# State board creates high school graduation requirements task force

*by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources*

â€˜Task Forceâ€™ to Assist in Implementing New Diploma Requirements On Thursday, the State Board of Education approved taking the next step to better preparing students for college and the workforce. The Board approved the creation of an Implementation Advisory Task Force to assist and advise them as they set policy to implement the stateâ€™s new graduation requirements. The task force will make recommendations and proposals to the State Board over the next 24 months. During discussions over the past two years, the Board heard from thousands of Oregonians, most of them educators, who identified challenges to implementation of the new graduation requirements. The top five challenges they identified were (in order): 1. Funding 2. Adequate number of teachers 3. Adequate number of classrooms and labs 4. Support for students who need additional help meeting new requirements 5. Impact of requirements on students with disabilities and with limited English proficiency To address those issues, the Board approved a plan for Implementation Advisory Task Force, representing PreK-20 institutions, workforce, business and community leaders, legislators, and key policy makers. The Superintendent and the Governor will jointly appoint the members of the Implementation Advisory Task Force. Oregon Department of Education staff will coordinate the work, including agendas and scheduling of meetings. Members of Implementation Advisory Task Force will be announced this spring. In addition, the Board approved the following subcommittees to address specific issues that emerged during the discussion of the diploma requirements: Essential skills committee, Standards and assessments committee, Cost/capacity committee (includes teacher supply and demand); Proficiency-credit committee. â€œThe best way to determine how to implement the new requirements is to listen to those who know the most about the real needs of Oregonâ€™s public education system,â€• said Jerry Berger, State Board Chair. â€œWe want to be sure that we have the best information as we move forward, and the recommendations of this task force will come from the people who have first-hand, real-world information. We need that perspective, and we are committed to listening to their ideas for how to make this work for all students, schools and school districts in the state.â€• â€œIn addition, we will communicate task force recommendations and Board decisions,â€• Berger said. â€œThe work of the task force is important to everyone, and we want to ensure that we keep everyone in the loop every step of the way.â€• "I see the creation of the advisory group as essential to the successful implementation of the new graduation requirements," said Superintendent Susan Castillo. "This is very important work, and I am looking forward to reviewing the group's work and hearing their recommendations." In January, 2007 the State Board approved new requirements that will ensure students take more rigorous coursework and higher levels of math and science in order to receive a diploma. The State Board took the action in order to better prepare Oregon students for postsecondary education and the workplace. New requirements include 3 years of science (for the graduating class of 2012); 3 years of math with content at the Algebra 1 level or above (graduating class of 2014); 3 credits in any of the following - arts/applied arts/second language (graduating class of 2012); and a portfolio of essential skills. Students will have the opportunity to gain credit by proficiency.

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