Use of Advisories to Document New Oregon Diploma Requirements
Heather Norland, March 10, 2009, EDLD 655

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 ensure that all students are completing and documenting these skills.

Single Goal: In order to better prepare Oregon students for educational pursuits. These skills are not directly included in graduation requirements in the state. The new Oregon diploma requirements increase the rigor of education in their schools (Birky, 2008; Center for Collaborative Education, 2007). Students 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 CSM/CEM.
- Con: Accountability. Limited accountability for submissions due to no one person in charge to ensure students documenting their progression.

Senior Seminar
- Pro: Implementation. Fairly easy to implement. Most districts already using this to collect evidence for CSM/CEM.
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Advisories
- Pro: Implementation. Provides an opportunity for students to monitor student progress on Essential Skills (ES).
- Con: Implementation. Provides an opportunity for students to monitor student progress on Essential Skills (ES).

Senior Advisor
- Pro: Implementation. Provides an opportunity for students to monitor student progress on Essential Skills (ES).
- Con: Implementation. Provides an opportunity for students to monitor student progress on Essential Skills (ES).

Advisory
- Pro: Implementation. Provides an opportunity for students to monitor student progress on Essential Skills (ES).
- Con: Implementation. Provides an opportunity for students to monitor student progress on Essential Skills (ES).

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?
- May be organized around essential questions, themes, skills

Examples (themes/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

3. Choose Curriculum Content
- Content based on advisory purpose
- Follow common curriculum across advisories
- May be organized around essential questions, themes, skills

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4. Assess Advisory Success and Adjust
- Determine desired outcomes and how they will be measured
- Measure outcomes on a regular basis
- Adjust as needed

Implementation Process
1. Define Purpose
2. Organize Advisory to Fulfill Purpose
3. Choose Curriculum Content
4. Assess Advisory Success and Adjust

References