fruit that holds all the pieces together. Clearly to have the best product, all four of these elements must be present and complete.

The Board rejects the notion that District success can be measured by Competency alone. Although identifying and utilizing appropriate measures of Culture, Character, and Community are more difficult, we believe that a District is less than fully successful if it graduates students who are academically competent, but are deficient in the other areas. It is in these latter areas that the students, parents and community play a significant role in the development of a successful person.

#### **IV. HOW WILL SUCCESS BE MEASURED IN THE OREGON SCHOOL DISTRICT?**

Because Competency is the factor that the District has the greatest ability to control and is at the core of what we define as “success,” we anticipate that most of the District’s attention and focus will be on this factor. There are a number of different ways to measure Competency as evidenced by the different forms of data we generate with respect to each student. In a standards-based district, students’ progress in any curricular area is measured by mastery of outcomes. This criteria-based model evaluates students based upon an established standard and not in relation to how other students are evaluated (i.e., a normative-based model). Outcome assessment records mastery of skills over time, in contrast to standardized testing which provides a limited snapshot of student competency in any curricular area at a specific point in time.

The Board believes the best continuing and ongoing measure of student competency in our District is evaluation by curricular and District outcomes. We believe that a standards-based curriculum, aligned with mandated state curricular standards, is more appropriately suited to our continuous improvement model than an accountability model focused primarily on grades or test scores.

Our standards-based curriculum is modeled upon the ability to master content over time. Learning and mastery in our system are not time-based concepts. We place great faith in our professional staff’s ability and desire to make sure each student in our District is given every opportunity to master District and state required curricular outcomes. Measuring success by tests which focus on mastery at specific points in time fails to recognize that our system is based upon the fundamental notion that students achieve mastery through different means and at different rates.

The use of standardized tests as the sole or significant measure of student achievement also has several other weaknesses:

- A student who scores at the advanced level on the 4<sup>th</sup> grade WKCE test would be included at the highest level of achievement in the annual reporting of the test results. If the same student were to score at the proficient level on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade

WKCE test, the student would again be reported out as a District success notwithstanding the lack of progress the student has made in the District over the course of four years. In contrast, a student who tests at a minimal level in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and at the basic level in 8<sup>th</sup> grade would be a District success despite the fact that the student would be viewed in the annual reporting of WKCE scores as a District negative;

- Changes occur year-to-year in standardized test formats and in the content they measure, the time the tests are given and the raw score thresholds for determining advanced and proficient student scores (the current labels utilized for defining “success”). This has made year-to-year comparison between classes meaningless;
- Different classes consist of different students. Rather than compare this year’s class to last year’s class or comparing different schools to each other, the more meaningful measure would be to measure a student’s or grade’s progress over time (the continuous improvement model); and
- A certain amount of variation in student test results is expected given the difference in the students being tested. This expected variance in scores for different schools or classes may not be statistically significant when results are viewed on a year-to-year basis; however, it is often portrayed as such in media reporting.

This does not mean that we place no value on standardized tests. Test scores provide us with relevant information about the level of our students’ curricular competency at specific points in time. While we choose to believe that our teachers’ ongoing assessment of student achievement and competency is the best means of measuring success, test data provides us with important information in assessing Competency within our system and serves as a check and balance on a number of factors. Test scores can assist us in these primary ways:

- To assess at specific points in time whether students display grade-appropriate levels of competencies, skills, and knowledge and whether those are minimal, basic, proficient or advanced based on uniform state standards;
- To assess whether students are demonstrating progress during the course of their education;
- To provide teachers and sites with data to analyze how student achievement can be improved in our continuous improvement model;
- To provide teachers with accurate information about student competencies in order to identify students needing specific assistance or challenge in specific subject areas;
- To help us evaluate where changes in our curriculum may be appropriate; and

- To help us identify effective teaching strategies.

While the preceding discussion has focused on Competency, it is not meant to diminish the other factors that define a successful District student. However, the measurement of Culture, Character, and Community is more difficult than Competency. Each relies on more factors outside the District's control and do not have the same type of historical, objective measures of success as Competency. Because of the recent attention given to the measurement of Competency by other entities, we felt compelled to address in more depth what we as a District believe is the appropriate measure of academic competency.

Both the Board and the Accountability Task Force spent much time trying to determine measures of success in the areas of Culture, Character and Community. We realize there are myriad ways in which we might measure these factors or their antecedents and that the apples may take different shapes depending on grade level, building culture and outside influences. Because of this, we believe the definition and measurement of Culture, Character and Community are collaborative tasks to be accomplished by District stakeholders within the process we articulate below. As we proceed in this process, we will be asking the sites to help us identify appropriate measures of Culture, Character and Community.

## **V. HOW WILL THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROCESS BE IMPLEMENTED?**

Just as defining success required us to look at where we have been as a District, our starting point on how to implement the continuous improvement process is best focused on the development of the decision-making process in the District. We believe that any valid decision-making model should be an accurate reflection of the relationships among the stakeholders involved in the process. One of the reasons we disfavor normative assessment standards in measuring success is because they tend to focus on accountability in a negative context, either by searching for failure in other stakeholders or by focusing on score attainment as opposed to content mastery. In either case, there are by definition winners and losers. The continuous improvement model avoids this negative connotation of accountability, both in how we measure success and in how we implement the process in a decision-making model. In the end we seek to create a trusting collaborative relationship between the Board, administration, professional staff, students, parent and community.

Our decision-making model has evolved over time. In 1995, the Board, administration and teachers' union entered into the Village Partnership Agreement which defined the decision-making responsibilities among these three anchors. In conjunction with the Agreement, although not spelled out in the document itself, was the establishment of "site based" decision-making in the District. In each District building, a site council was created consisting of representatives of the staff, administrators and

community. The goal in creating the Village Partnership and site councils was to have decisions be collaboratively made at the most fundamental level appropriate for the issue in question.

In October 1998, the Board reaffirmed its commitment to the site council model and specifically charged the sites as follows:

The councils are to be given a significant mission: do everything they can to make sure our students maximize their potential. Simply put, the site council's goal is student achievement. In today's outcome-based educational environment, and recognizing varying learning needs of children from complex families, the teacher's can't do it all. Our district dollars can't even insure it. It will take people, coming together to creatively use the limited money we have to find additional resources, parental commitment and support for teachers and staff.

The Board was asked two years ago to address whether it still believed in site based decision-making and we met with each council to explore this issue with them. We found that site based decision-making was firmly entrenched in the buildings and that each of the sites was developing its own identity different from other sites. It was also apparent that the sites had independently come to the realization that their efforts were best focused on the maximization of student achievement in their building. Since then, we have annually seen an increased focus in the building profiles on goals established by data evaluation.

Thus, the District's decision-making model has evolved into a collaborative system in which student achievement is the cornerstone. While this precisely dovetails with our intent to develop a continuous improvement model for student achievement, we have not as a District formally integrated our intent to utilize a standards-based curriculum and assessment process of success into our decision-making rubric.

We have found such a vehicle in a model advocated by Douglas B. Reeves, PhD. of the Center for Performance Assessment. His system is based upon a standards-based evaluation program, which our District already has in place. In such a system, Reeves advocates a tiered approach to the assessment of student achievement.

His first tier is the establishment of select system-wide indicators of success. These indicators are those which most broadly reflect the shared values and goals of the District; i.e., those indicators which most reflect the District's definition of a successful student. The District will utilize these system-wide indicators to establish District-wide goals for the coming year(s).

The next tier consists of school-based indicators linked to the achievement of the system-wide goals. These indicators are specific to each school and represent strategies in the building and in each classroom leading to the attainment of system-wide goals. If the system-wide indicators measure the effects of District-wide practices (i.e., measure District "success"), the building indicators are the causes of those effects and represent



strategies to achieve those desired effects. Reeves' model also includes a third tier, which we interpret to be a building-specific narrative of data collected by the building relative to the building level indicators; in other words, a description of the building level factors which influenced the building level indicators.

Reeves' system envisions an annual District accountability report which analyzes the system-wide and building level indicators each year. This data-based summary focuses on the following questions:

1. What were the goals?
2. What was the performance related to the goals?
3. What was the performance compared to previous years?
4. What strategies worked well to improve student achievement?
5. What does the information in the accountability report tell us about how to improve student achievement?

At the building level, Reeves advocates more frequent data reviews, e.g., quarterly, to search for associations between system-wide and building level indicators.

The Reeves' model fits our District well. Our commitment to continuous improvement based upon the assessment of data asks essentially the same five questions set forth above. His use of a system-wide/building level goals process supports our site-based decision-making model. Using this framework, the Board will establish system-wide goals consistent with our District's definition of success and will leave it to the sites (i.e., our building level administrators, professional staff, parents and community) to establish strategies and goals for each building to meet the system-wide goals. The data reported each year regarding student achievement will be analyzed in the context of these goals and will drive decision-making in the District as well as the establishment of new goals for the succeeding year.

More specifically, the process will be as follows:

1. The Board will annually establish system-wide goals for the District. These goals shall address the following factors as they relate to our students: Competency, Culture, Character and Community. As noted above, the goals will primarily address issues of Competency, particularly as it relates to District and curricular outcomes, but will also address goals in each of the other three areas.
2. The buildings will establish building level goals and strategies to achieve the system-wide goals.
3. The buildings will assemble data relevant to the building level and system-wide goals and report that data to the Board. The data report shall also include a narrative of the factors which the building's staff believes were significant to data reported.

4. The Board will review the data from the buildings as well as other system-wide data of relevance. The Board will then utilize that data in its decision-making process on the budget and other policy issues. The Board will also use the data to review the system-wide goals and indicators and establish them for the following year. The buildings will use these District-wide goals to set their building goals. The Board shall annually issue a document to the public which reports on the District's progress towards achieving the goals and outlines strategies for the following year.

Through this process, the District will focus on continuous improvement of student achievement in the District. The process will be driven by data, as further understood by narrative reports from our buildings, which will be annually reviewed District-wide in an ongoing assessment of how to improve student achievement in the District. This model will aid in creating a collaborative atmosphere in two ways. First, it defines the areas in which each constituent sector of the District has primary responsibility. The role of the Board is to set District-wide goals and to enact policy and budgets in the context of these goals. At the building levels, administrators, staff, teachers and community are to work collaboratively within the context of the site-based system to establish site-based goals consistent with the District goals. To the extent that these building level goals are focused on Competency issues, we anticipate the professional staff will collaborate amongst each other, either in subject areas, grade levels or building level, to find the best practices to influence improved student achievement. In areas in which parental and community input is important, particularly in the areas of Culture, Character and Community, the site councils need to collaborate with these sectors to establish and meet their goals.

Second, since we define success in terms of a process and create a process which requires the District constituents to collaborate and share information to increase student achievement, none of the sectors can be "successful" unless all work together. No one stands to gain anything by another sector's difficulties. If we don't all work together, we all fail.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

In this model, in which change is status quo, we hope that our professional staff will undertake new initiatives and strategies to improve student achievement. We anticipate some efforts may be more successful than others. The analysis of the data derived from our endeavors and the development of new goals are part of the learning process. We expect our teachers to learn from their initiatives just as we expect such from our students.

The continuous improvement structure is not being established as a performance appraisal of our teachers. We have professional development and mentoring programs to ensure that our teachers have every opportunity to enhance their abilities to educate our children. We expect our principals and mentors to insure teachers are using proven

instructional practices and strategies. The continuous improvement structure and its results are considered tools with which individual teachers, and teachers in collaboration, can use the classroom to research, learn, and implement practices and strategies to enhance student learning.

Our District has long used the motto “All can” as a way to express our belief that all students can learn to their potential. We also recognize that some students choose not to try. Despite this reality, we regret the loss of the potential of a child to be a productive and successful member of our community. Because of the importance of each child, we must include those who choose not to learn. We believe and expect teachers will use learning data along with their skills as educators to reach and engage all children, including those who are choosing not to succeed. We maintain the fundamental expectation that our professional staff will dedicate their efforts to enable all of our students to reach their fullest potential.

The recently mandated external measurements of student achievement were adopted under the rationale that schools should be held accountable to the public that funds those schools. The continuous improvement model emphasizes success and the means by which performance can be improved at all levels throughout the District. The model emphasizes collegiality, trust and professionalism. We believe that assessment models that focus on failure in our professional staff and our students are counterproductive and damaging to overall achievement. We further believe accountability to the public can best be demonstrated by continuous improvement and we are committed to that task.

Success of any process is the result of the performance of each part of that process. Students, parents, the community, teachers, staff, administrators, and the Board all have essential roles to play in ensuring student success. Collectively we must strive to identify the extent to which our students are reaching District goals and to identify areas and strategies for improvement. It is our hope that the continuous improvement process will result in a constant focus on reaching District goals, the identification of areas needing attention, and a never-ending search for ways to improve student learning.

**The Oregon School District Board of Education  
September 2003<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> The Board would like to attribute two resources authored by Dr. Reeves which contributed to our analysis and were referenced in our paper. They are: Reeves, D. B. 2000. *Accountability in Action: A Blueprint for learning organizations*. Denver: Advanced Learning Press; and Reeves, D. B. 2001 *Holistic Accountability: Serving students, schools and community*. (Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press).

Attachment A

## Detailed History of Accountability Development

May, 1989	Report of Strategic Planning Committees
June, 1989	BOE approves Mission Statement
February, 1991	BOE memo: Oregon Successful School Initiative
April, 1991	Grade level configuration report
August, 1992	<p>BOE adopts CCC Position Paper: Commitment to Continuous Improvement: Education for Life-Long Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Once transformational philosophy and practices become accepted behaviors of teachers, there emerges a need to reorganize the school environment and align the policies and practices that support it. This, then, perpetuates the journey toward continuous improvement. The goal of the Oregon School System is to develop as a collaborative team and to accept that the idea of change should not be viewed with apprehension but rather as status quo.</li> <li>• Adopts “Outcome Based Decision Making” as philosophical model for District: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ All students can learn.</li> <li>○ Success creates success.</li> <li>○ Schools control the conditions for success.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A clearly defined mission statement shared by all members of the District.</li> <li>○ Clearly defined exit outcomes and curricula designed to ensure achievement of the outcomes.</li> <li>○ Methods for assessment that are aligned with the outcomes.</li> <li>○ A commitment to collect and analyze data.</li> <li>○ A long-term view of the improvement process.</li> <li>○ Involvement by all staff.</li> <li>○ Available resources to train staff in data collection and analysis and curriculum development and effective teaching practices.</li> <li>○ A willingness to scrutinize and change.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
February, 1994	<p>BOE Commitment to Continuous Improvement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All students will be expected to achieve mastery of all curricula outcomes within their instructional programs.</li> <li>2. A four-stage process will be used for outcomes identification through to implementation. There will be scheduled reviews of each subject area on a cyclic basis.</li> <li>3. All curricula and assessments developed by the SAC must be at</li> </ol>

	<p>least as rigorous as our previous criteria.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Each SAC will develop an integrated plan of instruction including outcomes, assessments, enrichments and extensions prior to school board adoption. For SAC outcomes already approved by the board, enrichments and extensions will be developed and submitted to the board for adoption.</li> <li>5. The CCC will establish a schedule and sequence for implementing the remaining subject area outcomes, assessments, enrichments and extensions and for bringing the subject areas currently in the use validation process to the school board for adoption.</li> <li>6. The district will collect data on student performance for the benefit of the professional staff to aid in the further improving student achievement.</li> <li>7. The administration will provide curriculum and professional development monies and develop strategies to help achieve the above goals.</li> <li>8. The school board reaffirms that this program for continuous improvement is the top priority of the Oregon School District.</li> </ol>
<p>May, 1994</p>	<p>BOE approves District Exit Outcomes</p>
<p>October, 1996</p>	<p>BOE creates list of expectations as part of continuous improvement. "As we continue our pursuit of increased student achievement, and more experience and knowledge are gained, the BOE does expect that results (in the 95% proficient level) are not only possible, but probable. Using the achievement results and experience we now have, continued improvement in student achievement remains one of the district's major goals."</p> <p>A. Development of Curriculum A four-stage process will be used for outcomes identification through to implementation. There will be scheduled reviews of each subject area on a cyclic basis. All curricula and assessments developed by the SAC must be at least as rigorous as our previous criteria. SAC's in all subject areas will have to examine alignment with Wisconsin's newly proposed Academic Content and Performance Standards. Each SAC will develop an integrated plan of instruction including outcomes, assessments, enrichments and extensions prior to school board adoption.</p> <p>B. Instruction All teachers will teach the BOE approved curricula and report achievement results of their assigned studies according to the plan adopted for their school. Each building will develop and implement a plan for the provision of correctives, extensions/enrichments and acceleration for their students.</p> <p>C. Mastery All students except those who's IEP stipulates otherwise, are expected</p>

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	<p>to achieve proficiency standards for all curricular outcomes within instruction programs.</p> <p>When students are not achieving at an acceptable rate, the staff will alert the parent/guardian and work with them to remediate the underachievement. This could include greater parental help at home, summer school, or other appropriate measures. The CCC is requested to develop an advisory paper for providing options for students who are not performing at grade level at the end of the school year. The advisory paper will be submitted to the BOE for approval and implementation.</p> <p><b>D. Data Collection</b> Each school will develop a plan for collecting student achievement data in a timely way and report same to the district office. Student achievement results will be shared with the BOE and the community annually.</p> <p><b>E. Staff Development</b> The District, in consultation with its staff, will develop a variety of staff development opportunities reflecting current research and effective practices. Staff members are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the available opportunities in order to enhance their own learning and to improve the learning environment for others.</p>
October, 1998	Reaffirmation of Site Councils and their mission to maximize student achievement. Mission reaffirmed in January, 1999, at joint meeting of BOE and combined site councils.
September, 2002	BOE creates Accountability Task Force to prepare recommendations to the Board of Education identifying indicators to measure District success and provide parameters for the sites.
November, 2002	Accountability Task Force presents its findings and recommendations to the BOE, which includes a reaffirmation of the Mission Statement and Exit Outcomes.
January, 2003	BOE reaffirms Mission Statement and Exit Outcomes
September, 2003	BOE adopts Position Paper on Accountability

Attachment B

## **District mission statement**

June, 1989 and reaffirmed January, 2003

The mission of the Oregon School District is to educate the student by helping students acquire the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to achieve their individual potential, to contribute to a changing society and to be receptive to learning as a lifelong process. The mission will be accomplished by delivering a high quality program through the joint efforts of students, staff, parents and community.

## **Reaffirmation of Site Councils' Mission of Student Achievement**

October, 1998

We reaffirm the value of our building site councils to the district, administration, teachers and community. We want to move this process to the next level. The councils are to be given a significant mission: do everything they can to make sure our students maximize their potential. Simply put, the site council's goal is student achievement. In today's outcome-based educational environment, and recognizing varying learning needs of children from complex families, the teachers can't do it all. Our district dollars can't even insure it. It will take people, coming together to creatively use the limited money we have to find additional resources, parental commitment, and support for teachers and staff.

Attachment C

# District Exit Outcomes

May, 1994, reaffirmed January, 2003

*The Learner will demonstrate skills necessary to be a quality producer.*

- Communicate effectively using a variety of media
- Demonstrate use of appropriate technology
- Demonstrate cooperative and independent work skills

*The Learner will demonstrate proficiency in problem solving and critical thinking.*

- Identify problems and set goals
- Gather and analyze relevant information
- Critically evaluate information
- Develop strategies for attaining goals
- Implement selected strategy
- Evaluate process and results

*The Learner will demonstrate skills and understanding necessary to contribute to local and global communities.*

- Understand the importance of individual differences and cultural diversity
- Understand the importance of responsible citizenship
- Understand the importance of environmental responsibility.

*The Learner will develop a substantial knowledge base in essential skills.*

- Demonstrate proficiency in academic skills including the arts
- Demonstrate proficiency in living skills
- Demonstrate proficiency in employment skills
- Demonstrate proficiency in technology skills

*The Learner will demonstrate skills that foster continued personal growth, learning, responsibility and accountability.*

- Set and strive to attain challenging personal, career, and educational goals
- Anticipate and accept consequences of her/his actions



Attachment D

# MEMO

To: The Board of Education  
From: Accountability Task Force  
Subject: Recommendations for District Accountability  
Date: November 11, 2002

The Accountability Task Force was formed to prepare recommendations to the Board of Education identifying indicators to measure District success and providing parameters for the sites. This memo summarizes those recommendations for the Board's consideration in writing its position paper on this subject.

## **District Definition of Success**

To determine the District's definition of success, we wrote our own using a significant amount of data from prior work of District committees and Site Councils and faculty, which reaffirmed the District Mission Statement and Learner Outcomes, developed 10 years ago. Ultimately, we liked the District Mission Statement's language better than what we had written. We therefore revised our definition of success to the achievement of the District's Mission.

The Oregon School District considers itself successful when it educates all students by helping them acquire the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to achieve their individual potential, contribute to a changing society, and be receptive to learning as a lifelong process.

## **Indicators of Success**

We determined the Mission Statement had four categories of potential indicators:

- Character (defined as honesty, integrity, respect, responsible behavior, appropriate social skills)
- Competency—particularly in the areas of reading, math, and writing
- Community (defined as the mutually supportive roles the community plays in supporting the District, and the ways the District supports the community)
- Culture (defined as a safe environment to support learning, helping children make good—healthy, safe, and respectful—choices)

We heard from all of the Sites, and were impressed with the volume and kinds of data being collected and used throughout the District. With this background, we brainstormed several indicators of success, and our top two choices in each of these categories are:

### Character

- Number of children not disciplined
- Number of children involved in service projects

### Competency

- Outcomes, assessed by both
  - School (teachers), and
  - Self-assessment (this was interpreted by our task force as a portfolio of a student's work representing the completion of our Learner Outcomes presented to District faculty or administration prior to high school graduation)
- Test scores (from state-standardized tests)

### Community

- Number of students who volunteer
- Number of service learning projects
- Number of adults who volunteer in the schools (a very close 3<sup>rd</sup> choice)

### Culture

- Provision of a rich range of options provided by the District
  - Alternative programs
  - Fine arts
  - Sports
- Number of students with positive relationships with staff

Nine indicators are thus suggested by the task force, though there is duplication in the ideas represented in service projects, service learning, and volunteerism. This duplication, however, also indicates the importance of volunteerism and service to the task force in developing children to become engaged and contributing adults in both our community and the global community.

We suggest the Board consider all these indicators but combine some of them by asking for feedback from the Site Councils, faculty, and/or community or through its own leadership.

## **Additional recommendations**

1. We believe it is best for the site councils to hear these recommendations at a joint meeting--to have the same starting point and know the information is communicated to all site councils in the same fashion.
2. We ask that the sites and faculty use the data collected for these indicators to identify individuals at any level who are not making appropriate academic progress (we called them the children who "fall through the cracks") and plan for or provide for activities to help them to insure competency for all students. We believe this collection of information is equally as important as measuring District success. Data on these interventions will also be helpful to collect.
3. We recommend the Sites publicize their results online to share data, reporting methods, and formats.
4. We'd like to insure all teachers understand their role in teaching competency in reading, math, and writing, especially those who teach the non-core courses in the arts, physical education, computer skills, etc. The task force provided many anecdotes on the importance of these courses to core learning.
5. We believe that parents value a universal format.
6. We ask that the Board consider standards and specific measures across all sites, where appropriate.
7. However, we believe there is room for individuality in reporting the data.

Accountability for Student Achievement in the Oregon School District  
Board of Education Position Paper, Appendix D

Attachment A

## Members of the Accountability Task Force

Name	Representing	Occupation
Gail Brown	Faith community	Minister, United Methodist Church, Brooklyn
Dr. Ellen Connor	Parents	Pediatric Endocrinologist, University of Wisconsin Medical School Faculty
Dr. H. Gary Cook, Ph.D.	Parents	Testing consultant with Harcourt Brace, formerly Director of Testing at Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Chris Cowan	OEA Designee	Science Teacher, OHS
Jeff Healy	Students	OHS Senior and Student Member on the Board of Education
Dr. Donna Mahr, Ph.D.	At-Large	Community Leader
Sandra Owens	OEA Designee	Social Sciences Teacher, OMS
Jane Peschel	Building Administration	Principal, Prairie View Elementary
Dr. Terry Riss, Ph.D.	Parents	Cell biologist, Promega Corporation
Mary Ruble	Retired	Formerly Vice-President of Government Relations, Ameritech
Candace Weidensee	District Administration	District Administrator, Special Education
Gary Wille	Business Owners	Gary Wille Auto Service

Deedra Atkinson, Facilitator