



Achievement and Accountability Workgroup (AAW) Feedback Report
August 19, 2014

During the August 19, 2014 meeting, SBE staff presented on additional indicators and recommendations for evidence-based education reforms, the development of a district-level Index Rating, and the inclusion of Dual Credit in the Index. This report was written based on notes from the discussion, written feedback from AAW members in response to guiding question, and was sent to AAW members prior to publication.

Executive Summary

Table with 2 columns: Topic or Question, AAW Feedback or Recommendation. Rows include: Number of Indicators, Early Learning, Expanded Learning Opportunities, Teacher Indicator, Discipline, Language Acquisition, KIDS COUNT Indicators, Attendance.

Survey-Based Indicator	Agreement with no Dissent: All members were interested in a survey indicator, with some members focused on student voice and other members focused on parent voice. The suggested survey topics covered the full breadth of health, safety, economic, and family and community, thus overlapping with KIDS COUNT indicators.
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Inclusion of Dual Credit in the Index	
Topic or Question	AAW Feedback or Recommendation
Any problems with inclusion of Dual Credit in the 2013-2014 Index?	No Agreement: Members did not reach consensus around a major problem with reporting the 2013-2014 Dual Credit participation. Members raised concerns about funding inequities and regional differences in capacity.

Inclusion of District-Level Index Ratings	
Topic or Question	AAW Feedback or Recommendation
Were members in favor of a district-level Index Rating?	Majority Agreement: No, unless there is a clear purpose for doing so.

Additional Indicators and Recommended Reforms for ESSB 5491

Number of Indicators

Concern Raised: The Legislature identified indicators as snapshots of educational system health. Including too many indicators could defeat the purpose of having snapshots. SBE staff stated that it is important to have indicators that can have multiple policy influences, thus doing double-duty. One member cautioned that tension is created when expanding data and accountability because schools have to configure their rules to meet the expectations of too many masters within state and federal government.

Early Learning

Agreement with no dissent: Include a measure of early learning, either beyond WaKIDS or by enhancing the WaKIDS indicator, as an additional indicator, and recommend bolstering early learning as an evidence-based education reform in the 5491 report.

Among other 5491 data, SBE staff presented on Pre-K participation rates from KIDS COUNT, stating that Washington ranked low compared to other states in students enrolled in preschool programs. Members noted that WaKIDS is already an indicator of kindergarten readiness. They were interested in a measure of access to Pre-K learning opportunities. Members noted that WaKIDS is not yet representative of the entire population because it is still being phased in, but it is a good start. The suggestions on a measure beyond WaKIDS or the enhancement of the WaKIDS indicator were varied and included:

- Participation in Pre-K services.
- Disaggregating WaKIDS results by participation in Early Childhood Assistance Program enrollment and other early learning programs to understand the impact of preschool services on kindergarten readiness.
- “See that the data exhibits the haves and have-nots – poverty, English language proficiency, health insurance, et cetera.”

- “A focus on early learning for all of the family – parents too! Literacy/employability of parents; ability to help children learn, external learning.”

Members were in agreement that early learning should be recommended as an evidence-based reform in the 5491 report. Multiple members suggested that early learning become part of basic education, suggesting that it be an entitled afforded constitutional protection. One member cited a study that showed the effect size of Pre-K on student outcomes as greater than that of reduced class size. Another member stated that the Road Map districts include measures of early learning in their accountability system. The following written comments on expanded Pre-K overlapped with expanded learning opportunities, with the discussion revolving around increased access leading to reduced opportunity gaps:

- “So what do the students (target students) need? – Quality Pre-K? Longer school year? Extended HS time to graduate?”
- “More time and access to education for high need students = more opportunity.”
- “Early learning part of Basic Ed”
- “Pre-K, Full Day K for those in need”
- “Summer programs (prevent summer loss)”
- “Reform that could help address K readiness - Including high-quality early learning as part of Basic Education and improving the quality of our early care and learning system.”
- “Exploring extended school year and day models. Note: This reform is ideal but politically probably not feasible, at least as a state-wide reform.”
- Extended Learning opportunities funding
- “Do students have access to extended school year, extended graduation – How do these data correlate to gaps?”
- “Why should taxpayers pay for kids to be in Pre-k that are better off staying at home? A matrix needs to reflect those who could benefit.”

Expanded Learning Opportunities

Strong Interest with Limited Discussion: Recommend expanded learning opportunities as an evidence-based education reform in the 5491 report. One member stated that successful charter schools have used expanded learning opportunities to successfully improve student outcomes. Suggestions included afterschool programs, wraparound services, summer programs to prevent summer learning loss, and one member stated that expanded learning opportunities are inclusive of preschool early learning opportunities. Thus the written comments and discussion of early learning were closely related to expanded learning opportunities. The general theme was that more time and access equals more opportunity and improved student outcomes.

Why do you think the system is not improving on a particular indicator? What reform addresses that cause?

Varied topics, no decisive agreement: Written responses to this broad question of reform raised issues of teacher, leader, and school effectiveness most commonly.

- “Also the folks in the trenches. Trenches need more opportunities (probably more/better resources) to tell – and less being told”
- “The policy makers need to get serious if they want to close the gaps. Stop the rhetoric and punishment. Adequately fund programs and reduce the strangling red tape and directives from Olympia. Local districts know their kids and needs best. Example => new LAP law.”

- “We’re looking through a myopic lens. Student success is a factor of family experience/expectations, school effectiveness, access to health care, job stress/financial struggle. School effectiveness does not exist in isolation.”
- “Change schools (and teachers) not the kids. Institutional racism – cultural competency. High quality instruction where it is needed most {Strategic Staffing}! Student “data backpack” (to take with mobile kids).”
- “Evaluating how money is being spent – is it being spent on reforms that are research-based and that work. Figure out how we can spend money more wisely/strategically. Figuring out how to improve portability of student records (Ed history, IEPs, etc.), especially for mobile students who move from district to district, so that educators have the information they need to meet the needs of each student.”
- “Reforms that could help address achievement gaps – (A) how we train, support, and keep effective teachers and leaders; (B) how we measure and respond to teachers and leaders who are able to help students learn and grow; (C) how we exit ineffective teachers and leaders.”
- Percent of eligible children enrolled in select formal early learning programs. Percent of licensed childcare programs meeting quality criteria.

Teacher Indicator

Majority Disapproval of Teacher Effectiveness, Suggestions on Measuring Human Capital: Several members reacted with disapproval to using TPEP as a 5491 indicator, particularly before full implementation and vetting, and offered alternative ways of measuring human capital. Multiple members were against inclusion of any indicator of teacher effectiveness in the 5491 report. However, one member provided a written comment strongly recommending multiple measures of teacher effectiveness. Members cautioned against using TPEP as a measure of teacher effectiveness, stating that it has not been fully implemented and vetted, it is subjective, and teachers can appear effective by one indicator and not by another. As alternatives to TPEP, members considered the following measures:

- Ratio of endorsed teachers to the number of teachers needed in areas of the state.
- Ratio of endorsed teachers by content area to the number of teachers needed by content area.
- Teacher availability.
- Aggregate number of teachers incoming every year.
- A measure of equitable distribution of teachers by Highly Qualified status, placement, and content area. (A member noted that almost all teachers are Highly Qualified.)
- Cautioned against the movement of teachers in high poverty schools because the data may come to wrong conclusions when new schools open or transfer teachers.
- Retention rates of teachers.

Members provided the following written comments on teacher effectiveness:

- “Teacher quality has myriad variables – it’s probably a meaningless indicator. There is a double-edged sword to discipline – you don’t want kids out of the classroom, but you do want it to be safe.”
- “Strongly recommend teacher quality indicators especially ones that measure track teacher prep; distribution of high quality/effective teachers; when TPEP scores are available it would be helpful to have that data; teacher competency in licensure areas; teacher recruitment, promotion and retentions; number of effective teachers of color. Note: Some of the measures may be more useful at the district level.”

- “No to teacher quality – too subjective, but what about some objective data to show what IHE’s are producing and what our policies are reaping as a result of blaming teachers/principals. Candidate pools are thin. What are institutions of higher education doing?”
- “Teacher quality is in transition. I do not believe we need to add this until we know TPEP is an effective tool.”
- “No.”

Discipline

Limited Discussion with No Dissent: The limited discussion on discipline included some support and no opposition to the inclusion of a state-level discipline indicator, although members did have technical suggestions for how the measure should be calculated. Members provided the following written comments:

- “Discipline percent of districts implementing alternative discipline interventions (PBIS).”
- “Recommend including discipline as an indicator – same ways to measure: Number of exclusions, demographics of students, and attendance – could help identify disproportionality and help measure safety and school climate.”
- “If considering discipline – Those toxic behaviors i.e., weapons – is beyond an education system health indicator – There should be consideration for non-toxic behaviors to gauge effectiveness to be an indicator.”
- “For discipline, get quality data.”

Language Acquisition

Mixed Opinions, Limited Discussion: Members did not voice support for WELPA during the limited conversation, but did emphasize the importance of measuring language acquisition.

Members made the following comments:

- Language acquisition is important to track, but WELPA is probably not the best.
- “Supportive of language acquisition being a stand-alone indicator – although capacity wise – this may need to be phased in later. If there are capacity constraints, I rec. measuring language acquisition at specific grade milestones (cg 4th, 8th...) I also have concerns here about what assessments are used to measure students’ English proficiency and how students are exited out of traditional ELL programs.”

KIDS COUNT Indicators

Presentation Summary: KIDS COUNT includes nationally comparable data that is used for state comparisons on four domains comprised of a total of 16 indicators. The domains are: economic well-being, education, health, and family and community.

Broad Interest: Members were interested in the economic, pre-K indicator of education, health, and family and community indicators, but were not clear on whether they should be included in a concise set of snapshots for 5491. However, it was clear from the discussion on early learning that they were in support of the Pre-K participation indicator.

- “(1) Access to quality health care. (2) Mother’s level of educational attainment. (3) Consider the issue of undocumented students and their post-secondary work (college or work). High schools have no impact on this issue but will be rated on it. Students don’t always disclose and there is no way to calculate.”

- “Healthcare/Employment (employments stress)/School are intertwined in the health of a child – they cannot be separated, but I don’t know how to fit the puzzle pieces together.”

Attendance

Strong Interest: Multiple members noted the importance of attendance data as a window into student life and education reforms, but members did not provide a clear way for attendance to be used as a meaningful state-level indicator rather than a meaningful local-level indicator.

Multiple members stated the importance of attendance data to understanding the engagement of parents, health care, parent employment, resources, and other factors that affect students. One member said that students who are lacking clothing, hygiene supplies, and other basic resources may not show up to school. Members noted the importance of attendance to progress throughout the year, dropout rates, engagement, classroom morale, and requirements for physical space within the classroom. Essentially, the attendance rates offer information into non-academic supports that may improve student outcomes. In response to the idea of targeted assistance to remedy these challenges, a member cautioned that the state should not incentivize low attendance for districts to receive additional funding. Although members were enthusiastic about the importance of attendance data, they did not provide a clear way for it to be used as a meaningful statewide snapshot of educational system health rather than an important local-level indicator.

- “Attendance – dig deep- Address why is the kid not there? Disaggregate achieve data for effects of attendance/engagement.”

Survey-Based Indicator

Strong Interest: All members were interested in a survey indicator, with some members focused on student voice and other members focused on parent voice. The suggested survey topics covered the full breadth of health, safety, economic, and family and community, thus overlapping with KIDS COUNT indicators. Members emphasized the importance of student and parent voice in evaluating the education system.

Members provided the following comments:

- “Student voice – what do they have to say about themselves, family and the system? Access to tools they need to be proficient learners? Book, tech, etc. Parent voice -what do they have to say about themselves, family and the system? Access to tools they need to be proficient learners? Book, tech, etc. Timing is very important – not a 2 hour survey, or not during testing, etc. Do students have access to extended school year, extended graduation – How do these data correlate to gaps? Parents may provide reasons why it is difficult for them to support their child i.e. – many are working poor – working more than one job and children home on their own or with grandma most of the time.”
- “Some kind of at-risk student survey to identify kids who are in danger of dropping out from an attitudinal perspective, not just demographic. I’d base it on attitudes and self-perceptions of those who did not drop, those on the cusp, those who did.”
- “Family engagement, dropout, attendance, motivation, safety, engagement by teachers, best subjects, likes to read, likes to do math, something not taught/not time for in school”

Inclusion of District-Level Index Ratings

Were members in favor of a district-level Index Rating?

Majority Agreement: No, unless there is a clear purpose for doing so. Several members voiced strong opposition to a district-level Index Rating. The most vocal members in opposition work in districts, schools, or serve on school boards. However, all members were open to the idea of district-level Index Ratings as long as there was a clear, important purpose such as providing targeted support to districts. Most members were opposed to calculating a district-level Index Rating for information purposes only, raising concern that the district-level Index Ratings would be used by the media to publish a ranked list of districts. Members insisted that the decision to include a district-level Index Rating hinges on what it would be used for (i.e. supports and interventions).

Should the district-level analysis mimic the school-level analysis (proficiency, growth, and CCR)? If not, what other indicators be considered?

After staff raised the issue of growth becoming meaningless in large districts because it would average towards the 50th percentile, a member suggested that the Board report the range of growth values within the district. A member wrote that the Board would “probably need to ‘flight’ districts – kind of like WIAA” and staff interpreted this to mean that districts should be categorized into brackets or flights based on size or other characteristics so that the Index Ratings offer comparisons of similar districts. One member stated that district-level information could shed light on the use of alternative schools within the district. One member suggested that parent engagement could be measured in districts using a survey to ensure that all communities are being engaged. Multiple members were interested in a measure of opportunity and equity gaps at the district-level, but did not provide detail on how to measure equity. SBE staff stated that the sample size in districts would allow for a greater understanding of the performance of subgroup students because n-counts below 20 would not be suppressed in the data. OSPI staff stated that AYP is a district-level indicator, but the decision to include a district-level Index Rating should be based on a compelling need to understand a district-level issue.

- “Save measures that inform improvement, including strategies for improvement.”
- “No. Effective school characteristics have been published – would they not also serve as effective district characteristics?”
- “What is the purpose of a district rating? If the purpose is (1) unclear or (2) negative, then no rating.”
- “No – the district is held accountable already through school performance.”
- “The purpose or need must be very clear not only for the reasons already provided, but also because it would also be likely that leadership in a low-performing district might focus more on district performance than on school performance. That is, a district index could distract or divide district leadership in addressing student learning.”

What does an effective district look like?

- “Good question. WSSDA should answer!”
- “Improved graduation rates that also considers extended graduation rates. Is the district systemically effective? Are students given enough time to gain English proficiency to meet goal – graduation? Are feeder elementary; MS, preparing students for HS and graduation? Do all schools have systems to keep students in school, keep them safe, parent-engagement?”

- “One that supports a K-12 SYSTEM to ensure students leaving our system are choosing the next phases of their lives from positions [that] have academic and personal power. An individual school cannot accomplish this alone.”
- “One that is responsive in allocating resources to best meet the needs of all learners.”

Inclusion of Dual Credit in the Index

Presentation Summary

During the proposed phased-in approach, Dual Credit data would be reported first, and then included in the accountability measure during the following year. Tests of the relationship between Index scores with and without Dual Credit, between graduation rate and Dual Credit, and between Free and Reduced Price Lunch and Dual Credit, showed that it is working as desired. However, school size was moderately correlated with Index Ratings. Larger schools generally had higher Index Ratings from the Dual Credit programs.

Having analyzed the data, the reporting of 2013-2014 Dual Credit participation data is planned for the upcoming 2013-14 Index release, but would not contribute to the Index rating. Do you see any problems or unintended consequences with this plan?

No Agreement: Members did not reach consensus around a major problem with reporting the 2013-2014 Dual Credit participation data, but members did raise concern with funding inequities and regional differences in capacity. The bulk of the conversation revolved around the differences in capacity to fund Dual Credit offerings, with a particular issue being increased STEM funding that is going to particular parts of the state while other districts would not receive that financial support to develop Dual Credit offerings. OSPI staff suggested that there should be a way to account for that difference in funding. Members discussed an issue with some high schools offering College in High School courses but calling them Running Start due to a difference in funding. One member stated that WSAC is convening a Dual Credit workgroup to discuss the issue. A member suggested that, in addition to reporting the Dual Credit value, the Board should provide districts with a simulation of how the Dual Credit measure would affect the Index Ratings of their schools.

- “Access and resources are probably not equitable – Not sure how this would or could contribute to the index.”
- “Whoa. Too big a question for today.”
- “Can you aggregate by county? For participation? Are there financial limitations for some districts to not offer dual credit? It doesn’t sound like there’s consistency in how this will be applied, yet – is the cart before the horse?”