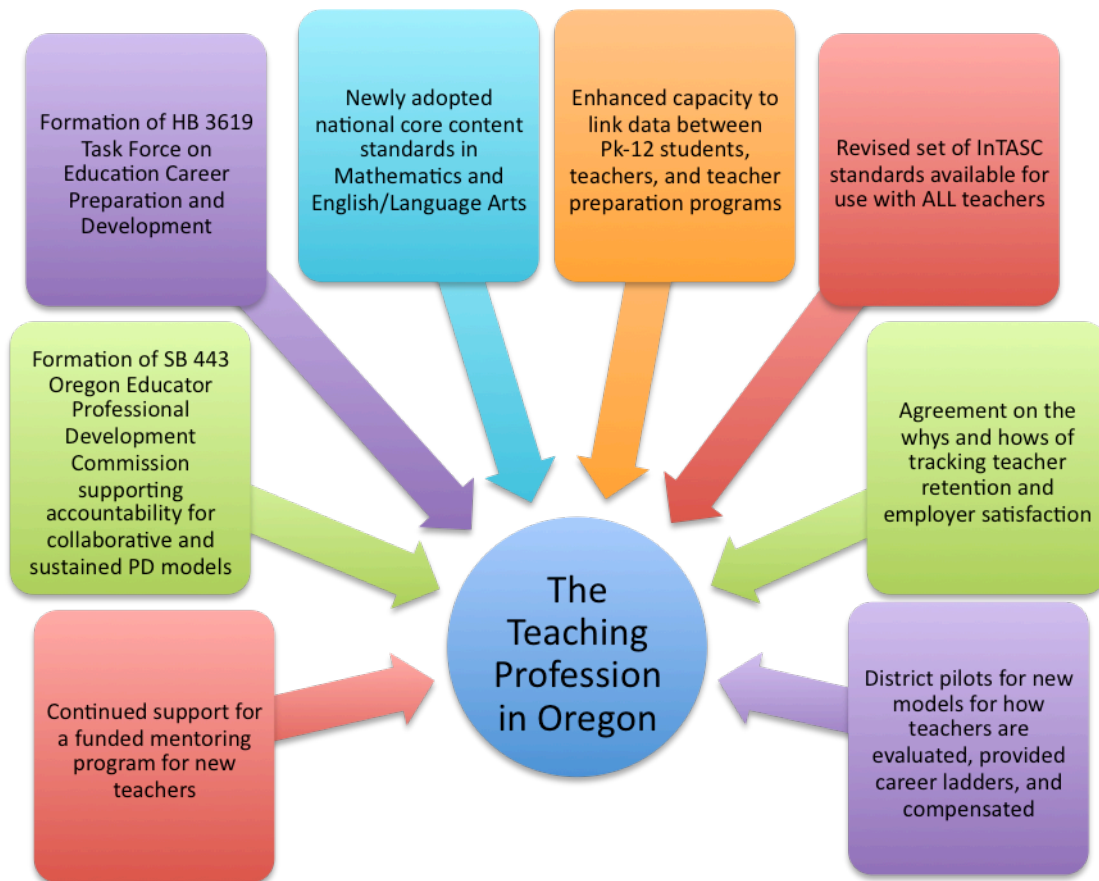


# The Power of One: Reaction to the Recent Launching of Model Core Teaching Standards by the Council of Chief State School Officers

A Commentary by  
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Every so often society witnesses an array of trends and events that together create either the perfect storm or a dramatic sea change, depending on one's perspective. Such a set of factors have collided in education to create far reaching changes in how classroom teachers are prepared, supported, and evaluated as seen in the figure below:



Rosselli, H. 2010

The July 2010 release of Model Core Teaching Standards by sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers for public comment is timely and relevant to Oregon's education agenda. Over two decades old, the original Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards were primarily focused on new teachers and were used as the undergirding framework for NCATE accredited institutions in Oregon and were crosswalked with the initial licensure standards required by the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission. The

group now referenced as the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC), has released new standards that are now designed and intended to apply to all teachers and that recognize the role of leadership that teachers are expected to assume in the schools of today. The usefulness of standards that span the continuum of teacher development can best be maximized IF there is general agreement on what expertise should look like at the stages of preservice, induction, early years, and master teacher. This calls for a convergence around current sets of standards that differentiate between the stages of a teacher's development and more specificity in a commonly agreed upon performance indicators and a rubric for guiding the assessment and support of teachers at each stage of the continuum, work that CCSSO have indicated they are beginning.

The lack of a common language in the past has created gaps in communication between vital partners involved in the recruitment, preparation, licensure, mentoring, retention and promotion of teachers in the state. The alignment of InTASC standards with those designed for program accreditation (NCATE), professional development (NSDC) and advanced credentialing (NBPTS) results in more common language and a unified way to reference the important skills and standards that teachers are expected to demonstrate while reducing unnecessary disconnects as educators progress through the various stages of their professional careers and coalescing around "a common vision for learning, teaching, and leading." Now is the right time for Oregon to use these standards to develop articulated systems that view the profession on a continuum rather than as disparate components.

CCSSO has revised the standards to also complement the new Common Core State Standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts infusing all of the standards with more attention to 21<sup>st</sup> century expectations of learners related to communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and the use of technology. The attention to literacy across the disciplines and the diversity of learners is also prominent and parallels the need for expectations to be able to reach and teach all types of learners with an ultimate focus on teacher instruction that requires PK-12 students to demonstrate their learning. Although the previous INTASC standards valued communication between teachers and among system and community stakeholders to support student success, there is more concerted focus on collaboration and inquiry throughout the standards. And as expected, the revised standards elevate the prominence of assessment literacy for teachers.

As is noted by the authors of the revised standards, users will need to avoid the tendency to use ALL of the items as a checklist rather than illustrative ways to better understand the standard. And Oregon would be wise to heed the advise of the authors to thoughtfully acknowledge the factors beyond the control of preparation programs, such as "the culture, climate, resources, induction practices, and supports that teachers experience in their first teaching assignments" and account for the "complexities of using student data to make decisions related to teacher preparation before embracing standardized test results as the only means of holding teacher preparation programs accountable".

Rightfully so, the authors acknowledge the power of state licensure rules effect the entry of teachers into employment. In its discussion of TPAC as a promising performance assessment

for preservice teachers, the CCSSO authors fail to adequately acknowledge Oregon's own preservice performance assessment, Teacher Work Samples, developed over 30 years ago and required as part of its existing licensure requirements since the early 1990s. Oregon is also further along than some states in that for the past two years hundreds of new teachers have participated in the Oregon Teacher Mentoring Project as either mentees or mentors. Based on the New Teacher Center model in California, there is already commitment of key staff members to align the mentor program around teacher standards ultimately adopted by Oregon.

Most likely, the work of CCSSO and its timing during highly politicized policy discussions that continue to focus on teachers as the key ingredient in achieving world class standards for America's students, will have far-reaching impacts on many policies impacting accountability for teacher preparation, evaluation and professional development. The report clearly reminds all engaged in these discussions to remember that: "Fairness demands that accountability be tied to a teacher's opportunity to learn and to teach, to multiple measures of effectiveness, and to the working conditions in which the teacher practices." Even when the winds of change align and a major sea change evolves, there is still need for thoughtful policy development that emerges from inclusive dialogues and involvement of all stakeholder groups. Like P-12 students, teachers must not be shortchanged or left behind as Oregon seeks to achieve higher standards for all students. Indeed, this is the best time to also focus on elevating the Teaching Profession, as teacher are still the key factor linked to student success.