



Dedicated to the development of critical competencies
in adults for change and growth.

A Wetherhaven Production

Policy Analysis Worksheet, CAM

Name of policy:

State of Oregon Department of Education CAM Certification

Type of policy instrument:

Government regulation

Description of setting and background (who made the policy and who is affected):

The State of Oregon Department of Education created the policy and it affects all public school stakeholders in the state including school administration, teachers, students, parents, communities, businesses, non-profit agencies, and government agencies.

The Oregon policy development was an outcome of a general feeling that the school system was not producing the quality of student necessary to compete in the world market. The Oregon policy followed a national reform drive where other states started developing transformation plans at about the same time. Oregon was not developing a plan in isolation, extensive research into other initiatives, both domestic and international, formed the foundation of the work on the Oregon plan.

Major purposes of policy:

The purpose of the Certificate of Advanced Mastery is to assure that each student is prepared for successful transitions to his or her next steps. This is the stated purpose of the policy. Implied purposes and other agendas included reform of the way high schools teach students, turning out students that industry could hire without extensive retraining in critical competencies such as communication, problem solving, and learning efficacy, and serving notice to high schools that the current way business was being done was not acceptable to society.

Implications for equity, efficiency and excellence (one observation for each):

- ◆ Equity: The way our educational process is set up currently, there is little school to school consistency in outcomes of the educational process. An 'A' from one school might actually equate to a 'C' in another school. The grade then carries little meaning unless coming from a known high quality educational institution. The CAM will help create equity so that each student will be judged against a known standard and the outcome for each school can be judged against a known standard, the CAM.

Other non-positive equity issues would include poor implementation of CAM in communities where there is weak leadership at the district and building level and

where there is poor intellectual and social capital in communities leading to poor community and parental support of the transformation process. Inequity of funding in smaller districts may lead to the inability to attract quality administration and a reduced ability to have the critical mass necessary to staff to support reform.

The CIM process is predisposed to equity more than the CAM process as the measurements are far more consistent than they will every be on the CAM. Review on a district by district basis will create great differences in CAM outputs and acceptable CAM outputs creating inequity. Some CAM's will not be the same quality as others, which addresses quality as well.

- ◆ Efficiency: The CAM process is not at all efficient, it is however effective. In the current educational process, pre-published lesson plans are available, boards and administration can dictate books and curriculum, all of which makes for a very efficient teaching process. This is however, not an effective learning process. It is input centric, not output centric. The CAM process is output centric or effective. The inputs are not at all dictated and therefore the educational design process will be less efficient and messier. In the perspective of a cost vs. benefit view, if the program is more effective and produces the results envisioned, the investment will be worthwhile, even if more costly.
- ◆ Excellence: Excellence is indeed the intent of the reform process. CAM is inline with national trends of educational reform designed to improve the excellence in education nationally and our ability as a nation to better compete in a global marketplace. There will be district to district differences in the quality of the CAM, as each district will set its criteria for acceptance.

Other relevant issues (social-cultural, economic, political, links to other policies):

Educational reform seems to have created the same social fervor as the abortion issue. In its initial format, outcomes such as having students be able to work effectively in diverse work teams created an extraordinary outcry from the religious conservatives. The very thought of having their children having to work in a team with a gay student was out of the question. The fight to kill the legislation was extraordinary. We then saw the fight of teachers who did not want to change/improve their teaching techniques. Administration was fearful of the changes necessary to support the changes and how that would influence their districts and schools.

Costs were a concern and the debate over who would pay for changes in an atmosphere of reduced funding heated up and is still a concern. There seems to be a strong political component to the debate, in general republican against, democratic for reform. The Oregon educational reform plan is in close alignment with national trends for educational reform.

Things to think about (enforceability, degrees of freedom for interpretation, anachronisms):

Since the CAM is designed to dictate outcomes, inputs are open to interpretation if they produce the outcomes envisioned. Once agreed upon, the CAM will be enforceable at a state level. Outcomes may have funding implications as well. As far as anachronisms,

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reform was introduced at the same time as many other reform efforts nationally. Oregon made the choice to lead rather than follow which has created more resistance as the reform effort took many out of their comfort zones. Given that, we may have been a bit ahead of our time in the reform effort. Whether or not this would have reduced resistance to change is debatable.

In reflection, the state was remiss in its method of introduction of change. We have a crisis in leadership both at the state level and at the local level in education. We are losing administrators faster than we can create them. There is a huge block of administrators on the verge of retirement. For the most part, those we have are not certainly highly trained in the facilitation of change and transformation.

If the department of education had done its homework 10 years ago and had anticipated this leadership vacuum, they might have started the change process by implementing a broad scale development program for school administrators. This program would help administrators build the competencies necessary to support and initiate reform and create creative educational environments for teachers to innovate. This would be a very positive program even initiated at this late date, as the state will not come out of the educational leadership crisis any time soon.