

State educator defends pre-college standards

By DANA TIMS
Of the Emerald

SALEM— State Superintendent of Public Instruction Vern Duncan admitted at the start that he hoped his recommendations would be "scrutinized, amended and torn apart."

hesitate to take Duncan up on his opening offer.

Duncan prepared his proposals in response to the findings of a legislative interim task force report, which made 10 recommendations regarding standards and competency tests. The task force, comprised of three senators and three rep-

Duncan wanting to retain testing through 12th grade, disagreement came quickly.

"If you keep competency tests at the 12th grade level," said Sen. Clifford Trow, D-Corvallis, committee co-chairer, "You'll just reinforce that wrong-ended attitude. What the task force wanted to do was move all that up so more emphasis would be placed on those things at a much earlier age."

"In time, we can get there," responded Duncan, "but there are people who are now sophomores and haven't had the exposure to those earlier programs. I'm afraid they would be cut off."

Duncan told committee members that presently, only high schools are required to test students for minimum standards. One of his recommendations, which will be presented to the board in April, would establish tests for elementary and secondary students also.

But the legislators wanted him to be more specific about the standards. Some even expressed doubt about their legitimacy.

"Isn't it true," asked Sen. Anthony Meeker, R-Amity, "that to graduate from an Oregon high school, a student must only read and write well enough to be at the sixth grade level?"

"Well, even with an eighth grade education and reading level," responded Dun-

can, "you can read most newspapers and rental agreements. And it will take you on through your life."

"Can you read a high school physics text with an eighth grade education?" asked Trow.

"You can read the basic words," answered Duncan. "Of course, you'd have to learn the technical language."

Duncan also said a master list of minimum standards is being compiled by his office. It will, he said, contain nine general areas of studies and use 30 to 50 indicators of competency.

"But we can't be too specific about these," he said, "because people demand local control. We can't just tell them what to do. But now we have the expertise to go in and work with local districts and help them upgrade their standards if they fall short of what their standards should be."

"But," said Dave Frohnmayer, R-Eugene, "wouldn't every school in Oregon be able to make the paper argument that they're meeting these standards?"

Duncan assured him that his office could handle the problem. "We've got some direction now, and these things are getting easier than when I took over."

But with an obstinate committee in the way of his preliminary recommendations, that "direction" may grow more diffuse as the days drag on.



legislative
issues

A joint meeting of the House and Senate Education Committees took those words seriously Monday night.

Duncan appeared before the committees to discuss his preliminary recommendations to the State Board of Education for revisions to the state minimum standards. The committees, however, have their own ideas about minimum standards and didn't

representatives, included five members of the combined committees.

Both the task force's report and Duncan's recommendations centered around the teaching and testing of basic skills— reading, writing and "computing." But with committee members favoring the report's emphasis on testing minimum competencies at lower levels only and

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Law school sponsors art contest

A University law professor has organized a competition from which two art pieces may be commissioned and placed in the law school.

Prof. Dominick Vetri says a "wall treatment" and a sculpture may be commissioned costing a maximum of \$750 to be drawn from private donations to the school.

Interested artists should submit a portfolio of slides or photographs of past works, a statement of intent for this project, a drawing or sketch of the proposed work and a description of the work, including dimensions, materials, construction time and price.

A law school committee will decide which proposals, if any, to accept. The committee will con-

sist of two members of the law school faculty, a law student and an artist consultant.

Project submissions should be given by Thursday to Sallie French of the University law school.

For more information, call Vetri at 686-3868, or French at 686-3852.

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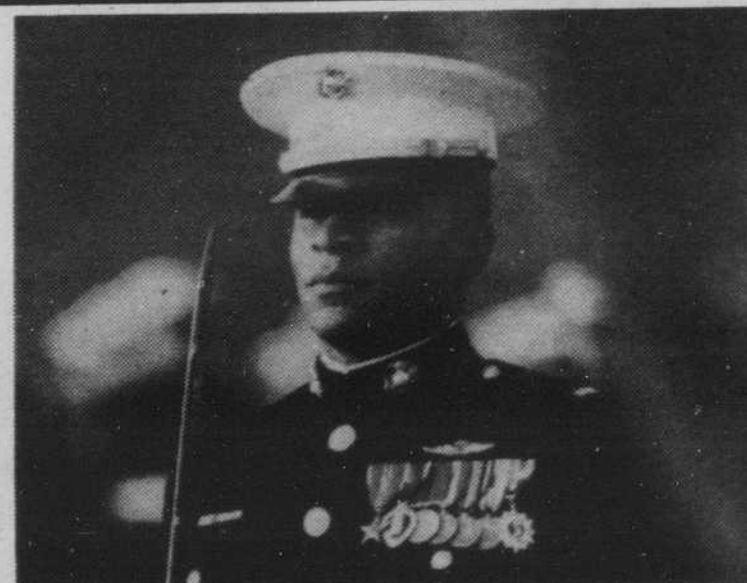
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