

Use of Advisories to Document New Oregon Diploma Requirements

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School Improvement Goal

New Oregon diploma requirements increase the rigor of graduation requirements in the state. The new requirements also increase the relevance of the diploma by aligning diploma requirements with skills post-secondary institutions and the business community report students are missing upon graduation. Requiring Essential Skills for graduation make the diploma more relevant to post-secondary success in both work and educational pursuits. These skills are not directly monitored and documented within current coursework, and no current accountability system exists to insure that all students are completing and documenting these skills.

Single Goal: In order to better prepare Oregon students for graduation, schools must create a formal system for documenting the completion of the Essential Skills.

Options

Portfolios

- Pro: *Implementation.* Fairly easy to implement. Most districts already using this to collect evidence for CIM/CAM.
- Con: *Accountability.* Limited accountability for submissions due to no one person in charge to ensure students documenting their progression.

Senior Seminar

- Pro: *Accountability.* More accountability for skill documentation. Completed in Senior Seminar class.
- Con: *Relevance?* Diploma requirements' changed to make the diploma more meaningful for all students (State Board of Education-Oregon Department of Education, 2007).
 - More time is needed for career exploration than just grade 12. Relevance to post-secondary options can be increased by using other methods.
 - Timing: Applications to post-secondary options (college, trade-school, apprenticeships) must be submitted earlier.

Advisories

- Pro: *Relevance.* Provides students with the opportunity to explore career-related issues early.
- Pro: *Accountability.* Provides an opportunity for one person to monitor student progress on Essential Skills (ES).
- Pro: *Relationships.* Builds relationship with advisor.
- Pro: *Support s Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance (CGC) Implementation.* All schools in Oregon expected to have a framework in place (Oregon Department of Education, 2008). One component of this is creating an Education Plan and Profile (EPP) for each student. Plan can include demonstration of ES.
- Pro: *Timing.* Advisories allow students to explore their interests and career goals over several years rather than just one. Also, better timing for application submission.
- Pro: *Research Support.* Many schools both inside and outside Oregon have shown success with the use of advisories in their schools (Birky, 2008; Center for Collaborative Education, 2007; Clarke, 2003; Darling-Hammond, Anness, & Ort, 2002).

Essential Components of the Plan

- ❖ **Building a representative team**
 - Representatives from each key stakeholder group in the school should be invited such as counselors, union representatives, administrators, and teachers representing all grade levels and academic departments
- ❖ **Leadership**
 - **Administrator support is essential!!**
 - Enthusiasm and support for this project with at least one representative at each grade level or in each academic department is helpful
- ❖ **Clear Professional Development Structures**
 - Create time for teachers to meet regularly for collaboration, planning, and lesson preparation
 - Ongoing, frequent opportunities to support teachers through professional development throughout the implementation process
- ❖ **Student Ownership**
 - Assign credit to this time slot or show students in some other way the importance of advisories

Implementation Process

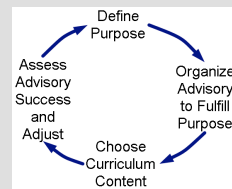


Figure 1. Implementation process diagram.

Process Components

1. Defining Purpose

A team must begin by clearly defining the purpose of their school's advisory. Advisories with different purposes will be organized differently and require different skills from the advisors.

Purpose Examples:

- Monitor essential skills documentation
- Advise students of academic decisions
- Foster home/school communication
- Encourage supportive peer relationships

2. Organizing Your Advisory to Fulfill School Purpose

- Number of students per advisor?
- Which adults in building will act as advisors?
- How will students be assigned (age, grade level, gender, skill)?
- Will students be paired for one year or multiple years?
- Frequency and duration of meetings (daily, weekly, biweekly)?

Current Oregon Models

Who's using advisories?

Canby	Crook County	Dufur	Gladstone
Lakeview	Myrtle Point	North Bend	Nyssa
Phoenix	Redmond	Scappoose	Sisters
Sprague (Salem)		Spray	The Dalles

Examples

- ES documentation, 25 minute weekly class, arranged by grade level themes
- Purpose: combination of skills deficits and ES documentation 25 minute twice weekly meeting, by grade level
- ES documentation and communication purpose, 2-3 times/week

Implementation Timeline and Resource Requirements

Implementation Timeline (For Fall Implementation)

- Spring & Summer
 - Team building
 - Purpose definition
 - Advisory organization
 - Curriculum content chosen
- At the completion of every term/trimester
 - Assessment of advisory success
 - Necessary adjustments

Resource Impacts

- ❖ **Time:** Much planning time (for steps 1, 2, & 3) needed, as well as professional development time train all advisor.
- ❖ **Money:** Spring/Summer Planning = Minimum 2 days \$264/ person Professional Development (for all advisors, but maybe not as a whole group for the whole day) = Minimum 1 day @ = \$264/person (U. S. Department of Education, 2007)

3. Choose Curriculum Content

- ✓ Content based on advisory purpose
- ✓ Follow common curriculum across advisors
- ✓ May be organized around essential questions, themes, skills

Examples (theme/skills by grade level):

Freshman: Self-discovery
 Sophomore: Connections between self- discovery and community based learning opportunities
 Junior: Explore post-secondary interests and application opportunities
 Senior: Finalize/complete applications for post-secondary plans, finish documenting Essential Skills demonstrations

4. Assess Advisory Success and Adjust

- Determine desired outcomes and how they will be measured
- Measure outcomes on a regular basis
- Adjust as needed

Outcomes Projections

Intended Outcomes

One outcome from the use of advisories is that a consistent system of documenting student skills needed for graduation would be in place. This would reduce any confusion over who was responsible for monitoring student progress, insuring student preparation to meet graduation requirements and successful post-secondary challenges.

Unintended Benefits

- *Connection:* The use of advisories to personalize education for students increases students' connection to school and increases student satisfaction (Center for Collaborative Education, 2007; Clarke, 2003; Darling-Hammond et al, 2002).
- *Attendance Rate Gains:* Students attend more frequently as they find more meaning in their education.
- *Graduation Rate Increases:* The use of advisories in schools has shown to increase graduation rates for students. (Center for Collaborative Education, 2007; Darling-Hammond et al, 2002).
- *Ease Transition to High School:* Advisories implemented in 7th grade ease transition (National High School Center, 2007).

References

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