THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Accountability | World-Class Math and Science Standards | Meaningful Diploma/CORE 24

CORE 24 IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE MEETING NOTES
NOVEMBER 2, 2009

ITF Members Present: Michael Christianson, Jean Countryman, Linda Dezellem, Lynn Eisenhauer, Larry Francois, Lisa Hechtman, Sergio Hernandez, Julie Kratzig, Bridget Lewis, Karen Madsen, Dennis Maguire, Mark Mansell, Mick Miller, Alex Otoupal, Jennifer Shaw, Brad Sprague, Chuck Hamaker-Teals, Sandra Sheldon

SBE Members and Staff: Steve Dal Porto (Board Co-Lead), Jack Schuster (Board Co-Lead), Connie Fletcher, Bunker Frank, Bob Hughes, Kathe Taylor (staff)

Observers: Linda Lamb, Tim Knue

Welcome and Review of Agenda.

School Funding and Finance Reform Update. Isabel Muñoz-Colón provided an update on the latest information about school funding. Her PowerPoint presentation is on the SBE website at: http://www.sbe.wa.gov/documents/SBE%20Core24%20Nov3%2009_Final.pdf

The presentation walked through the factors contributing to a funding crisis and detailed the legislature's proposed solution: ESHB 2261. Since ESHB 2261 does not establish the prototypical school model values in statute, Isabel talked about a process for establishing proposed ending funding values, and shared Superintendent Dorn's proposed 2018 values, largely based on the work of the Basic Education Funding Task Force. She noted that the proposal would be updated after the Funding Formula Technical Workgroup (established by ESHD 2261) provided recommendations and better data was obtained. She concluded her presentation with Superintendent Dorn's rough estimate of the cost at that time.

Phase-in Recommendations. Jennifer Shaw and Mark Mansell facilitated a discussion about the phase-in recommendations the ITF could make. This discussion, originally scheduled for half an hour, consumed the rest of the meeting as ITF members grappled with the information they had just heard and the task of making a realistic recommendation.

The group struggled with sizing the task—whether they could focus on what resources would be needed to implement Core 24 or whether the resources for Core 24 could not be separated from those needed to address all of the education reform issues.

Discussion centered on:

- What funding of a 6th instructional hour (identified by the SBE as necessary for Core 24) represented
- Whether Core 24 should be linked or delinked to the funding of all of the systemic elements needed for education reform; whether all of education reform would need to be "fixed" before Core 24 could be phased in
- What aspects of education reform might be most closely linked with Core 24 (e.g., funding for low-income students, counselors, support for at-risk students, etc.)
- Whether funding for education reform would be driven by biennial budgets or statute

- Concerns that funding for schools would be going “backwards” due to the state’s budget crisis
- Concerns that the overall education reform price tag, based on Superintendent’s rough estimate, is going to be large, and the Core 24 piece of that needs to be realistic
- Concerns that if a clear message couldn’t be sent from this group that graduation requirements funding was important, it was unlikely to come from other sources
- The meaning of full funding—did that mean the full system was funded, and how likely was it that the full system would ever be funded? (Concern that if we were to wait until everything was funded, the system would never move forward.)
- Concern about ballparking a funding request too low—(if we ask for X, we’re never going to get it. We’re going to get X minus something.)
- Whether middle school funding would be needed for Core 24.

Mark and Jennifer summarized the competing perspectives:

- The focus should be on the system—high schools don’t operate in isolation; the whole system needs to be funded.
- The focus should be on the high school implementation requirements; make a realistic recommendation for this part of the system

In the afternoon, Jennifer read the CORE 24 charter to the group. The charter included the Board’s original motion to “Affirm the intention of the Board to advocate for a comprehensive funding package and revision to the Basic Education Funding formula, which among other necessary investments, should link the implementation of Core 24 directly to sufficient funding to local school districts for a six-period high school day, a comprehensive education and career guidance system, and support for students who need additional help to meet the requirements.”

Jennifer asked each person to take a minute to write down what needs to be funded, and then share their comments.

Julie: In my district, if the state would support struggling students, then CORE 24 would work. Most of our students get 24+ credits (we require 23). We need a safety net. We also need increased FTE for extra teachers and guidance/counseling.

Jean: In my district, poverty, class size, funding of a 6 period day; 1 FT elementary counselor and 2-3 HS counselors to create 300 or less per counselor.

Lynn: For successful and sustainable implementation, increase teacher capacity, with multiple ways to get there and support for struggling kids, and a more open box for how we help kids learn.

Lisa: Provide allocations to let teacher load drop to 100 kids per year, access to 6 period day, comprehensive guidance from summer of 8th grade year, increase teacher capacity

Sandra: Flexible funding to implement this, with a variety of ways for students to get credits, flexible school day/year

Michael: competency-based instruction, recognizing programs of study that are credit-intensive, and allowing students to attend (pre-apprenticeship, trades). Fund it.

Alex: Flexibility, lower case loads for counselors (our 9th grade counselor has a case load of 615)

Linda: Flexibility of schedule, is it the length of the day? Funding for after-school tutoring programs.

Chuck: Expanded sense of cross-crediting, change strategies at teacher level to help students learn, support networks for teachers to develop better instructional strategies, giving teachers time to collaborate, etc.

Brad: Find a way to help all learners—peer teaching as one way. Students or volunteers to help students. Safety nets—tighten the mesh to capture them before they drop through.

Dennis: 20% bump in my budget with flexibility to decide what's best for my kids would be great; counseling; phase-in for teacher capacity, facility, etc.

Larry: Flexibility, however it's defined, legislature needs to fund it if they require it. Support system for students is crucial. Counselors, social workers, family advocates, crucial.

Bridget: Funding hits the key points. A first order piece; system must make fundamental shifts to make CORE 24 work for all kids. What does phase-in mean? Doesn't seem to be any stair steps built in.

Mick: Three tiers: 20% increase—pay for that 6th period over 2008-2009 funding. Implement guidance and counseling (Dorn component). Materials, supplies and operational costs at 2/3 of Dorn model to build supports for struggling students.

Sergio: 20%. Plus Guidance $82 million, plus Support for struggling students, $88 million.

Karen: Good faith effort every day to fully fund all the parts of 2261. Recommendation #1, 6 years after funding, plus professional development, repurpose facilities, elaboration on who struggling students are, 8-12.

Several proposals were suggested to move the discussion forward. Superintendent Dorn's rough estimates of cost (slide #44 in Isabel Muñoz-Colón's presentation) were referenced.

Proposal #1-- roughly $700 million
1. We believe the whole system should be funded and you should work toward funding the whole system.
2. Class size standard for grades 8-12 to hire more staff (5/13 of $733.2)
3. Guidance counselors (all of $82.1)
4. Class size poverty reduction. (all of $88.2)
5. Related MSOC costs to accompany class size reduction. (5/13 of 754.9)

Proposal #2—5/12 of the following costs from Superintendent Dorn's list:
1. class size poverty reduction
2. guidance counselors
3. professional development coaches
4. instructional aides
5. LAP/ELL

Plus ½ of NERC brings total to: $476 million from base year of 2008-2009

Proposal #3: ($1.3 billion, based on Superintendent Dorn's rough estimates)
1. Link to 2261
2. 5/12 of all categories (slide #44)
3. Includes restoration of I-728 funds
4. Budget must be in statute

In the end, the ITF underscored that:
- Secondary schools are part of a K-12 system and that the ultimate success of Core 24 would depend on full funding of the entire system.
- Funding would need to extend to middle school
- Funding must start 6 years before the first Core 24 graduating class