

**EDUCATOR/ ADMINISTRATOR QUALITY WORKGROUP (EAQW)
FINAL REPORT – KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY**

"In the Confucian tradition it is said that the mark of a golden era is that children are the most important members of the society and teaching is the most revered profession."

Peter M. Senge

PREAMBLE

All Oregon children deserve a rigorous education that engages their hearts and minds in imaginative and powerful ways. Schools should provide opportunities where young people can wrestle with deep questions, learn to develop inquisitive minds, and develop the courage to act on their beliefs. Deborah Meier, author and former school principal, observed that schools that unleash the learning potential for students create "feisty" learners ready to tackle ever more learning through innovation and creativity.

Teachers and administrators, who are well prepared and dedicated, relish the opportunity and challenge of education – the most important work in Oregon. Over the past decade, high profile research efforts have showcased how the quality of teachers and principals dramatically affects student achievement. The report "What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future" asserts, "What teachers and principals know and can do is the most important influence on what students learn." The American Council on Education synthesizes a slew of research to arrive at a similar conclusion in its report "To Touch the Future." The report states, "The success of the student depends most of all on the quality of the teacher. We know from empirical data what our intuition has always told us: Teachers make a difference. We now know that teachers make *the* difference."

The evidence is compelling. The quality of the teacher-principal is the most important factor to improve student achievement. In other words, both poor and excellent teaching and school leadership leave a legacy. Outstanding educators create learning environments that engage all students. Every classroom deserves an understanding and caring teacher who helps students enjoy success. In a culture of learning, a student's imagination can be sparked, skills honed, and dreams evoked. The Chalkboard Quality Workgroup thought deeply about creating recommendations that ensure Oregon Schools are staffed by high quality teachers and administrators.

PROCESS

As the Educator/Administrator Quality Workgroup (EAQW) wrestled with this complex task, it became clear that while there is much that is positive about education in Oregon, there are many issues that must be addressed to ensure high quality learning opportunities for all K-12 students. The recommendations

that emerged from the EAQW fall into four broad categories: professional development, educator accountability (evaluation), licensure, and compensation in priority order. The EAQW believes that there are overarching guiding principles that must be recognized for implementation of the recommendations to be effective.

These principles are:

- Effective leadership skills must be intentionally developed at all levels: teacher, administrator, school board, and community.
- Education is a system, and all of the components of education are interrelated; so, addressing any one component in isolation may not produce maximum effect.
- Implementation must be planned thoroughly in advance, and all players must be prepared to complete their tasks.
- Educators need time to think, plan, and adapt recommendations to their locations. Innovations work best from the ground up.
- We work from an abundance model rather than a deficit model. We assume an abundance of knowledge, skill, and commitment in the field. Deficits of time, energy, and money pose challenges.

GOAL AREA 1: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development is the most critical component of the EAQW recommendations. Evaluation, licensure, and compensation all depend on a strong and effective professional development system. To be effective professional development must be given considerable thought and research as to what opportunities will support the largest impact on student learning. Attention to national research, ongoing local contextualized research, student needs to be academically successful, training for professional development providers and other practices will ensure that opportunities offered to educators are worth the considerable investment that must be made.

An educator's practice develops over time and is improved through ongoing evaluation and support. Professional development begins with preservice preparation, continues through early career induction (entrance period into the profession, usually considered to be the first 3-5 years of practice) and peer mentoring. It is critical to provide both mentoring for early career educators and ongoing professional development for experienced educators. Effective early career mentoring increases the chances that an educator will continue in the profession. As the educator gains experience, learning must be ongoing to ensure improvement in practice and development of important leadership skills.

Chalkboard Goals Addressed

Goal #1C: Recommend specific procedures to reinstitute Oregon's beginning teacher and mentor program, with a special emphasis in areas with high turnover and teacher shortages.

Goal #1D: Recommend procedures to make sure that high-quality professional development opportunities for teachers, principals and superintendents align with the needs of their schools, as well as with the requirement for continuing licensure and career-long professional development.

The EAQW makes these recommendations for Professional Development:

- 1. Beginning Teacher and Administrator Support:** Reinstitute the policy in place for beginning teacher support, which operated successfully in the 1980's. The beginning teacher support program should be updated and reinstated, and educators in their first three years of practice should be supported with professionally prepared mentors. New administrators should also be assigned mentors who have had successful experiences in similar positions.
- 2. Learning Network System:** Institute a learning network system that enables educators to create collegial, rigorous, and supportive learning communities that provide for ongoing professional growth of teachers and administrators. The learning network services could be housed on college/university campuses, in school districts, in Education Service Districts (ESDs), or other accessible locations. This system will integrate induction and mentoring support for early career educators, as well as provide learning and leadership opportunities for practicing educators. The learning communities could be a source of expertise and data for school improvement and university research efforts. The learning network system should include locations that serve all geographic areas of the state. These centers could be staffed by outstanding teacher/coaches on leave from their school districts; college and university faculty; retired educators who have demonstrated outstanding qualities that enhance learning; and other professional development providers.
- 3. Funding:** Invest in professional development by providing funding for:
 - Educators to become mentors and for schools to work with candidates preparing to become teachers and administrators.
 - Districts and colleges/universities to offer paid internships to promote recruitment of candidates into high need content areas or schools/districts and rural/remote locations. Savings from reduced intern pay could be used to fund school-based mentors assigned to coach both candidates and practicing educators on site.
 - Teachers to achieve advanced licensure or National Board Certification. This advancement in practice should lead to a

differentiated role for teachers that might be designated “Professional Development Specialist” or learning coach.

Accountability

Student learning improves when appropriate, high quality professional development focuses on the needs of educators and students. Data currently collected and analyzed at the building level should be monitored to inform the focus of professional development in a building. A rigorous and effective evaluation process for each educator will provide evidence for accountability in the area of professional development.

GOAL AREA 2: EDUCATOR ACCOUNTABILITY

The purpose of the evaluation of teachers and administrators is to improve professional practice. Research clearly demonstrates that high levels of professional expertise positively impact student performance. Essential evaluation principles include:

- Evaluation is not only an individual matter but a systems matter, and effective evaluation requires the full attention of the system in terms of time and resources.
- Evaluation must be part of a continuous learning model that leads to improved individual and team practice and the renewal of professional commitment to teaching and learning.
- Evaluation must include clear expectations and multiple sources of evidence.
- Evaluation must be respectful, ethical, and tied to best professional practice.
- Evaluation must enhance student learning.

Chalkboard Goal Addressed

Goal #1F: Determine how effective current methods are for evaluating, improving, and removing teachers and principals. Strengthen those methods and promote their use.

Current Practice

Each individual school district evaluates educators as articulated in the educators’ contracts and in accordance with Oregon Administrative Rules. Every school administrator in Oregon conducts annual evaluations for the teaching staff. However, the evaluation process is often sporadic, under-resourced, and therefore somewhat ineffective for promoting educator growth and improving student learning. The Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) addressing evaluation is included in Appendix B.

The EAQW makes these recommendations for Educator Evaluation:

4. Evaluation Procedures Training: Chalkboard should convene a process to review performance evaluation procedures for teachers and administrators. This action should be undertaken in partnership with key stakeholders, including but not limited to school districts, Oregon School Boards Association, Confederation of Oregon School Administrators, Oregon Education Association, Oregon Department of Education, public stakeholders, students and colleges/universities. The outcome would be driven by an agreed upon set of guiding principles and characteristics, including:

- Comprehensive orientation and training for both evaluators and those being evaluated through the learning networks. The program should include training for boards, school leaders, faculty, and staff.
- Model evaluation tools and rubrics.
- A pilot program prior to full implementation.

5. Hiring Procedures: Evaluation begins with the hiring process. The EAQW recommends that the process be integrated across the state to recruit the most qualified candidates to positions, schools, and districts and include these components:

- Establish and train a panel of stakeholders in each district to inform and advise the candidate review process.
- Establish reasonable timelines for hiring to avoid last minute decisions.
- Streamline a statewide application process to better match candidates and job openings.
- Prepare back up plans to provide for temporarily filling positions to allow sufficient time to find the candidate who is the best fit for the position.

Accountability

Evaluation is about accountability. An effective evaluation process holds school boards, administrators, teachers, and other staff accountable for student learning. Every educator is expected to pursue student learning as the primary goal. Incompetence at any level should be documented and plans for improvement should be implemented immediately.

GOAL AREA 3: LICENSURE

Licensing only high quality educators is critical to improving learning opportunities for all children. High level licensure standards drive the improvement of preparation programs and candidate evaluation. Currently,

Oregon's standards are more closely tied to preparation programs than to candidate licensure. It will be important to communicate with the public regarding existing standards for teachers and administrators, all of which are aligned with current national standards. Licensing only high quality educators is critical to improving learning opportunities for all children. Speaking specifically about teachers, Dr. Lee Shulman, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, writes:

“The teacher must remain the key... Debates over educational policy are moot if the primary agents of instruction are incapable of performing their functions well. No computer will replace them, no voucher system will bypass them.”

Chalkboard Goals Addressed

Goal #1A: Generate recommendations on the creation of new standards to license teachers.

Goal #1B: Create an alternative way for qualified people to become licensed as principals, superintendents, and teachers in high-need areas such as science and math.

Goal #1E: Refine and focus administrator licensing standards. Make licensure dependent on a candidate's ability to demonstrate in greater depth that they possess the skills to successfully lead plans to improve instruction throughout their schools.

Current Practice

Oregonians deserve assurances that only teachers who are effective in the classroom are licensed to work in Oregon's schools. The state has moved in this direction by establishing Initial and Continuing Teaching Licenses based on standards adopted in 1997 which were later revised and implemented in 1999. Design and approval for all Oregon teacher preparation programs are based on expected beginning teacher competencies rather than on lists of prescribed courses. The competencies, along with sample indicators, are organized around five major teaching functions:

- Candidates plan instruction that supports student progress in learning and is developmentally appropriate.
- Candidates establish a classroom climate conducive to learning.
- Candidates engage students in planned learning activities.
- Candidates evaluate, act upon and report student progress in learning.
- Candidates exhibit professional behaviors, ethics and values.

For licensure, all candidates are also required to pass a state adopted Basic Skills test and a Commission-approved content area test for their respective discipline or teaching area. Licensure and program design are focused on preparing candidates at specific developmental levels that are called “authorization levels.” There are four grade-level related authorizations for Oregon licensure: Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle Level and High School.

Additionally, the state of Oregon was the first in the nation to use Teacher Work Sample Methodology as a source of evidence for recommending and granting an Initial Teaching License, further linking the licensure of teachers to their ability to help students learn. Current Oregon Administrative Rules require all teacher preparation programs to assess two Teacher Work Samples from each candidate.

The Teacher Work Sample is a performance assessment task in which candidates pre-assess, use the results for planning instruction in a unit tied to state standards, teach the unit, post-assess, analyze progress made by students, and make recommendations for next steps in the learning process for each individual learner.

New standards for administrators were adopted in 2005 and will be implemented in January 2007. These expectations for administrators are based on standards from several national professional organizations, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISSLC) and National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA).

The EAQW makes these recommendations for licensure:

- 6. Performance Assessment System:** Invest in the research, design, and development of a system of reliable, valid, and defensible performance assessments that could be utilized by colleges, universities, Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, educators prepared out-of-state, and those seeking an alternative route to teaching or administration. Implementation of such a system would ensure the quality of initial preparation programs and competence of teacher and administrator candidates as they begin practice.
- 7. Alternative Licensure Systems for Teachers:** Create standards-based alternative routes to teacher licensure in order to increase the pool of qualified candidates in shortage areas (such as math, physical science, special education, and in rural and remote locations) and to diversify the workforce. Alternative route processes must ensure, through the use of a rigorous performance assessment, that only highly qualified candidates are licensed.
- 8. Alternative Licensure Systems for Administrators:** Create a streamlined, standards-based alternative route to administrator licensure. Alternative route processes must ensure, through the use of a rigorous performance assessment, that only highly qualified candidates are

licensed. Providers for the streamlined process could be the result of university, school district, and professional organization collaborations.

- 9. Review and Update Licensing Standards:** Allocate resources to Teacher Standards and Practices Commission to hire a consultant to convene and facilitate subject matter experts around content/authorization levels to ensure consistent alignment of educator preparation standards with Oregon's K-12 student standards. Review and update all licensing standards to align with the best quality national standards for teachers and administrators.

Accountability

There are several levels of accountability involved in licensure. Preparation programs are evaluated by Teacher Standards and Practices Commission. There are standards in place to require remediation or closure of those programs that produce incompetent candidates. Programs are required to report annually on progress of candidates toward licensure. Individual licensure candidates are held for passage of basic skills and content tests along with effective and appropriate performance assessments.

GOAL AREA 4A: BUILDING/DISTRICT LEVEL COMPENSATION MODEL

The professional judgment of the EAQW, after reviewing relevant research, is that compensation systems for individual educators are less effective in promoting student achievement than are incentives designed for buildings or districts. We believe that improving student achievement is a team effort. All staff members contribute to the success of a school. Creating a climate of student success is the responsibility of every person in the building, and when success occurs, every member of the team should be rewarded. Success of students should be measured by an individual student growth model methodology over time. Unlike No Child Left Behind or other measures of a single point in time, the criteria should be consistent improvement over at least a three year period for each individual student. Under current federal requirements achievement is measured for discrete groups of children and comparisons are made between groups that are unrelated to each other. Best practice assessment models include multiple points of assessment over time. Accordingly, a team approach coupling compensation to achievement is more likely to be fair and reflect the realities of multiple teacher contact with students.

Chalkboard Goal Addressed

Goal #1G: Propose an alternative model for compensating teachers and principals based on rewarding performance that improves student learning. Apply what has been learned during the past decade regarding alternative models for labor-management relations in education, including school-based management and budgeting.

Current Practice

Teacher contracts are currently negotiated by individual school districts and their unions. Pay scales are set by negotiation, and educators generally advance on the scale based upon positive performance reviews and years of successful experience in schools.

The EAQW makes this recommendation for compensation:

- 10. Building and District Level Awards:** Create building and district level compensation awards to allow for successful achievement of student growth targets. This would enable the staff to decide how to invest additional funds. We believe that this should be funded by the legislature. However, this is also an excellent way for Oregon corporations and foundations to demonstrate a commitment to rewarding excellence. Corporate bonuses are frequently based upon corporate profitability, not individual employee performance.

GOAL AREA 4B: INDIVIDUAL COMPENSATION MODEL

The EAQW did not come to group consensus around individual compensation models. The group clearly supported the building/district level compensation model, but had a variety of opinions on the efficacy of individual compensation models. If Chalkboard chooses to recommend a compensation system for individual educators, the system should be designed with multiple components on which evaluation and/or compensation depends. Accordingly, it is recommended that Chalkboard fund a pilot model in Oregon in order to test an innovative compensation system. The compensation structure should be locally determined. The EAQW found the report to be useful for providing models from other states that are implementing such systems.

Minnesota is one state that has enacted sweeping teacher compensation reform. The Minnesota alternative pay system is called Quality Compensation, or “Q-Comp.” Q-Comp is based on a performance pay program called the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP). TAP was developed with funding from the Milken Foundation and is supported by the Broad Foundation and the federal government.

Q-Comp requirements include the establishment of multiple career paths, objective educator evaluation systems, and professional development that aligns with performance. The EAQW has recommended that all three of these requirements be included in any proposed individual compensation system. It

seems that Q-Comp might be a system that would be compatible with our beliefs about educator evaluation and compensation.

CONCLUSION – LOOKING AHEAD

What could our schools and classrooms look like if all these recommendations were funded and implemented? The EAQW believes there are several major changes that will occur in the education system, keeping in mind that few of the recommendations can be successfully implemented in isolation. The workgroup believes that:

- Student learning, including test scores, will improve for ALL students, and the achievement gap between groups of children will close.
- The rate of students completing high school and continuing on to post-secondary education will increase.
- High quality teachers and administrators will be supported and retained in Oregon schools.
- The educational enterprise will become more collaborative, and hence, more successful with the integration of the community, the school board, administrators, teachers, staff and children.
- Incompetent and unmotivated teachers and administrators will exit the system or find positions that better fit their skill sets.
- Schools will be magnets for learners, teachers and community members to engage in life.
- Oregon will no longer appear near the bottom of national rankings in any assessment of educational quality.