



SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Randy I. Dorn

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STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Jeff Vincent, Chair

Old Capitol Building • PO Box 47206 • Olympia, WA 98504 • www.sbe.wa.gov

April 9, 2012

Dear Members of the Joint Select Committee on Education Accountability:

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the State Board of Education (SBE) are jointly undertaking work relative to the development of future school and district accountability systems. The purpose of the letter is to provide an update on that on-going work and extend an invitation to partner as the work of your committee gets underway.

The Washington State Legislature, through Chapter 235, Laws of 2010 (E2SSB 6696) and Chapter 548, Laws of 2009 (ESHB 2261), assigned the SBE with responsibilities for developing an accountability framework that "provides a unified system of support for challenged schools that aligns with basic education, increases the level of support based upon the magnitude of need, and uses data for decisions." Additionally, OSPI has been charged statutorily with "developing and implementing the accountability tools to build district capacity and working within federal and state guidelines." That latter charge is timely, as OSPI takes a lead role in the Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request.

While there is still work to do, both agencies have achieved some success in developing and implementing elements of this framework:

1. For the past three years, SBE has implemented an Achievement Index which incorporates multiple measures to assess all public schools in Washington annually. Districts, lawmakers, parents, and other stakeholders use this Index to enhance their understanding of school performance.
2. SBE and OSPI use the data from the Achievement Index to annually recognize high achieving schools with the Washington Achievement Award.
3. SBE and OSPI identified four districts as Required Action Districts in order to ensure that they accessed federal funds to implement turnaround models in their lowest-performing schools.
4. Most recently, SBE and OSPI have partnered to craft an ESEA Flexibility Request to the U.S. Department of Education in order to move forward with the development and implementation of a sound statewide accountability system, as well as to provide relief for districts from the No Child Left Behind sanctions. A key element of the Flexibility Request is the current Achievement Index and plans to update the Index to include student growth data and disaggregated student subgroup data.

As you convene your committee and begin your work, we would like to extend an invitation to partner together to ensure that future accountability plans are aligned with the fluid events of the last few months. Specifically, SBE has established an accountability committee to serve in a liaison capacity and to support your work. In addition, OSPI staff has been designated to support the accountability work.

Joint Select Committee on Education Accountability

April 5, 2012

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We look forward to working with you on this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Vincent", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeff Vincent, Chair
State Board of Education

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Dorn", with a large, stylized "D" and a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Randy Dorn, Superintendent
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction