

## **RECOMMENDATIONS DRAFT/OREGON RTTT DESIGN TEAM**

The recommendations that follow were developed during four months of intensive meetings that followed the publication of the draft guidelines for the Race to the Top grant competition in July of 2009.

Close to 100 people participated on the Design Team and Working Groups that formed these recommendations. The various groups met approximately two dozen times in a six-week period, a pace necessitated by the short timelines of the Race to the Top grant competition.

Participants represented every region of our state, and nearly every group of education stakeholders, including parents, business leaders, teachers from elementary, middle and high schools, classified staff, principals, superintendents, district and ESD administrators, universities, foundations, education policy advisors, the Governor's Office and the Oregon Department of Education.

### **Guiding Principles**

The RTTT Design team is interested in an application that complies with the spirit of the federal regulations, and whenever possible, aligns to the letter of the reform criteria. To that end, Oregon's application must address low-performing schools; teacher and principal effectiveness; college- and career-ready standards, and longitudinal data systems to support instruction.

Oregon's goal in this application is to identify and expand effective practices that already exist in our state and that align with these objectives. Ideally, there will be evidence that these practices are already having a positive effect on student achievement.

The RTTT Work Groups and the Design Team believe that equity of opportunity and outcomes must be a central theme of Oregon's application. This idea is embodied in specific recommendations such as a focus on turning around low-performing schools; the equitable distribution of highly effective teachers; increased diversity in the teaching workforce and a commitment to sustained engagement with our school communities as partners for change.

Engaging the community and parents as agents for change is a core tenet of our recommendations. Specific actions and resources will be called out to help parents support their children's education, and to enable community organizations to actively support students and schools.

### **Topical Areas**

We address five topical areas in compliance with the Race to the Top requirements: (a) standards and assessments, (b) low performing schools, (c) effective teachers and schools, and (d) data systems that support student learning, and (e) STEM.

## I. Standards and Assessments

The RTTT Design Team believes that the work being done in Oregon around proficiency-based practice relates directly to the federal government's interest in internationally-aligned standards and assessments that lead to increased high school graduation rates as well as career and college readiness.

**A. Common Standards.** Oregon is in line with the current movement toward common standards and was one of the 48 states that signed onto the initiative.

**B. Accountability for ALL.** Oregon's participation in testing is far more inclusive than the criteria used by NAEP and has become a model for other states.

**C. Skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.** Writing process is being expanded.

**E. Standards for information and improvement.** Expand standards to include both data use for improvement of instruction and for teacher development.

**F. Alignment of standards.** Professional development is needed in the alignment of standards with curriculum.

**G. Graduation requirements.** Proficiency-based practice is embraced by teachers and students in districts around the state as a powerful tool for improving achievement, and it has the added potential to differentiate Oregon's RTTT application from other states'.

The notion of "proficiency" can be applied to students, teachers and administrators. As such, the Work Groups and the Design Team believe that proficiency-based practice provides a framework for addressing several of the Race to the Top objectives:

PK-20 proficiency-based system should include internationally-benchmarked, aligned standards and assessments that lead to increased high school graduation rates, and graduates who are better prepared for college and career success.

A proficiency-based system should include professional development for teachers and principals that supports effective instructional practice and an evaluation framework that is linked to student performance.

A proficiency-based system should increase transparency and accountability for all parties: students, teachers, parents and schools.

*Criteria for participation...More to come.*

### *Recommendations for implementation*

1. A specific recommendation for advancing proficiency-based practice in Oregon might be to use RTTT funds to implement proficiency-based math in all schools. Through a proficiency-based approach, by the class of 2014 all students in Oregon will demonstrate

mastery of the mathematics standards proposed by Achieve, using a combination of assessment tools.

2. We will build a learning profile that documents student learning on eight core math standards relating to algebra, geometry, and statistics. Students will:

- Demonstrate that they understand real numbers and algebraic symbols
- Apply linear equations and functions
- Use quadratic and exponential equations
- Apply properties of two dimensional figures
- Apply properties of three dimensional solids
- Transform and analyze figures
- Analyze and interpret empirical data
- Apply basic principles of probability.

*Implementation and support...More to come.*

*Accountability...More to come.*

## 2. Low-Performing Schools

Oregon has a high quality plan and ambitious yet achievable targets to 1) identify persistently low-performing schools, including high schools, and 2) support LEAs in turning these schools around.

Our recommendation is to demonstrate, through successful large-scale implementation, that all schools in Oregon can achieve acceptable outcomes for students. We propose to initially focus on the lowest 5% of Oregon's elementary, middle and high schools with the following turnaround strategy:

**A. Strong and sustained leadership commitment.** Leaders at all levels (state, community, school board, local associations, district, school, students) will demonstrate a strong and sustained commitment to the work.

**B. Proven, evidence-based practices and data-driven decision-making.** A culture of effective instructional practices must be created, supported by decision-making that is transparent and based on evidence-based measures of student achievement.

**C. Meaningful community involvement.** Oregon features several successful models of community schools that are ready to be scaled-up in this context. We also have strong parent advocacy organizations that can be partners in accountability.

**D. Flexibility.** Districts and their collective bargaining associations must agree to provide these schools with the flexibility and support needed to quickly transform the culture of learning. This includes staffing, use of time and curriculum and instruction.

**E. Clear timelines and strict accountability.** Schools that participate in this grant will have very clear expectations and outcomes. Schools achieving (or exceeding) objectives will receive continued (or increased) funding. Schools not meeting targets will lose funding and be subject to loss of autonomy pursuant to state law (HB 2263).

*School identification.* Oregon's new Achievement Index provides a reliable and comprehensive view of school performance for the purposes of this grant. We are focused on the bottom 5% as defined by this Index, with a minimum of 25% of the schools from each level: elementary, middle and high school.

In addition to the Achievement Index, other supporting measures should be considered including graduation rates, dropout rates, subgroup performance, staff retention, district fiscal condition, and community characteristics (such as feeder schools for secondary schools). Final participation will be determined after thorough due diligence, including site reviews, by the governing body.

*Criteria for participation.* Schools and districts will sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Oregon Department of Education, committing to the core elements of the assertive transformation model. The application will include letters of support from the school board chair, superintendent, building principal, and a recognized, independent parent or community organization. The target school principal must be approved by the governing entity and granted authority for school staffing. Student commitment to the transformation should also be addressed.

It is our recommendation efforts be made to ensure participation of Salem-Keizer and Portland Public Schools, along with a geographically diverse representation of schools across Oregon.

*Recommendations for implementation.* Leadership within the school, the district and the community will demonstrate a strong and sustained commitment to change by the following actions:

1. An emphasis on development of cultural competency--awareness of the impact of race, poverty and language on student achievement-- and the setting of high expectations for the children and the adults in the community.
2. An alignment of resources and stakeholders around common goals.
3. The district will commit to placing appropriately qualified staff in buildings and at all leadership levels through effective staff selection practices and constructive negotiation within the collective bargaining agreement.
  - Districts will develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the local association that permits transfer and selection of staff to be carried out in accordance with the provisions of this grant.
4. The school will develop an intentional school improvement strategy, focused and specific with professional development assigned that develops expertise in each step for schools and the organization.
5. The school will receive flexibility and accountability at the building level, starting with the selection of a proven principal who is given authority to build his or her team.
6. The school will implement the recommendations of the effective teachers work group for managing principals and teachers.
7. There will be a systematic implementation of evidence-based practices and data-driven decision-making.

- Evidence-based practices will typically incorporate (a) a process for universal screening, (b) ongoing progress monitoring that drives instruction at a student level and monitors instructional implementation, (c) an explicit district-level, school-level, and student-level action plan, (e) time for data analysis, evaluation and use, (f) multi-tiered differentiated interventions, and (g) a flexible, data-responsive system of implementation.

Further specific recommendations of school-level implementation that could be supported by grant funding include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The use of validated formative assessment measurements in core subject areas to determine students' growth toward grade level standards.
- Double-dosing math and reading for all students below grade level.
- Within instructional blocks, whole group and small group instruction based on a multi-tier model and differentiated to meet the needs of all students.
- Frequent assessment of student progress and multiple opportunities for improvement.
- Extended day and extended year.
- A community-based program to extend the academic school day for students and to provide educational interests to parents and community members.
- Professional development emphasis on student engagement and cultural competency.
- Professional development emphasis on selected academic areas for teachers
- Professional Learning Communities and data teams with time for teacher collaboration (common planning period).
- The selection of vertically-aligned curriculum with core standards.
- Holistic support in the form of extended school day, community school programming or wraparound services.
- Ongoing, meaningful community engagement in the transformation of the school and in shared responsibility for student learning.

*Implementation and support.* Our group identified numerous existing resources to support implementation, but also recognizes the need for new capacity to be added with this program. Existing resources include the Oregon Data Project, as well as the state's work on SISEP on Scaling Up. The Work Group proposes a statewide Principal Leadership Institute and a coordinating entity for leading transformational efforts.

*Accountability.* Using the same indicators identified in selection of the lowest 5% of schools, ODE will establish a set of expected growth benchmarks. Based on a rubric identified by this grant, deliverables will include documentation of both instructional outcome data (e.g. student outcomes) and implementation data (e.g. fidelity of implementation, staff selection processes, training). Successful schools will receive incremental financial awards to continue and enhance existing interventions. Schools not making progress will (a) not receive continued funding from the grant; b) be subject to incremental surrender of autonomy and (c) be subject to consequences identified by the state as part of ESEA.

### 3. Effective Teachers and Principals

Any meaningful effort to improve the system of public education in Oregon must focus on the critical need to recruit, retain and reward great teachers and principals. The Race to the Top Design team voiced strong support for the following:

- A. Teacher Evaluation.** Oregon must develop a teacher evaluation model with consistent standards for teacher effectiveness, incorporating multiple levels of differentiation based on effectiveness.
- B. Teacher and Principal Expectations.** Performance expectations must be clearly defined and consistently implemented.
- C. Use of multiple measures.** The framework for evaluating teachers and leaders should include multiple measures of student achievement; not a single test.
- D. Evaluation for improvement.** The focus of evaluation is professional development and continuous improvement; not punishment.
- E. Professional Development.** A sustained commitment to job-embedded professional development that is differentiated, measurable, and based in a proficiency framework.
- F. Mentorship.** Mentorship of new teachers and administrators must be extended and expanded.
- G. Alternative pathways.** Oregon must look at alternative pathways into the classroom for teachers in hard to staff areas. This includes minority teachers; science and math teachers, teachers in rural areas, speech pathologists and school psychologists.
- H. Institutions of Higher Education.** K-12 systems must deliver feedback to higher education partners on professional preparation, retention, and long-term success of graduating teachers.
- I. Expanded career pathways.** Expanded career pathways and new compensation models like the CLASS Project can promote professional development, teacher retention and compensation, and student achievement.

#### *Criteria for participation*

#### *Recommendations for implementation*

1. Provide alternative pathways for aspiring teachers and principals. Encourage research and development of new alternative paths to licensure for teachers and principals.
  - Extended and expanded recruitment of professionals from the private sector with an added emphasis on STEM;
  - A new emphasis on alternative avenues to administrative licensure. Address demand specifically in hard to staff rural areas;
  - Continue to provide direct oversight and connection of alternative pathways through the Teachers Standards and Practices Commission.

- A residency-based partnership program utilizing effective elements of both the alternative CTE licensure process and the Bilingual Teacher Pathway program should be established.
  - Re-institute loan forgiveness programs for teachers in hard-to-staff rural areas.
2. Differentiate teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance
  3. Evaluate and develop teachers and principals by providing timely and constructive feedback and targeted professional development
  4. Adopt a statewide framework of teaching standards to align teacher/administrator preparation and licensure programs, mentoring, performance evaluation, and criteria for professional advancement.
    - Align and broaden mentoring programs and professional development with the newly adopted national standards for quality professional development (National Staff Development Council Standards).
    - Implement research and evidence based performance evaluation systems to assure timely and constructive feedback (Danielson, Reeves etc.) including ongoing principal and teacher training for summative evaluations. Implement new strategies to support peer collaboration for formative and continuous professional learning feedback (greenhouse or studio classroom models). Guarantee a transparent system for teachers and administrators to identify proficiency.
    - Elevate and make the case for a statewide commitment to job-embedded professional development.
    - Increase professional collaborative learning teams/communities to advance teacher leadership roles and responsibilities.
    - Establish incentives for research-based professional development opportunities tied directly to student achievement.
    - Provide targeted professional development designed by principals and teachers to close the achievement gap.
    - Align post-secondary and school district resources to dynamically support teacher and principal effectiveness.
    - Measure and track longitudinal student growth data based on the new Oregon Report Card. Utilize data from this promising format to inform professional development and adjust instructional delivery.
  5. Provide teachers and principals with opportunities to obtain additional compensation and responsibilities by working creatively within collective bargaining agreements.
    - Create a system for expanding career path opportunities promoting teacher and principal leadership roles and responsibilities.
    - Develop new compensation models including career-based pay and incentive compensation for schools and teams based on evidence of professional practice and raising student achievement.
    - Utilize multiple measures of student achievement and performance data to inform and stimulate professional growth and improvement.
    - Specifically identify promising pilots like the CLASS Project that address new career paths, creative compensation, professional development, and performance evaluation.

- Provide sustained support for interested schools, districts, and associations willing to innovate with locally developed design.
6. Grant tenure to teachers and principals based on rigorous and transparent procedures (where applicable). Remove tenured and untenured teachers and principals after they have had ample opportunities to improve but have not done so.
    - Oregon is uniquely positioned as tenure was eliminated and teachers and principals are now 2 year contract employees after successfully completing a 3-year probationary period( ORS 342.815-342.845).
    - Emphasize and act on the responsibility to assist poorly performing teachers and principals in improving proficiency. Utilize multiple measures of student achievement and professional proficiency to provide ample and fair opportunities to improve. When persistent efforts to elevate proficiency to an acceptable level fail, remove the underperforming teacher or leader within the guidelines of contract.
  7. Ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals.
    - In partnership with higher education and school districts, create lab schools to demonstrate success educating students of low SES, special needs, English Language Learner, or minority status or with STEM assessments results in the upper tier of achievement.
    - The focus of these lab schools would be to promote an environment of continued student success while also working in partnership with teacher preparation programs to create dynamic research and clinical practice environments.
  8. Report the effectiveness of teacher and administrator preparation programs.
    - Link new and existing data warehouses to create feedback loops to preparation programs, state agencies and policymakers on the placement, work history and effectiveness of educators, including measures of student achievement.
    - Create a network of professional development and preparation partnerships between school districts and institutions of higher education to foster collaborative learning and create a seamless K-20 system of professional preparation and professional development.  
Create teacher and administrator preparation partnerships between preparation programs and school districts to focus on “hard to fill” regions and content areas. These partnerships would focus on critical areas of content specialists in rural areas, especially in mathematics and science; special education specialists, English Language Learner specialists and other identified areas of teacher shortages in Oregon.
    - Create an Oregon teacher and administrator diversity initiative to recruit, support and place more teachers of color and language diversity into Oregon schools.
  9. Provide effective support to teachers and principals

- Establish incentives for research-based professional development opportunities tied directly to student achievement.
- Expand leadership development opportunities like the Oregon Leadership Network to develop culturally competent instructional leadership. Elevate and grow pre-service preparation programs, develop principal and superintendent induction programs, extend in-service and institute opportunities, and link each of these efforts to data-driven student achievement tied to the Oregon Report Card growth model. Formalize administrative and superintendent mentorship efforts in a sustained, multi-year approach.
- Establish an incented mentorship program for beginning teachers (years one through three) and principals through research-based professional growth and proficiency models like Reeves or Danielson. Commit to multi-year formalized relationships that extend through the probationary period. Provide incentives for successful completion of the probationary years, retention in the host district, and improvement in multiple measures of student achievement.
- Expand mid-career professional development programs for teachers and school leaders with an emphasis on enhancing skills that have a positive impact on student performance.

*Implementation and support...More to come.*

*Accountability...More to come.*

#### **4. Data Systems that Support Student Learning**

This should come out of the Longitudinal Data Application, right?

**A. Current Oregon initiatives.** Use and expand the assessment literacy training and the professional development design (roll-out, capacity building, sustainability and implementation) created through the Oregon DATA Project. This initiative requires the state to add teacher identifiers with the ability to match teachers to students.

**B. Data for ALL.** Develop a statewide progress monitoring system of student progress toward proficiency for use by administrators and teachers, but also for students and parents. The system would include strategies, interventions and resources to help students not on target be ready for student specific post-secondary opportunities - Oregon data project.

**C. Instructional information.** Creation of a base of exemplar standards based lessons. The lessons will be linked to data supporting the improvement of student learning for identified sub-groups. Teachers and administrators would have contact information allowing them to get additional information from these sites.

**D. Research based, best practice.** Use diagnostic and predictive measures tied to standards and decision rules to proactively inform teachers and school-leaders about students who are at risk and linking this information to potential actions on behalf of students.

**E. Comprehensive program data.** Extend data sets to include complementary data sources such as but not limited to employment, independent colleges, National Student Clearing House (NSCH), NWREL, and TSPC.

*Criteria for participation...More to come.*

*Recommendations for implementation*

1. Integrate a benchmarking and progress monitoring system in reading and mathematics for students in grade K-8 into the existing data warehouse system that is currently being completed so the longitudinal system is rich with local and state data.
  - Develop infrastructure for regional warehouses
  - Provide district support for accessing warehouses
2. Allow researchers from across the country to better understand the correlates for many outcomes for students with disabilities and produce a series of reports that offered empirical support for modifying and enriching the curriculum and supports provided to students with disabilities.
  - Develop infrastructure for regional warehouses
  - Provide district support for accessing warehouses
  - Develop a national study group for sustained research with university partnerships
3. Use curriculum-based measurement (CBM) to provide both formative and summative assessment information on student learning in the classroom.
  - Expand measures for use alongside proficiency-based assessments (as both target and access skills).
  - Develop alternative measures for teachers to use when students are well-below grade level performance targets
4. Provide curriculum modules to train administrators and teachers how to use longitudinal data, both across time within the school year on classroom measures but also across years with state tests.
  - Expand training for use of concept-based strategies
  - Develop materials for teachers to network their work

*Implementation and support...More to come.*

*Accountability...More to come.*

## 5. STEM

**A. Professional development.** Teachers need to be engaged in professional development communities that implement documented best practices including student-centered inquiry curricula and proficiency based learning and teaching.

**B. Pathways for professionals.** Development of professional educators begins early in students' educational lives with teachers needing to help them develop appreciation for a career in science, technology, or mathematics; this is particularly true for members of traditionally under-represented groups (women and students of color).

**C. Professional networks.** To appropriately nurture STEM initiatives, the community of practice in teaching and learning needs to be multi-vocal with field-based professionals, mentor teachers, novice teachers in training, and institutions of higher education (community colleges and 4-year university programs).

**D. Problem-based learning.** Students need to learn knowledge at all levels: declarative knowledge from books but more importantly conditional and procedural knowledge from problems that are situated in the world of science, technology, and mathematics in practice.

**E. Teaching and learning aligned with standards.** Teaching and learning need to be integrally related to national standards and generalize to environments outside the classroom with schools sharing resources.

*Criteria for participation...More to come.*

*Recommendations for implementation*

1. Provide long-term, rigorous and coherent in-service teacher professional development.
  - Use of scientists and engineers, including graduate and undergraduate science students, as classroom 'scientists-in-residence'
  - Incorporate authentic research and provide practical classroom experiences for STEM majors in pre-service teacher programs
  - Use inquiry curricula in meeting state and international benchmarks
  - Provide STEM teachers professional development by promoting teachers going back to the lab
  - Use incentive programs to expand the pool of STEM educators
  - Develop a cadre of regional trainers who can provide AP and pre-AP training to teachers
2. Establish a network of committed STEM stakeholders who will participate in long-term alliances that will provide intellectual and material support to formal and informal STEM educators.
  - Use hands-on, inquiry-driven K-8 science curricula, as well as sensors, interfaces and computers for middle and high school science classes; and state-of-the-art equipment such as high speed cameras, geochemical water analysis instruments, and traveling scanning electron microscopes, and game animation projects.
  - Utilize Oregon Virtual School District, on-line professional development courses.

- Share data between school classrooms in order to develop regional datasets.
- Include support for ELL and support students credit recovery.
- Harmonize adoptions of science and related curricula across regions.
- Collaborate with community college/four-year and high school/community colleges to provide college credit STEM courses in high schools and recruit students into STEM career tracks.
- Create a network of K-12 STEM signature schools that serve as examples of successful practice in STEM education.

3. Establish articulated pathways for underrepresented students to achieve grade-level benchmarks for STEM knowledge and skills. Design and implement support networks for differentiating STEM instruction for ALL students.

- Include industry experts, government scientists and engineers (e.g., tsunami hazard assessment and mitigation), and parents along with teachers, administrators and higher education partners.
- Situate professional development strategies can situate engineers and scientists to work alongside teachers in planning both adoption and pedagogical strategies for effective instruction.
- Engage parents to collaborate with teachers and area scientists in planning special events.
- Develop teacher and student mentoring with community STEM practitioners, including graduate and undergraduate STEM majors to purposefully structures to provide women and underrepresented group role models.
- Provide STEM learning opportunities for students Outside School Time (OST) that are linked to state and international standards and provide opportunity for student to demonstrate proficiency.
- Utilize emerging public/Private Partnership between ODE, Cisco and Intel to improve the student achievement by introducing proven technology into Oregon Classrooms.

4. Systematically provide guidance to schools and organizations that are aligning their programs, curricula and teaching practices to the new Oregon STEM standards and essential skills, helping them develop work sample assessments that measure student knowledge and skills in STEM.

- Create assessments that address ambitious standards, provide useful and timely information on students' progress to teachers, and efficiently gather and report data on students' learning.
- Build on national standards in the areas of math, science, technology and engineering.
- Develop innovative assessments using inquiry-based science work samples (which are currently required at the upper elementary, middle school and high school levels).
- Develop assessments that document students' engagement and understanding in the STEM disciplines.

*Implementation and support...More to come.*

*Accountability...More to come.*