

# School Change Rubric

## Condensed Version

### ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

The Oregon Small Schools Initiative seeks to create small, equitable, and high achieving high schools throughout Oregon. The project, which began in 2003, is part of *E3: Employers for Education Excellence* and is generously supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Meyer Memorial Trust. Information about the Initiative can be found at [www.E3oregon.org](http://www.E3oregon.org).

### ABOUT THE RUBRIC

Staff at the Initiative developed the School Change Rubric to help educators and others interested in high school redesign better understand the critical elements of high achieving and equitable small high schools. The version of the Rubric shown here reflects the thinking of the Initiative Design Team, research on best practices in school redesign from around the nation, and suggestions from the Initiative's Advisory Cabinet and expert faculty.

The Rubric is made up of four broad strands (*School Structure and Culture, Teaching and Learning, Leadership Development, and Community Engagement*) reflecting 22 individual dimensions. While some overlap exists between dimensions, each one represents an important set of indicators of school excellence.

### School Change Rubric: Strands and Dimensions

<p><b>STRAND 1: School Structure and Culture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Equity</li> <li>1.2 Autonomy</li> <li>1.3 Personalization</li> <li>1.4 Scheduling</li> <li>1.5 Collaboration</li> <li>1.6 School Climate</li> </ul>	<p><b>STRAND 3: Leadership Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1 Equity</li> <li>3.2 Distributed Leadership</li> <li>3.3 Effective Governance</li> <li>3.4 Learning Community</li> <li>3.5 Professional Development</li> </ul>
<p><b>STRAND 2: Teaching and Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Equity</li> <li>2.2 Focus on Powerful Teaching and Learning</li> <li>2.3 Personalization</li> <li>2.4 Academic Rigor</li> <li>2.5 Expectations and Accountability</li> <li>2.6 Assessment and Evaluation</li> </ul>	<p><b>STRAND 4: Community Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1 Equity</li> <li>4.2 Community Awareness and Support</li> <li>4.3 Parent Involvement</li> <li>4.4 Student Involvement</li> <li>4.5 Employer and Community Partnerships</li> </ul>

The full version of the Rubric, available on the E3 website, includes developmental descriptors and spaces for schools to record evidence of best practices. In the condensed version attached here, only the high-level "New Paradigm" descriptors and examples are included.

Schools are encouraged to use the Rubric as a tool to help assess their reform progress.

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## SCHOOL CHANGE RUBRIC: SCHOOL STRUCTURE AND CULTURE STRAND

<b>1.1 EQUITY</b>	
<p>School structure and culture fosters challenging and relevant learning opportunities for students from all cultural, racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, linguistic, and special needs backgrounds. There are no students assigned to low-achieving classes. Demographics of individual classes reflect demographics of the entire school. Each student receives unique support and academic preparation to achieve college-readiness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tracking eliminated</li> <li>▪ All students provided with multiple college-prep options during high school</li> <li>▪ Honors-level core courses for all students</li> <li>▪ Regular tutorial periods help all students access additional support</li> <li>▪ Every student provided with an adult mentor</li> <li>▪ Peer teaching and peer tutoring programs</li> <li>▪ Extra periods used to deliver intensive support services</li> </ul>
<b>1.2 AUTONOMY</b>	
<p>Small schools have sufficient control over budget, curriculum, schedule, staffing, leadership and governance, and space to carry out their own vision of schooling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Large school converts to a multiplex approach; coordinating council helps facilitate communication and cooperation between schools</li> <li>▪ Districts write policies that clearly and unequivocally support autonomous small schools</li> </ul>
<b>1.3 PERSONALIZATION</b>	
<p>School enrolls 400 students or less. Student interests and passions drive learning opportunities. Students from all cultural, racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, linguistic, and special needs backgrounds develop meaningful, long-term connections to peers and adults. Mentors guide students to develop a post-high school plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enrollment limits used to maintain small size</li> <li>▪ Course offerings based on student interests</li> <li>▪ Every student paired with adult mentor</li> <li>▪ Peer connections promoted through advisory groups and project teams</li> </ul>
<b>1.4 SCHEDULING</b>	
<p>Instructional time used strategically and flexibly. Time provided for teachers to work with individuals and small groups of students. School calendar maximizes potential for year-round learning. Facilities used beyond traditional school day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pre-periods, night classes, and tutorial periods</li> <li>▪ Flex time for teachers</li> <li>▪ Year-round school calendars</li> <li>▪ School as center of the community – open for learning around the clock</li> </ul>
<b>1.5 COLLABORATION</b>	
<p>Teachers are provided time and structures within the workday and designated staff development days to engage in formal, meaningful discussions about their practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaborative planning periods</li> <li>▪ Cross-curricular teaming of teachers</li> <li>▪ Late-start and early-release schedule to facilitate collaborative instructional design</li> </ul>
<b>1.6 SCHOOL CLIMATE</b>	
<p>School operates as a safe, positive, inclusive learning community where cooperation, respect, and responsibility are the norm. Social climate is an ongoing focus.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discipline policies and practices aligned to reflect priority of student learning</li> <li>▪ Diversity is consistently celebrated as a strength through all school messages and actions</li> <li>▪ Facilities reflect care for students</li> <li>▪ Peer mediation programs help solve student conflicts</li> </ul>

## SCHOOL CHANGE RUBRIC: TEACHING AND LEARNING STRAND

<b>2.1 EQUITY</b>	
<p>All students have equal access to highly challenging coursework that is relevant and connected to real life experiences. Teachers are knowledgeable about cultural, racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, linguistic, and special needs characteristics that affect learning and capitalize upon students' backgrounds when designing curriculum to meet individual learning needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Specific attention given to unlearning negative self-stereotypes</li> <li>▪ Instructional materials are differentiated to meet the needs of all learners</li> <li>▪ Teaching strategies selected to target a variety of learning styles</li> <li>▪ Explicit connections are made between student backgrounds and curricular topics</li> <li>▪ Rigorous performance standards are upheld for all students in all classes</li> <li>▪ Professional development explicitly addresses issues of equity in the classroom</li> </ul>
<b>2.2 FOCUS ON POWERFUL TEACHING AND LEARNING</b>	
<p>School has adopted and consistently employs a variety of engaging and effective teaching strategies. Learning goals and expectations are clearly articulated and understood by all students. Curriculum supports in-depth study.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Differentiated instruction</li> <li>▪ Project-based learning</li> <li>▪ Community-based or service learning</li> <li>▪ Exhibitions or public demonstrations of learning</li> <li>▪ Internship and mentorship programs</li> <li>▪ Publication and dissemination of learning goals</li> <li>▪ Staff meetings regularly used for discussions and demonstrations of best practices</li> <li>▪ Professional development provides opportunities to learn effective teaching strategies</li> </ul>
<b>2.3 PERSONALIZATION</b>	
<p>Student work is meaningful and taps into their passions and interests. Students are given numerous opportunities to demonstrate their personal attributes, gifts, knowledge and skills publicly. Students, parents, and teachers partner in the development of personal learning plans to prepare students for post-high school education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Differentiated instruction</li> <li>▪ Negotiated curriculum – topics and themes selected with extensive student input</li> <li>▪ Student choice in project exhibition modes</li> <li>▪ Personal learning plans developed for every student</li> </ul>
<b>2.4 ACADEMIC RIGOR</b>	
<p>Instruction is aligned with state and district standards and community expectations to prepare students for post-high school education. Students actively explore, research, and solve complex problems to develop a deep understanding of core academic concepts. Students are given multiple opportunities to engage in sophisticated and reflective learning experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Curricular mapping used to ensure alignment with local and state standards and expectations</li> <li>▪ Course sequences carefully articulated with lower grades to eliminate gaps and overlapping</li> <li>▪ Students supported to produce work that approaches industry standards</li> <li>▪ Courses regularly pursue depth over breadth</li> <li>▪ School chooses to have all senior Language Arts courses aligned with college-level coursework</li> </ul>
<b>2.5 EXPECTATIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITY</b>	
<p>Mission, goals, and expectations of excellence are developed and internalized by community, staff, and students. Teachers model accountability throughout their daily work with students and colleagues. Student assessments demonstrate mastery of skills and learning outcomes. Communication strategies are clear, goals are publicly displayed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community engagement strategies used to develop instructional goals and expectations</li> <li>▪ Staff regularly discusses student performance standards and how to push all students to higher levels of achievement</li> <li>▪ Multiple assessment tools used to demonstrate student progress, process, and proficiency</li> <li>▪ Peer review and assistance programs promote professionalism</li> <li>▪ Data used regularly to assess students, teachers, and programs and increase accountability</li> <li>▪ School engages community in an ongoing dialogue concerning student performance</li> </ul>
<b>2.6 ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY</b>	
<p>The use of ongoing, formative feedback is seen as a key learning tool. Student mastery is demonstrated through multiple performance measures, including collection of evidence as presented in portfolios and exhibitions which include research, oral presentations, and creative components.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In-process, formative feedback is a key feature in every classroom</li> <li>▪ Students required to publicly present and defend their learning results</li> <li>▪ Demonstrations of learning usually include two or more different modes</li> <li>▪ Students demonstrate learning growth through portfolios</li> </ul>

## SCHOOL CHANGE RUBRIC: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT STRAND

<b>3.1 EQUITY</b>	
<p>School decision-making bodies and leaders reflect the racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic differences of the community. The school recruits, retains, and develops staff from diverse backgrounds at all levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School decision-making bodies actively recruit and develop representatives who reflect the diversity of the school community.</li> <li>▪ Specific attention is given to hearing the voice of teachers who look like the students they teach</li> <li>▪ Teacher leader positions are shared by staff from different backgrounds and with different perspectives.</li> <li>▪ Hiring practices are strategically inclusive and aggressively seek to attract staff of color.</li> </ul>
<b>3.2 DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP</b>	
<p>Decision-making authority and influence are spread throughout the school. Leaders know the demographics of their schools and provide opportunities for all members to participate in key decisions. Staff and students have structured leadership opportunities to grow professionally. Leadership model enables sustained progress despite changes in leadership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Representative decision-making councils</li> <li>▪ Town-hall meetings, focus groups, and surveys used to gather feedback from constituents</li> <li>▪ Leadership development and professional growth pathways designed and promoted</li> <li>▪ Explicit capacity building plans grow leadership for ongoing support of school redesign efforts</li> </ul>
<b>3.3 EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE</b>	
<p>Meaningful decisions are made in an efficient and timely fashion by a diverse and representative governance body. Individuals from all constituent groups can clearly articulate the school decision-making process and the avenues for participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Key school decisions are made by a representative leadership body</li> <li>▪ School leadership body holds regular meetings that are open to all constituents</li> <li>▪ School leadership body publishes meeting minutes in a timely fashion</li> <li>▪ Decisions are made in a fair and efficient manner throughout the school</li> <li>▪ Constituent groups regularly communicate with their leadership council representatives regarding school issues and decisions</li> </ul>
<b>3.4 LEARNING COMMUNITY</b>	
<p>The staff intentionally puts learning first and is mindful about the change process and their work together. Staff, students, and community work together to enact the vision through relationships characterized by trust, respect, and responsibility. Principal, superintendent, school board, and community leaders actively support the school vision for student success.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Professional development and staff meeting time explicitly focus on change processes, developing a common vision of change, and student learning</li> <li>▪ Ongoing dialogue, events, and forums foster school-wide community building</li> <li>▪ Leaders from the school to the district to the school board participate in regular reviews of the school vision for student learning</li> </ul>
<b>3.5 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	
<p>Staff has time to reflect on their practice, collaborate with peers to improve instruction, and network with others beyond the school. Strategic professional development plan is aligned to vision and includes accountability measures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teachers are allowed to choose from a menu of professional development options that align with school vision for student learning</li> <li>▪ Teachers are provided with regular time and support to reflect on their practice, review student performance data, conduct action research, and share effective teaching strategies</li> <li>▪ Teachers regularly network with educators, employers, and experts beyond the school</li> <li>▪ Professional development plan aligns with school learning vision and takes a multi-year perspective</li> <li>▪ Accountability measures such as oral and written reports, peer reviews, classroom observations, and data analyses are used to provide feedback on training activities.</li> </ul>

## SCHOOL CHANGE RUBRIC: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRAND

<b>4.1 EQUITY</b>	
Parents and community members from all cultural, racial, ethnic, linguistic, special needs, and socioeconomic backgrounds are involved in all aspects of the school. School and community create open and explicit dialogue regarding issues of student achievement, equity, diversity, and empowerment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School actively engages community through forums, town hall meetings, and visits to community organizations and events</li> <li>▪ School staff visits the homes of incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade students to welcome them to the school</li> <li>▪ School explicitly reaches out to underrepresented parent and community groups, gathers their views, and uses them</li> <li>▪ All school newsletters and communications offer options for translation into different languages</li> </ul>
<b>4.2 COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND SUPPORT</b>	
Individuals and organizations throughout the community act as design partners who collaborate on the development of the school vision, curriculum, and programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community forums and town hall meetings</li> <li>▪ Focus group sessions that target specific subgroups in the community</li> <li>▪ Inclusion of community partners on key committees and leadership bodies</li> <li>▪ Inclusion of community partners in professional development and curriculum design meetings</li> </ul>
<b>4.3 PARENT INVOLVEMENT</b>	
Parents understand the vision and are active partners in curriculum design, student learning plans, school improvement, and school decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication plans target parents from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds</li> <li>▪ Parents are active and meaningful participants in school governance bodies</li> <li>▪ Parents participate regularly in professional development days and school reform conferences</li> <li>▪ Parent representatives serve in key roles on committees throughout the school and are voting members on school decision making bodies</li> <li>▪ Parents partner with students and school staff to develop student learning plans for all students</li> </ul>
<b>4.4 STUDENT INVOLVEMENT</b>	
Students understand the vision and are active partners in all aspects of school reform work, curriculum design, and community connections. Students provided with opportunities to have a meaningful impact on reform work and key school decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Student representatives are voting members of site leadership bodies</li> <li>▪ Students participate regularly on school reform panels, committees, and task groups</li> <li>▪ Students work with teachers to shape curricular themes, project topics, etc.</li> <li>▪ Students help to develop partnerships with employers and organizations in the community</li> </ul>
<b>4.5 EMPLOYER AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS</b>	
Employer partners develop rich learning experiences for all students and staff and reap tangible rewards from their relationships with students and the school. Partners actively work to bring school vision to fruition. Partners have opportunities to influence curriculum and program development. Partners receive regular updates on key curriculum and policy changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work-based learning, student internships, and job shadowing</li> <li>▪ Employer and community partners work with teaching teams to develop community-based projects</li> <li>▪ Employer and community partners regularly serve as audience members for student exhibitions</li> <li>▪ Student internships and projects target real needs of employers and community organizations</li> <li>▪ School communication plans target employer and community partners</li> </ul>