

## **131 The Oregon Successful School Initiative (OSSI)**

To: Oregon School District Staff

From: Oregon Board of Education

Date: February 25, 1991

Re: The Oregon Successful School Initiative (OSSI)

The Oregon Board of Education is required by State Law (as are all Wisconsin Boards of Education) to provide the facilities' and staff to educate all children living within the district's boundaries. The Oregon BOE aims to provide for all district students the best schooling possible within normal fiscal constraints. That goal is the one and only rationale for the OSSI.

The first step into OSSI was the SET program, conducted by the Oregon staff and attended by most of our staff. This was an excellent beginning toward improving the education of Oregon's students.

More recently, after considerable study of the research literature available on the subject, it appeared to the administration and those teachers who reviewed it, that Outcome Based Education (OBE) had much to recommend it. Those of the Oregon staff who studied it and/or tried OBE are supportive and believe it has improved – or could improve – their students' knowledge and performance, with the result that students feel more successful and more eager to study and learn.

There are, however, other teaching techniques that should be reviewed, pursued and adapted, or rejected, in an effort to find what is best for Oregon student learning and performance. Mastery learning, whole language, and more school – based decision – making are examples of school improvement techniques currently being discussed in the literature.

The question of whether or not the Oregon BOE is going to mandate OBE has been asked frequently of late. The answer for the immediate future is: no, unless the state mandates it. Barring State mandates, a local mandate is quite doubtful for the long range, too. The BOE anticipates Oregon's staff would want to employ any technique that would improve their students' performance, and the BOE has no intention of limiting options.

This can be a time of change; we need to work together to make it a time for continuing improvement. What can we do right now? The BOE is directing that a section in each school's IMC be provided with copies of research literature on successful schools and teaching. We encourage all staff review that material and to bring to the librarians' attention other pertinent literature, so that all may share information. The BOE is trying to serve as a catalyst; it is incumbent on the staff to provide the action on and reaction to the various initiatives.

The Oregon School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or handicap.