

State Board of Education Meeting

AGENDA

Wednesday, November 11, 2009

- 7:30 p.m. National Council for Teaching Quality Report on Human Capital in Seattle Public Schools with Implications for Washington State Effective Teaching Policies and Race to the Top Application**
Ms. Sandi Jacobs, Vice President for Policy, National Center for Teaching Quality

Thursday, November 12, 2009

- 9:30 a.m. Call to Order**
Pledge of Allegiance
Approval of Minutes from the September 17-18, 2009 Meeting (**Action Item**)
Welcome, Mr. John Deeder, Superintendent, Evergreen School District

Consent Agenda

The purpose of the Consent Agenda is to act upon routine matters in an expeditious manner. Items placed on the Consent Agenda are determined by the Chair, in cooperation with the Executive Director, and are those that are considered common to the operation of the Board and normally require no special Board discussion or debate. A Board member, however, may request that any item on the Consent Agenda be removed and inserted at an appropriate place on the regular agenda. Items on the Consent Agenda for this meeting include:

- Private Schools (**Action Item**)

- 9:40 a.m. System Performance Accountability Update, Draft Report and Legislative Request on Required Action for the 2010 Legislation**
Dr. Kris Mayer, Board Lead
Ms. Edie Harding, Executive Director
Dr. Pete Bylsma, Consultant, SBE
Dr. Janell Newman, Assistant Superintendent, District and School Improvement and Accountability, OSPI

Board Discussion

- 11:00 a.m. Break**

- 11:15 a.m. SPA Discussion Continued**
- 11:45 a.m. Public Comment**
- 12:15 p.m. Lunch**
- 12:45 p.m. SPA Discussion Continued**
- 1:15 p.m. CORE 24 Implementation Task Force Interim Report on Phase-in Recommendations**
 Dr. Kathe Taylor, Policy Director
 Dr. Steve Dal Porto, Board Co-lead
 Mr. Jack Schuster, Board Co-lead
 Dr. Jennifer Shaw, Co-Chair, ITF
 Dr. Mark Mansell, Co-Chair, ITF
- Board Discussion
- 2:10 p.m. Waivers for Efficiency and Effectiveness Calendar**
 Mr. Brad Burnham, Legislative and Policy Specialist
- 2:30 p.m. Adjourn to Prepare for Joint Meeting with PESB at the Heathman Lodge**
- 3:30 p.m. Joint Meeting with the PESB:**
- Race to the Top Overview and Application**
 Ms. Edie Harding, Executive Director
 Ms. Jennifer Wallace, Executive Director, PESB
 Ms. Judy Hartmann, Executive Policy Advisor, Governor's Office
- Teacher Reduction In Force Study**
 Mr. Joe Koski, Policy & Research Analyst, PESB
- Role of National Board Certification as a Policy Incentive: SBE Study and Other Considerations**
 Ms. Edie Harding, Executive Director
 Ms. Jennifer Wallace, Executive Director, PESB
- 6:00 p.m. Joint Dinner with the PESB, Heathman Lodge**

Friday, November 13, 2009

- 9:00 a.m. Intelligent Data Systems for Student Achievement from the Classroom to the Board Room**
 Ms. Chriss Burgess, Associate Superintendent, Vancouver School District
 Ms. Lisa Greseth, Manager, Information and Instructional Technology, Vancouver School District
 Mr. Joe Lapidus, Principal, Chinook Elementary

- 10:00 a.m. Update on Revisions to the 180 Day Waiver Process**
Mr. Brad Burnham, Policy and Legislative Specialist
Ms. Phyllis Bunker Frank, Board Co-lead
Mr. Jack Schuster, Board Co-lead
- 10:30 a.m. Break**
- 10:45 a.m. Update on the Quality Education Council and the 2010 Legislative Session**
Ms. Edie Harding, Executive Director
Ms. Mary Jean Ryan, Chair
- 11:30 a.m. Public Comment**
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch**
- 12:30 p.m. Business Items**
- Accountability Index Revisions and Accountability Draft Report and Legislation (**Action Item**)
 - Waivers for Efficiency and Effectiveness Calendar (**Action Item**)
- 1:30 p.m. Planning for January meeting**
- Visiting Legislators
 - National Board Certified Teacher Study
 - Teacher of the Year Recognition, Milken Educator, Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science
 - WSSDA Model Standards
 - Getting ready for Strategic Planning in 2010
 - BERCC Group Transcript Further Analysis
 - Race to the Top
 - 2010 Legislative Session
- 2:00 p.m. Adjourn**

APPROVAL OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS

BACKGROUND

Each private school seeking State Board of Education approval is required to submit an application to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. The application materials include a State Standards Certificate of Compliance and documents verifying that the school meets the criteria for approval established by statute and regulations. A more complete description is attached.

Enrollment figures, including extension student enrollment, are estimates provided by the applicants. Actual student enrollment, number of teachers, and the teacher preparation characteristics will be reported to OSPI in October. This report generates the teacher/student ratio for both the school and extension programs. Pre-school enrollment is collected for information purposes only.

Private schools may provide a service to the home school community through an extension program subject to the provisions of Chapter 28A.195 RCW. These students are counted for state purposes as private school students.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

Approval under RCW 28A.195.040 and Chapter 180-90 WAC.

EXPECTED ACTION

The schools herein listed, having met the requirements of RCW 28A.195 and are consistent with the State Board of Education rules and regulations in chapter 180-90 WAC, be approved as private schools for the 2009–10 school year.

Private Schools for Approval

2009-10

School Information	Grade Range	Projected Pre-school Enrollment	Projected Enrollment	Projected Extension Enrollment	County
Arbor Schools Juliana Fitts 1107 228 th Ave SE Sammamish WA 98075 425.392.3866	P-9	41	62	0	King
Madrona School Ann Lovejoy 219 Madison Ave S (Mail: PO Box 11371 Bainbridge 98110-5371) Bainbridge WA 98110-2503 206.855.8041	P-8	35	87	0	Kitsap
Providence Christian School Melanie Ball 16300 Motor Place (Mail: 10702 Marine View Dr Mukilteo 98275) Lynnwood WA 98037 425.248.5489	K-12	0	15	0	Snohomish
Rising Tide School Abbe Vogels 114 20 th Ave SE (Mail: 512 Central St NE Olympia 98506) Olympia WA 98501 360.339.2416	K-12	0	12	0	Thurston

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM: PROGRESS ON SPA WORK PLAN, REQUIRED ACTION REPORT/PROPOSED LEGISLATION AND REVISED ACCOUNTABILITY INDEX

BACKGROUND

Since 2006, the State Board of Education has been considering the components of a statewide performance accountability system, one essential to ensuring our students receive an excellent and equitable education.

The Board created a Systems Performance Accountability (SPA) work group to review proposals for an accountability system. Dr. Kristina Mayer has served as lead for the SPA work group, which consists of stakeholders from a variety of educational groups. The meeting materials can be found at: <http://www.sbe.wa.gov/spa.htm>. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has been a strong partner in helping shape the work. The progress of the SPA work group to date and anticipated new work for 2010 is shown below:

- Approve the provisional state Accountability Index and proposed recognition system by May 2009.
- Finalize OSPI-SBE recognition program(s) by July 2009 for 2009-2010 school year based on provisional Accountability Index.
- Work with OSPI and stakeholders to refine continuous improvement model processes, which includes OSPI voluntary support programs renamed Voluntary Action Districts (and the Innovation Zone) and Academic Watch for Challenged Schools renamed Required Action Districts, June-November 2009.
- Submit report and proposed legislation on accountability to legislature by December 1, 2009.
- Develop proposed new rule on school improvement planning by March 2010.
- Work with OSPI (and national groups) to request the U.S. Education Department to use the provisional state Accountability Index when making AYP decisions, beginning with results generated in the 2010-2011 school year (we realize we may need to adapt our Accountability Index to meet Federal expectations).
- Develop performance goals on student achievement (new work in 2010).
- Revise school and district improvement plan rules (new work in 2010).
- Consider SBE Report Card indicators on topics such as college and career readiness (new work in 2010).

- Examine how the prototypical school model could be used in a system of accountability (new work in 2010 as required by ESHB 2261).

At its January 2009 meeting, the Board passed a resolution outlining its Accountability Framework (see Attachment A). There are three components to the Accountability Framework:

1. An Accountability Index to recognize schools that are successful and those that need additional assistance.
2. Targeted state programs to assist districts.
3. Required action, if there are no improvements.

The 2009 Legislature's approval of the Board's Accountability Framework is reflected in sections 501-503 of ESHB 2261 (part of the new basic education funding system). The legislature asked the SBE to present its report by December 1, 2009 (see Attachment B). The System Performance Accountability (SPA) work plan may be found under Attachment C. The most recent SPA notes from the October meeting are in Attachment D.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

SBE staff, with consultant help from Jill Severn, has prepared a report that summarizes the detailed actions of the Board's accountability framework, with a special emphasis on a legislative proposal for Required Action. The report, "An Excellent and Equitable Education for All Students: A State and Local Partnership for Accountability" is behind this memo on a tab titled: "Leg Reports."

Under the Required Action proposal, the SBE will consider the policy steps and legislative bill to enable the state to work with local districts to develop a collaborative, required process to make dramatic improvements in a limited number of districts with schools that are persistently low achieving. Currently all school and district improvement is voluntary. OSPI offers assistance only if a district agrees it wants the state's help. The SBE has created its Required Action proposal to align with the new draft federal school improvement guidelines. These may change in the final guidelines, which mean we will make any necessary adjustments. A flow chart of the Accountability Framework is provided in Attachment E. A detailed outline of the Required Action District process (formerly called Academic Watch Districts) is provided in Attachment F. The draft bill will be provided at the meeting.

The SBE consultant, Pete Bylsma, has revised the SBE Provisional Accountability Index approved in May 2009 to include performance subgroups of students as part of the new Accountability Index. See the tab titled "Index Updates" for the "Executive Summary: Washington's new Accountability Index and "Recommendations for Accountability Student Groups". The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the SBE plan to recognize schools for high achievement and improvement in May 2010 using the SBE Provisional Accountability Index with some OSPI additions. However, the new SBE Accountability Index will not be used for identifying low achieving schools unless the SBE and OSPI are successful in obtaining a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education or making changes in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Reauthorization. The SBE staff will work with OSPI on this next year on this effort. While staff is not overly confident we will have success, we do believe at least that the draft federal school improvement guideline measures to identify schools are better than what exists under NCLB.

EXPECTED ACTION

Staff recommends that the Board review and approve the draft report "An Excellent and Equitable Education for All Students: A State and Local Partnership for Accountability" and the proposed draft

legislation for the 2010 session, with the recognition that some additional information is forthcoming before the report is finalized. While the final report is due to the legislature December 1, 2009, staff recommends approving this draft now to submit as “draft” to the legislature. Then, at the January Board meeting, when additional information is available, approve the final report. Additional information will include data on the potential numbers of schools and districts that would be identified as persistently low achieving, as well as the final federal school improvement guidelines.

Staff recommends that the Board review and approve the revised SBE Accountability Index that incorporates an analysis of student subgroups through an additional to determine AYP based on the “Executive Summary: Washington’s new Accountability Index” and “Recommendations for Accountability Student Groups.” SBE staff will then work with OSPI to seek federal approval for the use of this new Accountability Index.

Staff also recommends the Board approve a specific recommendation to the Superintendent of Public Instruction to post the results of the Washington Language Proficiency Test results for English Language Learners by district on the OSPI Web site for the 2009-2010 school year.

**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY RESOLUTION
JANUARY 15, 2009**

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education believes that all students deserve an excellent and equitable education and that there is an urgent need to strengthen a system of continuous improvement in student achievement for all schools and districts; and

WHEREAS, the legislature charged the State Board of Education to develop criteria to identify schools and districts that are successful, in need of assistance, and those where students persistently fail, as well as to identify a range of intervention strategies and performance incentive systems; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education affirms the call for stronger accountability must be reciprocal between the state and local school district and accompanied by comprehensive funding reform for basic education that demonstrates “taxpayer money at work” in improving student achievement; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education will work with its education partners to create a unified system of federal and state accountability to improve student achievement; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education recognizes the need for a proactive, collaborative accountability system with support from the local school board, parents, students, staff in the schools and districts, regional educational service districts, business partners, and state officials to improve student achievement; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education believes that schools and districts should be recognized for best practices and exemplary work in improving student achievement; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education recognizes the critical role of local school boards in addressing student achievement in developing a new state accountability system as well as the need to create a new collaborative mechanism to require certain school district actions if student achievement does not improve;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the State Board of Education will develop an Accountability Index to identify schools and districts, based on student achievement using criteria that are fair, consistent, transparent, and easily understood for the purposes of providing feedback to schools and districts to self-assess their progress as well as to identify schools with exemplary performance and those with poor performance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Board of Education will work with its education partners to build the capacity of districts to help their schools improve student achievement. Programs will be tailored to the magnitude of need. As part of this system of assistance, the Board will ensure that all efforts are administered as part of one unified system of state assistance including the Innovation Zone – a new effort to help districts dramatically improve achievement levels; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that after a time set by the State Board of Education where there is no significant improvement based on an Accountability Index and other measures as defined by the Board, the district will be placed on Academic Watch and the State Board of Education will:

- Direct the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to conduct an academic performance audit using a peer review team.
- Request the local school board, in collaboration with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, to develop an Academic Watch Plan based on the review findings, which would include an annual progress report to the local community.
- Review, approve, or send back for modification the local board Academic Watch plan, which once approved becomes a binding performance contract between the state and district.
- Ensure that the local school board will remain responsible for implementation.
- Request the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to monitor implementation of the plan and provide updates to the State Board of Education, which may require additional actions be taken until performance improvement is realized.
- Declare a district is no longer on Academic Watch when the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction reports to the State Board of Education that the district school or schools are no longer in Priority status; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Board of Education believes this accountability framework needs to be a part of the revisions made to the basic education funding system and that the legislature will provide the State Board of Education, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the local school boards with the appropriate legal authority and resources to implement the new system; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board will continue to refine the details of the accountability system by working with its education, parent, business and community partners over the next year.

Adopted: January 15, 2009

Attest:



Mary Jean Ryan, Chair

ESHB 2261 Accountability Language

Summary:

Legislative intent is to create a proactive, collaborative system of accountability based on progressive levels of support and with a goal of continuous improvement in student achievement. The State Board of Education and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction has been directed to seek approval for use of the system for federal accountability purposes.

Requires the SBE to continue refining an accountability framework that includes:

- An accountability index to identify successful schools and those in need of assistance.
- A proposal and timeline for a comprehensive system of voluntary support and assistance to be submitted to the legislature before being implemented.
- A proposal and timeline for a system targeted to those that have not demonstrated improvement that takes effect only if authorized by the legislature and that includes an academic performance audit, a school board-developed corrective action plan, which would be subject to SBE approval and become binding; and progress monitoring by SPI.
- Report due to legislature December 1, 2009.

ESHB 2261 Language -- now under RCW 28A.305.224 (4) (b)

SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 501.** (1)(a) The legislature recognizes that comprehensive education finance reform and the increased investment of public resources necessary to implement that reform must be accompanied by a new mechanism for clearly defining the relationships and expectations for the state, school districts, and schools. It is the legislature's intent that this be accomplished through the development of a proactive, collaborative accountability system that focuses on a school improvement system that engages and serves the local school board, parents, students, staff in the schools and districts, and the community. The improvement system shall be based on progressive levels of support, with a goal of continuous improvement in student achievement and alignment with the federal system of accountability.

1 (b) The legislature further recognizes that it is the state's responsibility to provide schools and districts with the tools and resources necessary to improve student achievement. These tools include the necessary accounting and data reporting systems, assessment systems to monitor student achievement, and a system of general support, targeted assistance, recognition, and, if necessary, state intervention.

(2) The legislature has already charged the state board of education to develop criteria to identify schools and districts that are successful, in need of assistance, and those where students persistently fail, as well as to identify a range of intervention strategies and a performance incentive system. The legislature finds that the state board of education should build on the work that the board has already begun in these areas. As development of these formulas, processes, and systems progresses, the legislature should monitor the progress.

Sec. 502. RCW 28A.305.130 and 2008 c 27 s 1 are each amended to read as follows: The purpose of the state board of education is to provide advocacy and strategic oversight of public education; implement a standards-based accountability framework that creates a unified system of increasing levels of support for schools in order to improve student academic achievement; provide leadership in the creation of a system that personalizes education for each student and respects diverse

cultures, abilities, and learning styles; and promote achievement of the goals of RCW 28A.150.210. In addition to any other powers and duties as provided by law, the state board of education shall ... (language continues from current law).

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 503.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.305 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The state board of education shall continue to refine the development of an accountability framework that creates 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.

(2) The state board of education shall develop an accountability index to identify schools and districts for recognition and for additional state support. The index shall be based on criteria that are fair, consistent, and transparent. Performance shall be measured using multiple outcomes and indicators including, but not limited to, graduation rates and results from statewide assessments. The index shall be developed in such a way as to be easily understood by both employees within the schools and districts, as well as parents and community members. It is the legislature's intent that the index provide feedback to schools and districts to self-assess their progress, and enable the identification of schools with exemplary student performance and those that need assistance to overcome challenges in order to achieve exemplary student performance.

Once the accountability index has identified schools that need additional help, a more thorough analysis will be done to analyze specific conditions in the district including but not limited to the level of state resources a school or school district receives in support of the basic education system, achievement gaps for different groups of students, and community support.

(3) Based on the accountability index and in consultation with the superintendent of public instruction, the state board of education shall develop a proposal and timeline for implementation of a comprehensive system of voluntary support and assistance for schools and districts. The timeline must take into account and accommodate capacity limitations of the K-12 educational system. Changes that have a fiscal impact on school districts, as identified by a fiscal analysis prepared by the office of the superintendent of public instruction, shall take effect only if formally authorized by the legislature through the omnibus appropriations act or other enacted legislation.

4)(a) The state board of education shall develop a proposal and implementation timeline for a more formalized comprehensive system improvement targeted to challenged schools and districts that have not demonstrated sufficient improvement through the voluntary system. The timeline must take into account and accommodate capacity limitations of the K-12 educational system. The proposal and timeline shall be submitted to the education committees of the legislature by December 1, 2009, and shall include recommended legislation and recommended resources to implement the system according to the timeline developed.

(b) The proposal shall outline a process for addressing performance challenges that will include the following features:

- (i) An academic performance audit using peer review teams of educators that considers school and community factors in addition to other factors in developing recommended specific corrective actions that should be undertaken to improve student learning;
- (ii) A requirement for the local school board plan to develop and be responsible for implementation of corrective action plan taking into account the audit findings, which plan must be approved by the state board of education at which time the plan becomes binding upon the school district to implement; and

(iii) Monitoring of local district progress by the office of the superintendent of public instruction. The proposal shall take effect only if formally authorized by the legislature through the omnibus appropriations act or other enacted legislation.

(5) In coordination with the superintendent of public instruction, the state board of education shall seek approval from the United States department of education for use of the accountability index and the state system of support, assistance, and intervention, to replace the federal accountability system under P.L. 107-110, the no child left 31 behind act of 2001.

(6) The state board of education shall work with the education data center established within the office of financial management and the technical working group established in section 112 of this act to determine the feasibility of using the prototypical funding allocation model as not only a tool for allocating resources to schools and districts but also as a tool for schools and districts to report to the state legislature and the state board of education on how the state resources received are being used.

SPA Work Plan
November 2009

Objectives:

- Approve the provisional state Accountability Index and proposed recognition system by May 2009.
- Finalize OSPI-SBE recognition program(s) by July 2009 for 2009-2010 school year based on provisional Accountability Index.
- Work with OSPI and stakeholders to refine continuous improvement model processes, which includes OSPI voluntary support programs renamed Voluntary Action Districts (and the Innovation Zone) and Academic Watch for Challenged Schools renamed Required Action Districts , June-November
- Develop proposed new rule on school improvement planning by March 2010.
- Work with OSPI (and national groups) to request the U.S. Education Department to use the provisional state Accountability Index when making AYP decisions, beginning with results generated in the 2010-2011 school year (we realize we may need to adapt our Accountability Index to meet Federal expectations).
- Submit report and proposed legislation on accountability to legislature by December 1, 2009.
- Develop performance goals on student achievement (new work in 2010).
- Revise school and district improvement plan rules (new work in 2010).
- Consider SBE Report Card indicators on topics such as college and career readiness (new work in 2010).
- Examine how the prototypical school model could be used in a system of accountability (new work in 2010- required by ESHB 2261).

**Revised Timeline for System Performance Accountability (SPA)
Work 2009-2010**

Dates	Activities
January 14-15, 2009	Board meeting to review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft resolution for action. • Feedback on Accountability Index and Pete Bylsma's revisions. • Work Plan for 2009. • Achievement Gap Data Overview for Commissions' Work. • ELL Issues for state oversight by Howard DeLeeuw, OSPI.
January- March	Edie and Pete will meet with superintendents at nine ESD meetings stateside to review the Accountability Index, Innovation Zone, and Academic Watch proposals. Pete will meet with technical advisers from

Dates	Activities
	school districts and OSPI at least twice regarding refinements to the index.
February 17	SPA Work session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kris and Edie will frame our work for year. • OSPI will give brief update on NCLB status and federal funding. • OSPI will present lessons learned from Summit Districts and Sustainability and thoughts on programs to serve continuous improvement for schools and districts. • SBE Consultant will discuss refinements to Accountability Index, as presented to the Board in January Meeting. • SBE Consultant will discuss recognition program using Accountability Index.
March 12-13	Board meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hear update from SPA work session. Pete will seek input from several national experts from OSPI's National Technical Advisory Committee on March 13 to review the SBE proposed Accountability Index.
April 21	SPA Work session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review continued refinements on Accountability Index (focus on alternative education, ELL), deeper analysis for struggling schools, and recognition program.
May 14-15	Board meeting to review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update from SPA work session. • Approve Provisional Accountability Index Plan A (we will also work on a Plan B) and SBE and OSPI recognition program(s).
May-July	Develop strategy and outreach to different stakeholder groups and work with OSPI and the U.S. Education Department on Accountability Index for improved (and unified) system for determining AYP. Work with OSPI on recognition program(s).
June 16	SPA work session on OSPI voluntary state programs of continuous improvement for all schools as well as deeper analysis of struggling schools. Discuss ways to incorporate dropout data and achievement gap recommendations into our work for overall report card tracking.
July 15-17	Board meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin discussion on OSPI voluntary state programs of continuous improvement and key indicators for deeper analysis.
August 11	SPA work session on Subgroup analysis for Accountability Index, Voluntary and Academic Watch process, Professional Learning Communities WEA presentation, Data in Motion ESD 113 presentation.
September 17-18	Board meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue discussion on provisions for OSPI voluntary school for continuous improvement and Academic Watch process.
October 13	SPA work session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of recommendations and timeline on state voluntary support programs and Academic Watch (renamed Required Action) process. • Discussion of revision to SBE Provisional Accountability Index to incorporate sub group analysis.
October - November	OSPI/SBE recognition of schools under new program.

Dates	Activities
	Discussions with U.S. Education Department on proposed unified accountability system.
November 12-13	Board meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review draft school improvement plan rule revisions (look at nine effective school characteristics) and approval of proposals and timeline for OSPI voluntary state support programs for struggling schools under Academic Watch. • Present overall accountability report card.
December 1, 2009	Report to legislature December 1 on proposal and implementation for 1) recommendations for state voluntary program; 2) “Academic Watch” for challenged schools and districts that have not demonstrated sufficient improvement through the voluntary system-- Legislature must approve this in statute or appropriations bill; and 3) use of prototypical school model to report on how state resources are used (this last provision does not have a December 1 date).
February 9, 2010	SBE Performance Goals, College and Career Readiness Indicators,
April 13, 2010	
June 8, 2010	
SBE Report Card , School and District Improvement Plans, Accountability Using the Prototypical Schools Model.	

**Systems Performance Accountability (SPA) Notes
October 13, 2009**

Attendees: Kris Mayer, Phyllis Bunker Frank, Warren Smith, Bernal Baca, Steve Dal Porto, Amy Bragdon, Connie Fletcher, Bob Hughes, Mack Armstrong, George Juarez, Erin Jones, Janell Newman, Tonya Middling, Gary Kipp, Karen Davis, Mike Bernard, Bill Williams, Phil Brockman, Caroline King, Martha Rice, Pete Bylsma, Edie Harding, Brad Burnham

Recap of Progress To Date and Current Work on Accountability Framework for Voluntary and Required Action

Edie Harding gave an update on progress to complete the details of the State Board of Education (SBE) Accountability Framework. OSPI and SBE will ensure our Accountability Framework is seamless, integrates with the new Federal School Improvement guidelines, and builds upon the work of our Systems Performance Accountability (SPA) work group, which includes: a continuous system of improvement for schools and districts, a joint state/local collaboration for voluntary and required action, a focus on improvement and additional state criteria to determine which districts move into Required Action.

The accomplishments of the SPA work group and the SBE include: a review of current national research issues and Washington state school and district policy barriers and performance issues; a collaborative accountability framework; a provisional accountability index to recognize high achieving schools that improve; closing the achievement gap and meeting standard; and creation of a process for reviewing districts with persistently low achieving schools for voluntary and required action.

Janell Newman discussed the expectations under the draft Federal School Improvement guidelines. New measures will be used to determine the lowest achieving schools that include assessing absolute performance as well as growth in the all category of students for reading and math. One cohort of Title I and Title I eligible schools will be identified by Washington based on these and other criteria to receive federal funds under school improvement (through the district with these schools). Districts will be asked to participate based on a determination of greatest commitment to follow through on the four federal models of intervention. These models are: turnaround, closure, restart and transformation.

Edie outlined the proposed steps that would occur for those very few districts that would fall under the SBE proposal for Required Action. The steps include a joint state/local collaboration with recommendation from an independent external audit that the local school board will use to create a plan (using one of the four federal models or a state model or local model). SBE will need to approve the local school board plan. The state will be responsible for providing the resources and authority to districts to implement the binding conditions of the plan.

Feedback forms in hard and electronic copy were distributed to the SPA group for input. Some of the initial thoughts from the group included: concerns about the sustainability of the school improvement funds after three years, timing with the Quality Education Council, and basic education funding revisions. Members of the groups wanted a way to be clear about the role of districts vs. schools in the voluntary and required action, the capacity to address the four federal models for school improvement, and details of how opening up the collective bargaining agreement would work in required action.

SBE will consider action at its November Board meeting to approve further refinements of its Accountability Framework:

- 1) The details for Voluntary and Required Action for addressing the role of the state and local districts with low performing schools to improve educational outcomes for their students – a final report and a draft bill for the 2010 legislation session will be prepared based upon the Board's action.
- 2) Revisions to the SBE Provisional Accountability Index to examine high and low achieving schools. The current SBE Provisional Accountability Index will be used for a Joint OSPI/SBE Recognition Program for high achieving schools as well as those that show gains in achievement and closing the achievement gap, compared to their peers or overall improvement. SBE/OSPI will work with the Federal government to pursue a waiver or changes in No Child Left Behind to use the revised Accountability Index with low achieving schools.

Review of Criteria for District Identification for Voluntary and Required Action

Pete Bylsma outlined some suggested state criteria to determine what additional measures beyond the federal school improvement rule could be used to identify districts with persistently low achieving schools. These include as a first step: identification of the bottom 25 percent of schools (both Title I and non Title I) based on percentage of all students in both reading and math for four years; the use of the AYP uniform bar as a metric; the results for elementary, middle, high and multiple grade bands; and examination of those in the bottom quartiles of their grade band in both math and reading for four years. Under the second step, a deeper analysis would include: contextual data (school type, changes in student population, feeder patterns, district governance); other assessment data (subgroups, achievement gaps, Washington Language Proficiency Test); teaching and learning issues (staff qualifications and experience, curriculum alignment, extended learning opportunities, community involvement); other data (dropout rates, external evaluations, participation and unexcused absences); cells of the SBE Accountability Index (peer ratings, close the achievement gap, graduation rates). State criteria for Required Action for districts will need to be legally defensible: quantitative and not open to subjective interpretation.

Race to the Top

Edie provided an update on Washington's plans to seek funding from the Race to The Top competitive grant in Round 1 (January 2010) and Round 2 (June 2010). She handed out an organizational and work plan. The Governor, the Superintendent, and the Chair of the State Board of Education must sign off on the application. The SPA group will receive updates from a number of work groups, including one on struggling schools. We will solicit feedback from local districts and other education stakeholders. Proposals must address: the state's full range of students, show effective strategies to change and improve educational outcomes, be equitable, research based, scaleable, and sustainable.

Revisions to SBE Provisional Accountability Index and Sub Group Analysis

A critical revision to the Provisional Accountability Index is the addition of the subgroup analysis. Pete Bylsma made revisions based upon feedback from his technical advisers, federal experts, and SPA members, which will: 1) keep reporting all subgroups on the OSPI Report Card, 2) keep the Accountability Index the same as the Board adopted last May and used for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) decisions for all students, and 3) use a separate modified Index with more

subgroups to make AYP decisions based on each individual subgroup (this last one was suggested by the SPA group discussion).

The all student group will use SBE Provisional Accountability Index (reading, writing, math, science and graduation rate). The schools and districts must have a 2-year average of at least 3.00 as an overall average on the Accountability Index to make AYP.

On the additional index for subgroups, four more subgroups will be added. The outcomes for the subgroups will be limited to those in the Federal accountability – reading, math and extended graduation rate, computing a row average for each subgroup. Any subgroup may not make AYP if the average of the subgroup row does not improve at least once every two years. Special education students will have no restriction on the percent of students who can count as meeting standard on the Washington Alternate Assessment System (WAAS) and special education students who reach level 2 on the state wide assessments will be deemed as meeting standard.

The Board will consider taking action on these changes at its November Board meeting.

Revisions to the 180 Day Waiver Process

Brad Burnham presented one of the options for consideration for revisions to the 180 day waivers. The proposed option would shift long term planning efforts for student achievement to OSPI to administer under the new accountability system in both voluntary and required action. SPA members felt that these waivers should not be available to schools and districts that were going to receive additional funds under voluntary or required action. They felt the waivers should be handled in one office (SBE). All acknowledged the dilemma in terms of trading time for professional development and instructional time for students.

Staff does not plan to go forward with a recommendation on this particular revision to the 180 day waiver process.

The next SPA meeting is scheduled for 1- 4 p.m. on February 9, 2010 at the Renton School District.

Washington State Board of Education (SBE) Accountability Framework

Key Components of the SBE Accountability Framework

1. An excellent and equitable education for all students.
2. Continuous improvement for all schools and districts.
3. One federal/state system.
4. State and local collaborative effort.

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Identification Process

Step One: Identify persistently low achieving schools (and their districts) using proposed federal school improvement guidelines (include non-Title I schools).

Step Two: Use additional criteria to examine school and district performance.

Step Three: Identify the lowest performing schools (and their districts).

All Districts Not Identified for Voluntary or Required Action

Annual Efforts

The districts create School and District Improvement plans to address issues of student achievement.

OSPI provides limited technical assistance.

Districts with Persistently Low Achieving Schools Identified for Voluntary or Required Action

Voluntary Action Districts

Required Action Districts

The local board will select one of the four Federal School Improvement Models: (turnaround, restart, closure, transformation) or additional state or local models (for Required Action only).

Positive Outcomes

1. Improve student achievement for all students to prepare for postsecondary education, work, and citizenship.
2. Build the capacity of districts to help students improve.
3. Close the achievement gap.
4. Lower dropout rates.

Persistently Low Achieving Schools and Their Districts for Voluntary and Required Action Process

November 3, 2009 DRAFT FOR BILL CONSIDERATION

1. Definitions

Definition of a Persistently Low Achieving School: The U.S. Secretary of Education has committed to turning around the bottom five percent of Title I Schools and Title I eligible schools using the federal school improvement grants as a major catalyst. The primary metric will be measuring all student performance in each school for reading and math in terms of absolute performance (the lowest performers) as well as based on whether schools have improved at the same rate as the state average gains based on the all student category for reading and math. The schools are defined into three tiers:

Tier I: Lowest five percent of Title I schools in a step of improvement as defined by No Child Left Behind.

Tier II: Equally low-achieving secondary schools that are Title I eligible.

Tier III: Title I schools in a step of improvement as defined by No Child Left Behind not identified in Tier I.

Those districts with schools in Tier I and Tier II would be the highest priority to be served under the federal school improvement guidelines.

Definition of a Persistently Low Achieving District: A district with persistently low achieving schools identified below that will be invited to participate as a one of the state's Voluntary Action Districts or Required Action Districts with the addition of non Title I schools for Required Action.

Definition of a Voluntary Action District: A Voluntary Action District contains Title I and Title I eligible schools that have extremely low overall student achievement and have not demonstrated growth in meeting or exceeding the state average performance gains in reading and math for all students in four years, plus additional state defined criteria.

Definition of Required Action District: A Required Action District contains Title I and non Title I schools that have extremely low overall student achievement and have not demonstrated growth in meeting or exceeding the state average performance gains in reading and math for all students in six years, plus additional state defined criteria.

2. Selection Criteria for Voluntary and Required Action based on Districts with Persistently Low Achieving Schools Identification Process:

a. First step: Federal Criteria: Lowest five Percent of Schools Based on All Students Metrics in Math and Reading.

Conduct initial sort of persistently low achieving schools based on draft federal school improvement guidelines described above -- absolute achievement and improvement for "all student" category in reading and math based on the three tiers. This step

would be described in the SBE proposed bill.

b. Second step: State Criteria: Duration and Pattern of Low Achievement and Greatest Number of Students/Schools Affected

Examine state defined criteria¹ which would not be described in the SBE proposed bill except to mention that the state will use other criteria including but not limited to:

- i. Six years of performance data on state assessment for elementary schools, middle schools and high schools.
- ii. Feeder school patterns: elementary to middle to high school progression that continue to have low achievement.
- iii. Number of students and numbers of schools in district with low achievement. Note: removed alternative schools and grades as covered in i-iii); low achievement needs to be defined.

c. Third step: Additional State Criteria Examining Details of Low Achievement

Determine persistently lowest achieving schools and their districts based on above criteria. Additional state criteria after Second Step will include but are not limited to (these will not be described in SBE proposed bill):

- i. Extended graduation rate for high school students.
- ii. Sub group performance on state assessments.
- iii. ELL performance on Washington Language Performance Test.
- iv. District capacity in terms of financial and human resources.
- v. Percent of required credits seventh-ninth graders have earned to measure if they are on track.
- vi. Perception survey data from local board, staff, students, and community.
- vii. Local district data on student achievement.

d. Fourth step: Inform all districts identified as Persistently Low Achieving Districts of their status as Voluntary Action Districts or Required Action Districts and invite any of these districts to participate as Voluntary Action Districts

e. Fifth step: For those districts identified as Required Action Districts that choose not to participate on as a Voluntary Action District, they will move into official Required Action District status within three months of identification²

3. Voluntary Action Districts Process:

- a. OSPI will use external experts to conduct a district needs assessment (similar to audit described under Required Action).
- b. Local school district with local school board approval will select one of four federal models described below in Required Action Steps.
- c. OSPI will focus on building district capacity to address individual schools.

¹ Future state criteria may include: measures of high school students' preparedness for postsecondary and career readiness: course completion and success (including the CORE 24 recommended graduation requirements and dual college high school credits); achievement based on multiple assessments including college ready tests and IB and AP exams; and attainment in graduation and participation in postsecondary education. Middle school students criteria could include attendance and course failure. Elementary school students' criteria could attendance; refinements at all levels to measures of quality teaching.

² The legislature will need to approve the Required Action process before districts will be placed into Required Action.

4. Required Action Districts Process:

- a. OSPI notifies the local school district and superintendent that it is recommending the district be placed in Required Action and provides the reasons why. Based on state criteria for the Required Action, a district may be placed in Required Action within three months unless it decides to volunteer to participate as a Voluntary Action District.
- b. OSPI notifies SBE of districts recommended as Required Action Districts.
- c. The local school district may appeal to SBE/OSPI staff panel for review if it disagrees with OSPI and provide information on why district should not be in Required Action:
 - i. Panel will make recommendation to SBE.
- d. SBE designates district is in Required Action within three months of determination.
- e. OSPI conducts Academic Performance Audit with experts external to the Required Action District:
 - i. Composition of audit group:
 1. External expertise in comprehensive school and district reform.
 2. No staff member of OSPI, SBE, or the specific Required Action District being reviewed may participate on the audit group.
 - ii. Audit components would focus on student achievement including, but not limited to, the following issues within each school and the district that relate to student achievement:
 1. Strengths and weaknesses of current leadership in district and schools.
 2. Quality and implementation of current district and school improvement plans.
 3. Human resources policies (how staff is evaluated, hired, compensated, assigned, trained, and replaced) through collective bargaining contracts and other local school board policies.
 4. Alignment of curriculum and instruction to state standards.
 5. Use of data to inform instructional practice.
 6. Quality and use of instructional time, including amount.
 7. Current resources (federal, state and local) targeted on lowest performing schools.
 8. Family and community partnerships with schools.
 9. The most effective model based on Academic Performance Audit.
- f. Local school board in collaboration with its staff and community develops Required Action Plan based on audit findings and the following steps:
 - i. Choose model:
 1. One of four federal models: turnaround, restart, close, and transformation.
 - a. Turnaround: replace principal and fifty percent of staff; adopt new governance, other requirements.
 - b. Restart: open under new management.
 - c. School closure: send students to other schools in districts.
 - d. Transformation: develop teacher and school leader effectiveness, comprehensive instructional reforms, extended learning time, community oriented schools, operating flexibility, and sustained support. (Note there are very specific requirements attached to each of these categories, e.g, replace the principal, provide more time for enrichment opportunities, etc.)

2. A state model (if state funding or RTTT funding is available) using the SBE Innovation Zone, which responds to the audit findings and addresses the key elements of the federal transformation model, but does not require specific activities as described in the federal guidelines.
 3. A local model that has proven research strategies which does not require state or federal funding.
- ii. Develop Required Action Implementation plan, budget, resources, and metrics for measuring outcomes:
 1. Plan must identify how to remedy Academic Performance and utilize one of the above models.
 2. Budget may include:
 - a. Federal funds will be available for districts to use in Title I schools or Title I eligible schools.
 - b. State funds would be available for districts with non Title I schools or if the state model is selected (we will consider using RTTT funds initially but they may not be available for a transformation like model).
 - c. Local funds for local model.
 3. Metrics will include:
 - a. Specific interventions to be implemented.
 - b. Leading indicators such as instructional minutes per school year and teacher attendance.
 - c. Student achievement outcomes, such as assessment data and student enrollment in advanced coursework (for high schools) by subgroups.
 - d. Others as identified by local school district.
 - iii. Other things to consider in plan?
- g. SBE approves Required Action Plan. Local school district must make significant progress within three years.
 - h. State provides resources for district to act on Required Action Implementation Plan and make plan binding.
 - i. OSPI creates list of education management organizations and technical assistance providers that could help districts.
 - j. Local school board and district required to provide regular reports to SBE/OSPI and community on progress:
 - i. Required Action District reports will be quarterly.
 - ii. Reports will contain:
 1. Strategies and assets to solve problems.
 2. Evidence of implementation.
 3. Evidence of impact.
 4. Other ideas?
 - k. OSPI notifies SBE and Required Action district that district is ready to exit Required Action or that the district is not making sufficient progress after three years:
 - i. Sufficient progress is measured by district's Required Action Plan metrics.
 - ii. Change in learning index overall and for each subgroup – need to move up at least one level from one to two, etc.
 - iii. Examining students taking more college prep and college credit classes.
 - iv. Required Action Implementation progress on federal measures of absolute achievement in reading and math and improvement equal to or above the state average gains in the “all students” category.

- I. SBE approves Required Action District's release or requires local school board to assess use of a different model if progress is not made and develop a new Required Action Plan.

5. Timelines

- a. Board approves legislative request in fall 2009.
- b. SBE, OSPI, Governor, key legislators, and stakeholders request legislation in winter 2010.
- c. Identify eligible schools and their districts in winter 2010.
- d. Notify all districts that are Voluntary Action Districts and those that are Required Action that they may participate as Voluntary Action Districts winter 2010.
- e. Implement new Voluntary Action and Required Action programs in spring/summer 2010 (if legislature approves although state funding for non Title I schools will not be available this early, we will apply for RTTT grant funds initially).
- f. Voluntary Action Districts have three years to successfully implement their plans or they will be moved to Required Action.
- g. Required Action Districts have three years to successfully implement their plans or demonstrate sufficient progress as defined by the Required Action Plan.

6. Components of Legislation

- a. Allow state to intervene through state/local collaboration process for Required Action (required by Feds for new school improvement guidelines and Race to the Top).
- b. Required Action:
 - i. Lay out steps and avoid being overly prescriptive.
- c. Authority:
 1. Ability to reopen collective bargaining contract to include subjects of mandatory bargaining based on audit findings and local board's proposed Required Action Plan.
 2. Collective bargaining agreement must execute a new memorandum of agreement to create an amended agreement that is aligned with the local school board's Required Action Plan.
 3. Express authority for district to use education management organizations for any of the intervention models
 - ii. Ability to withhold Title I funds if district does not produce plan that SBE approves.
- d. Resources:
 - i. Estimate resources needed as part of fiscal note and future legislative request in 2011.
 - ii. Initial funding for districts to develop Required Action Plan.
 - iii. Federal funding for school improvement may be used for Title I and Title I eligible schools available 2010-13. Estimated \$42.5 million.
 - iv. RTTT request to support non Title I schools for 2010-13.
 - v. State funding for non Title I schools request in 2011-13 biennium.
 - vi. State funding to support OSPI request in 2011-13.
 - vii. If funding is not available under the Required Action process for additional districts or non Title I schools, districts will remain in Required Action but not penalized and will be the first to receive funding when it becomes available.

THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

**An Excellent and Equitable Education for All Students:
A State and Local Partnership for Accountability
DRAFT November 5, 2009**

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Executive Summary

An Excellent and Equitable Education for All Students: A State-local Partnership for Accountability

Introduction

In 2005, the Washington State Legislature directed the State Board of Education (SBE) to "implement a standards-based accountability system to improve student academic achievement."¹

In 2009, the Legislature through ESHB 2261 acknowledged the SBE accountability framework to "create a unified system of support for challenged schools."² The Legislature requested the SBE, in consultation with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), provide a report by December 1, 2009 that addressed:

- An accountability index to identify schools for recognition and additional support.
- A proposal and timeline for a voluntary system of support for low achieving schools.
- A proposal and timeline for a more formalized comprehensive system of improvement targeted to more "challenged" schools and districts that have not demonstrated significant improvement through the voluntary system.³

This draft proposal, and its accompanying proposed legislation, responds to that legislative directive. We would like to present this draft report to the Legislature in early December and finalize the report at the SBE January 2010 Board meeting. The SBE acknowledges that a comprehensive system of improvement, referred to in this report as "Required Action," can only take effect if authorized by the Legislature. Current state law provides for voluntary – but not mandatory – participation in state-provided school and school district improvement programs.

What an Accountability System Can Achieve

Many Washington students still lack access to an excellent and equitable education -- **OSPI data on number of students in persistently low achieving schools and number of schools/districts will be provided here to give magnitude of problem**

Washington's schools have already demonstrated that it is possible to improve student achievement. Over the past decade, schools have learned how to use

¹ RCW 28A.305.130

² RCW 28A.305.225

³ RCW 28A.305.225

assessment data to align curriculum to state standards and to improve the quality of instruction in diverse classrooms. Many schools and districts have also built systems for continuous improvement and personalized instruction. OSPI has likewise already demonstrated its capacity to provide services that help challenged schools improve.

What we lack is a systematic way to apply all that has been learned about how to *sustain and accelerate* school improvement for all students, schools and districts.

President Obama and U.S. Secretary of Education Duncan are encouraging states to provide the tools and break the barriers to make a dramatic turnaround with the bottom five percent of persistently lowest achieving schools.

That is what this proposal seeks to do. To succeed, this accountability system must provide districts with resources and authority to rise to the challenge; a strong and effective set of services to help them; and broad public support for the work they must do.

Given these conditions, there is no doubt that all our kids can learn, that all students can clear today's higher bar of academic achievement, and that all students can graduate from high school ready for college and careers.

The SBE's Proposal

The SBE has commissioned numerous studies of policy barriers, explored effective models for change, and learned from other states' education reform efforts. The SBE has also worked extensively with educators, parents, and community members across the state as well as national experts in developing its proposals outlined below.

Identification Process of High Achieving Schools and "Challenged" Persistently Low Achieving Schools

The SBE has also developed an Accountability Index that provides a clear and comprehensive measure of student achievement. The Accountability Index will help districts focus on improvement, close the achievement gap, and identify schools that "beat the odds" in helping disadvantaged students. State assessments of reading, writing, math and science, as well as the extended graduation rate, are included in the Accountability Index. The SBE Accountability Index will be used to recognize high-achieving schools in an annual joint SBE/OSPI Recognition Program. The SBE also plans to work with OSPI for the adoption of this Accountability Index in replacement of the AYP matrix upon NCLB reauthorization or through a U.S. Department of Education waiver.

The SBE believes that its Accountability Index provides a better system than the current federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) matrix. For now, however, the

SBE proposes using federal criteria⁴ as well as state criteria to identify persistently low achieving schools. This will ensure a unified federal/state system of accountability. A brief description of these indicators is as follows:

1. Federal criteria that defines the persistently lowest achieving five percent of Title I and Title I eligible Washington schools in a step of improvement in terms of the absolute performance as well as improvement in performance compared to average state gains in the “all students” category in reading and math state assessments.
2. State criteria that includes, but are not limited to: an examination of schools and their districts in terms of the duration of low achievement over six years and the greatest number of students and schools affected, as well as greater details of low achievement by different student subgroups. Greater details include: extended graduation rates, district capacity in terms of financial and human resources, percent of credits earned by 7th-9th graders to stay on track, local district data on student achievement, perception survey data from the local school board, staff, students, parents and community on student learning.

Following this deeper analysis, districts with “challenged” or persistently low-achieving schools will be notified of their status as Voluntary Action Districts or Required Action Districts.

The Voluntary System

A district recommended for Voluntary Action based on the federal and state criteria above will have the opportunity to participate in the OSPI school and district improvement program and be eligible for federal school improvement funds. OSPI will conduct a district needs assessment that focuses on student achievement issues and will work with the district on how to address the issues identified. The district must select one of the four required federal models for school improvement (described below). OSPI will focus on building the district’s capacity to improve student achievement. This program will begin in the winter of 2010 and does not need legislative approval.

The Required System

A district will be notified that it is a Required Action District based on the federal and state criteria and must participate in a state legislatively mandated process. A **Required Action District** differs from a Voluntary Action District in two ways: it includes **Title I and non-Title I schools** and has not demonstrated sufficient performance gains in reading and math for all students in **six years**.

⁴ The federal criteria are defined in the draft new federal school improvement guidelines that are a part of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

For Required Action Districts, OSPI will conduct an Academic Performance Audit using experts in comprehensive school and district reform. The audit will focus on student achievement and will include (but not be limited to):

- Strengths and weaknesses of current leadership in district and schools.
- Human resources policies as outlined in the collective bargaining contracts and other school board policies (how staff is evaluated, hired, compensated, assigned, and replaced, as well as professional development opportunities).
- Alignment of curriculum and instruction to state standards.
- Use of data to inform instructional practice.
- Quality, use, and amount of instructional time.
- Current resources (federal, state and local) targeted on lowest performing schools.
- Quality of current district and school improvement plans and implementation.
- Family and community partnerships with schools.
- The most effective model for improvement based on the Academic Performance Audit.

Following the audit, the local school board, in collaboration with its staff and community, will develop a Required Action Plan based on the audit findings and select an appropriate model for change from among either the following four federal models or state/local models listed below

Federal Models:

- Turnaround: Replace the principal and at least 50 percent of the staff, adopt a new governance structure, and implement a new or revised instructional program.
- Restart: Close the school and reopen it as a charter school or an educational management organization run school.
- Closure: Close the school and transfer students to a higher-performing school.
- Transformation: Implement a transformation strategy that:
 - Develops teacher and school leader effectiveness.
 - Implements comprehensive instructional reform strategies.
 - Extends learning and teacher planning time.
 - Creates community-oriented schools.
 - Provides operating flexibility and intensive support.

State Model:

The Innovation Zone, which addresses the key elements of the federal transformation model listed above, but doesn't require specified activities if those activities are not applicable to the audit finding .

Local Model:

The local model must be based on best research proven practices.

The school board in the Required Action District, in collaboration with its staff and community, then develops an implementation plan, budget requirements, and metrics for measuring outcomes. This plan must specify how the district will address the audit findings.

Federal funds will be available for use in Title I and Title I eligible schools. State funds would be needed for non-Title I schools, or funding the state Innovation Zone model. Local funds would be used for the local model.

Required Action Districts must specify the planned interventions. The leading indicators could include measures such as instructional minutes per school, teacher attendance, student achievement outcomes, and high school student enrollment in advanced coursework.

The SBE must approve the Required Action Plan, which then becomes a binding agreement between the school board and SBE. The state will then provide resources for the district to implement the plan.

Required Action Districts are required to report to SBE and OSPI quarterly on their progress, identifying the strategies and assets utilized to solve problems, the evidence of fidelity to the plan implementation strategy, the evidence of impact on student achievement, and progress monitoring student achievement data.

After three years under Required Action status, OSPI will notify the SBE that a Required Action District is either ready to exit Required Action status or that it is not making sufficient progress, as measured by the metrics of the district's plan, including marked improvements in meeting the federal and state criteria for student achievement that resulted in the district's initial placement in Required Action.

SBE will then either approve the district's release from Required Action status or require the local school board to adopt a different model or revise its strategies in a new Required Action Plan in collaboration with its staff and community.

The Required Action Program could begin spring 2010 with legislative approval.

Resources and Timeline

There is approximately \$42.5 million in federal school improvement funds that would support a three year cohort of Voluntary and Required Action Districts beginning in 2010. Additional state or Race to the Top competitive grant funds would be needed to fund non-Title I schools or the Innovation Zone state model.

A Call to Action

Parents send their children to school with great hope – one that we all share. Each of our children deserves the opportunity to thrive and reach his or her full potential. We must insist on boldness now and hold ourselves accountable to act. No child's education should hold them hostage from a bright future.

DRAFT

An Excellent and Equitable Education for All Students: A State-local Partnership for Accountability

Introduction

In 2005, the Washington State Legislature directed the State Board of Education (SBE) to "implement a standards-based accountability system to improve student academic achievement."⁵

In 2009, the Legislature through ESHB 2261 acknowledged the SBE accountability framework to "create a unified system of support for challenged schools."⁶ The Legislature requested the SBE, in consultation with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), provide a report by December 1, 2009 that addressed:

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- A proposal and timeline for a more formalized comprehensive system of improvement. targeted to more "challenged" schools and districts that have not demonstrated significant improvement through the voluntary system.⁷

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OSPI data on number of students in persistently low achieving schools and number of schools/districts will be provided here to demonstrate magnitude

⁵ RCW 28A.305.130

⁶ RCW 28A.305.225

⁷ RCW 28A.305.225

Washington's schools have already demonstrated that it is possible to improve student achievement. Over the past decade, schools have learned how to use assessment data to align curriculum to state standards and to improve the quality of instruction in diverse classrooms. Many schools and districts have also built systems for continuous improvement and personalized instruction. OSPI has likewise already demonstrated its capacity to provide services that help challenged schools improve.

What we lack is a systematic way to apply all that has been learned about how to *sustain and accelerate* school improvement for all students, schools and districts.

President Obama and US Secretary of Education Duncan are encouraging states to provide the tools to make a dramatic turnaround with the bottom five percent of their persistently lowest achieving schools.

That is what this proposal seeks to do. To succeed, this accountability system must provide districts with resources and authority to rise to the challenge; a strong and effective set of services to help them; and broad public support for the work they must do.

Given these conditions, there is no doubt that all our kids can learn, that all students can clear today's higher bar of academic achievement, and that all students can graduate from high school ready for college and careers.

The Progress of Washington's School reform and the Need for a Coherent Accountability System

The proposed accountability framework has evolved in the context of Washington's ongoing effort to raise student achievement to levels consistent with the requirements of today's complex and evolving economy and society.

That process was set in motion in 1993, when the Washington state Legislature passed landmark legislation that led to the creation of state academic standards and the requirement that students meet these standards to earn a high school diploma.

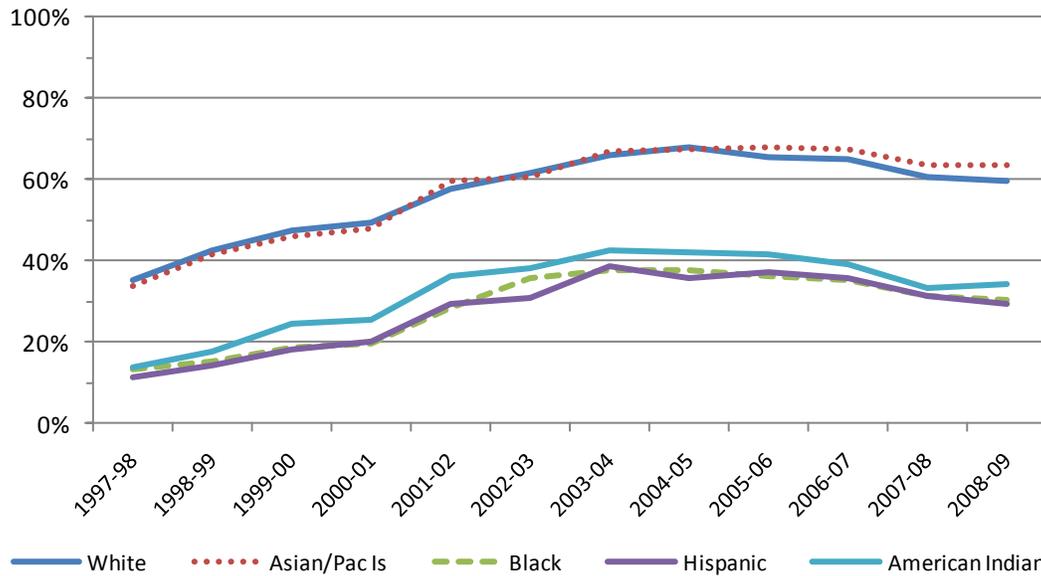
Creating a standards-based system ended the practice of awarding high school diplomas to students with limited basic skills and knowledge. The new standards-based system also raised the overall level of student learning and provided educators with powerful data to analyze trends in student achievement.

Student achievement data also highlighted the achievement gap between white and Asian-American students on the one hand, and (in some cases) African-American, Hispanic, and American Indian students on the other. While student achievement has risen for all groups of students (especially since the advent of

the standards movement), the gap between student groups has not closed, as shown in [Figure 1](#).

Figure One

Percent Meeting Grade 4 Mathematics Standard, Statewide by Race/Ethnicity,



The data generated by standards-based tests presents a clear picture of how our schools are performing. In spite of the good news of overall increases in student achievement, a frustrating and tragic part of the story remains: in most cases, it is the schools with the highest concentrations of low-income students and students of color who are making the least gains in student achievement. In too many of our schools, student achievement perpetually lags, while the skill requirements of the 21st century society and economy continue to rise.

The consequences – for the students in these schools, for the communities in which they live, and for our state and nation – are potentially devastating. A recent report by McKinsey and Company cites that “achievement gaps have negative implications that will grow over time for the U.S. economy as diminished skills and performance in the labor force reduces national income and economic growth. For example, measuring the impact of lower performance of black and Latino students and the impact on their educational attainment, we can estimate the U.S. earning alone would be \$120 billion to \$160 billion higher in 2008 if there was no racial achievement gap.”⁸

The state’s paramount duty is to provide for the education of all students, and to this end, state government provides approximately 70 percent of the funding

⁸ McKinsey and Company. Detailed Findings on the Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America’s Schools April 2009 page 81.

used in public schools. Thus, the state has both a moral and constitutional responsibility to ensure that every student, in every school, is getting the full benefit of a high quality, personalized education. An accountability system that ensures intervention in persistently low achieving schools is therefore a necessary component of the state's paramount duty.

The Uneven Landscape of School Improvement

In light of the state's paramount duty, OSPI has an obligation to go beyond its monitoring role and provide technical assistance and build the capacity of schools and districts to improve the education of their students. Over the past six years, the OSPI school and district improvement program has evolved, providing focused assistance to interventions that impact student achievement. Some districts and schools continue to make steady gains in student achievement, and among these are "beat the odds" schools that are achieving impressive gains in student achievement with low-income students and students of color (who too often lack the many advantages of their more affluent white peers.)

Data on low achieving schools here

It's clear that low-income students are every bit as smart and capable as others, but too many of them are now sitting in classrooms where they are not getting quality instruction and support. Even some schools and districts with predominantly middle-class students are similarly failing to make the gains in student achievement that are so urgently needed. There are additional needs for resources, including time, funding, training, and effective personnel to create equitable opportunities for all students.

The Quest for Effective Shared Accountability

The State Board of Education has worked for several years with a wide array of stakeholders and education experts to examine effective remedies for our challenged schools.

As part of its process for designing such an accountability system, the SBE has:

- Commissioned a study of "Trends in Teacher Retention and Mobility in Selected Washington Middle and High Schools," by the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (CSTP), which found that high levels of teacher mobility and assignment of novice teachers in high-need schools impede student learning. Additional work is now underway to look at the policy incentives for National Board Certification with CSTP.
- Contracted with the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory for a policy barriers study that identified insufficient or unpredictable resources, inflexibility in their allocation, lack of time for professional development and collaboration, and absence of a coherent system to recruit, develop

and retain quality staff as the chief barriers to dramatic improvement in student achievement.

- Contracted with Mass Insight, to develop models for school transformation (these have subsequently been adapted to serve as the basis for new federal education policy).
- Examined other states' accountability and intervention systems for struggling schools.
- Produced background and research papers to inform stakeholders about SBE's work, the context of state and federal requirements, and the critical importance of quality instruction tailored to student needs.
- Met with groups of educators, national experts, education leaders, parents, and community members from across the state to solicit their ideas, feedback, and analysis of barriers and opportunities for school improvement and the development of an effective state accountability system.
- Worked collaboratively with OSPI's School and District Improvement Program to utilize what has been learned from OSPI school improvement efforts and to build on their work.

This proposal – and the draft legislation necessary to implement it (Appendix A) – are built on the foundation of this work.

Core Principles for Shared Accountability

Washington's system for school accountability relies on partnerships with local school districts to dismantle barriers to improvement while building on the following principles for success:

- Collaboration that builds local capacity is the only route to sustainable improvement that will endure beyond the period of state intervention or extra support.
- Flexibility in the school calendar, collective bargaining, regulation, and resource use is needed to direct expertise and assistance to the schools and students who need it most.
- Building statewide system capacity to provide effective assistance and professional development to local districts must be a process of continuous improvement based on emerging national and international research and best practices.
- Reciprocal accountability must be a consistent feature of relationships between parents and schools, between schools and districts, and between districts and OSPI and the SBE.

Current Status of Voluntary Action in Low Achieving Schools

During the past six years, OSPI has established “focused assistance” programs to help struggling schools. These programs have provided targeted schools and

districts with evaluations, professional development, planning assistance, coaching, and various other services to help them improve student achievement. However, participation in these programs is voluntary, and there are no consequences for under-performing schools and districts that choose not to avail themselves of these programs.

These programs are supported by federal Title I school improvement funds and state funds. The total investment for 2009-10 was \$21 million.

Initially, OSPI's assistance was targeted to individual schools. Over time, however, it became apparent that while gains in student achievement were made during the two or three years when active assistance was provided, it was often not sustained after the period of extra support ended. At the school level, sustained efforts to improve were often slowed or derailed by changes in staff or leadership or by lack of resources. Improvement was most vulnerable to deterioration when local school district leaders were not directly involved or invested in the work initiated by focused assistance.

As a result, OSPI's school improvement efforts have shifted to work with both schools and school districts. This ensures that district policy makers are engaged and committed to long term improvement efforts.

In 2008, OSPI launched the Summit District Improvement Initiative – a new, federally-funded effort that has provided an improved, intensive set of services for eight school districts over three years. Three more districts were added to the initiative in 2009.

OSPI school improvement programs usually provide an analysis of the school and/or district's needs, a part-time district or school improvement facilitator, targeted professional development, the expertise of needed consultants, and grant funding.

OSPI also created the Washington Improvement and Implementation Network (WIIN) Center, located in Tacoma, to carry out this school improvement work. Professional development and other services are provided at the WIIN Center.

Current Status of Required Action in Challenged or Persistently Low Achieving Schools

Current state law prevents SBE or the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) from requiring challenged districts to participate in a formalized comprehensive system of improvement.⁹

This proposal calls for the legislature to grant that authority.

⁹ RCW 28A.305.225 (4) (b)

Inequitable, incremental, and marginal gains in student achievement are simply not acceptable, particularly when the result is the perpetuation of gross inequalities of opportunity for low-income students and students of color. There is a clear consensus among all stakeholders for public education to be a “great equalizer,” urgent and dramatic action is required to accelerate improvement in Washington’s under-performing schools.

The No Child Left Behind Act

The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has shaped how schools and districts are selected for voluntary participation in OSPI’s school improvement programs. NCLB requires that schools and districts make “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP) by meeting rigorous annual improvement goals, as measured by state test results in reading and math, the level of student participation in testing, by graduation rates (for high schools), and unexcused absence rates (for middle and elementary schools).

NCLB measures achievement at the school and district levels using a complex matrix. It requires a uniform level of achievement for nine groups of students, including five ethnic or cultural subgroups, English language learners, students in special education, and low-income students. In Washington, the level of achievement required to meet AYP is raised every three years, and the goal is for all students to meet state academic standards by 2014.

Schools are judged to be deficient if they fail to show the required level of student achievement, attendance, or graduation *in any one* of these groups. NCLB requires a set of sanctions to be applied if a school or district does not make AYP two years in a row. These sanctions become progressively intense, but they apply *only* to those schools who have high concentrations of low-income students and therefore receive federal NCLB Title I funds.

Corrective measures could include replacing staff, implementing new curricula, extending the school day or year, closing the school, or converting it to a charter school. When faced with these choices, most schools (including those in Washington) select the NCLB “other” option, one that focuses on an array of different technical assistance strategies, from professional development to coaches to instructional trainers. None of these measures have yet been required until recently; the new proposed federal guidelines for school improvement may change the landscape. These new draft guidelines provide a much stronger menu of voluntary [turnaround models](#) that districts must select from in order to receive federal school improvement funding.

Designing a Coherent and Effective School Accountability System

SBE has, in consultation with a wide array of stakeholders, defined the essential elements of a coherent and effective system of school accountability and improvement:

- An excellent and equitable education for all students.
- Continuous improvement for all schools and districts.
- A single system for both state and federal measurement of school performance.
- A system built around collaboration between the state and local school boards/districts.

The three essential parts of this system will be

1. A fair and objective method of identifying both successful and under-performing schools and districts, based on both the proposed Accountability Index and additional criteria.
2. A system for *voluntary* participation in state-provided school and district improvement programs.
3. A system for *required* participation in state-provided school and district improvement programs.

To identify schools and districts in need of improvement, the legislature directed SBE to develop an easy-to-understand Accountability Index that could be accepted by the federal government as a substitute for current NCLB accountability provisions. This would require a federal waiver of NCLB rules or changes to NCLB itself.

If waivers from or changes to NCLB are not forthcoming, SBE will rely on the proposed federal school improvement guidelines to identify the persistently lowest achieving schools.

Identifying Schools and Districts that Need to Improve

In the accountability provisions of ESHB 2261, the Washington state legislature directed the SBE to develop a better identification process of schools most in need of improvement. The Accountability Index was developed to meet that demand. [Figure 2](#) shows how this proposed Index would apply to a single school. It measures four indicators and five outcomes. The four indicators are:

- Achievement by non-low income students.
- Achievement by low-income students.
- Achievement compared to other schools with similar demographics (called “peer” schools).
- Improvement in student achievement.

The five outcomes are student test scores in reading, writing, math and science, plus the extended graduation rate.

Figure Two
Matrix of Accountability Measures

INDICATORS	OUTCOMES				
	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Ext. Grad. Rate
Achievement of non-low income students.					
Achievement of low income students.					
Achievement vs. peers.					
Improvement from the previous year.					

This Index is more fair than AYP calculations, and, at the same time, it reflects a more thorough measurement of student achievement by including math and science and by reducing the minimum number of students required to generate a measure from 30 to 10 in each grade. Both OSPI and SBE are currently using the new Accountability Index to recognize the state's highest achieving schools, with the 2009 awards to be announced in May, 2010.

To highlight any existing achievement gaps, SBE proposes using an additional matrix to measure the performance of each student subgroup. (Technical descriptions and analysis of the Accountability Index and the separate matrix for subgroups are available on the SBE website at <http://www.sbe.wa.gov>.)

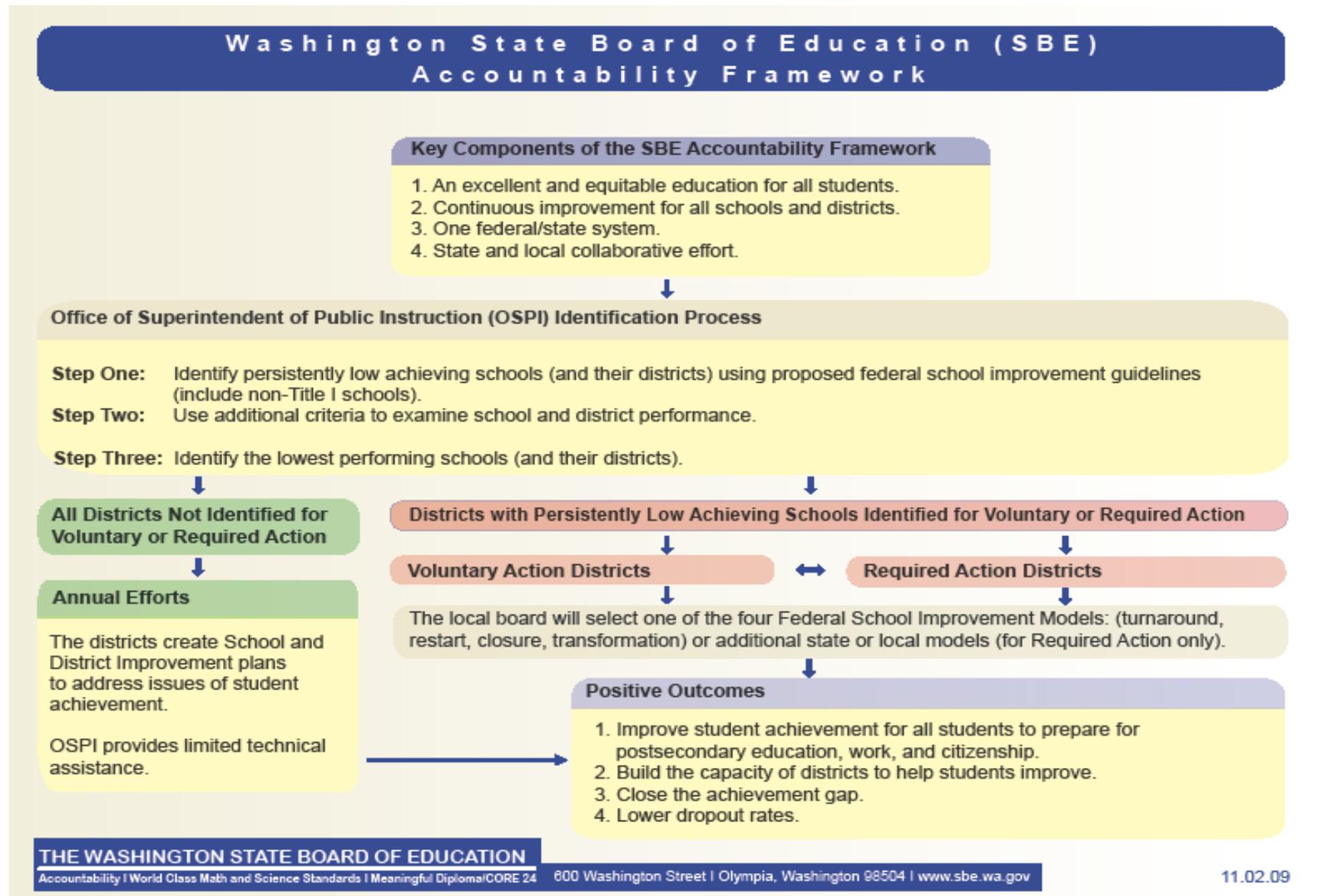
As this Accountability Index was being refined, the federal Department of Education issued new rules for how states should identify the lowest-performing Title I schools in a step of improvement, coupling those new rules with an announcement that federal aid to improve struggling schools will double in the next two years. The Secretary of Education has committed to using increased funding to turn around the bottom five percent of Title I schools in improvement status and other low-performing Title I-eligible schools. The primary metric will be measuring the "all students" category of performance in each school for reading and math in terms of absolute performance (the lowest performers) and degree of improvement compared to the state average gains.

To meet these new requirements and qualify for the increased federal funding, the state must sort schools into three tiers:

- Tier 1: The lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools that are in a step of improvement, corrective action or restructuring, as measured by the state test scores of all students in reading and math.
- Tier II: Equally low-achieving Title I-eligible middle and high schools but who have not received Title I funds.
- Tier III: All other Title I schools that have not made AYP for more than two years.

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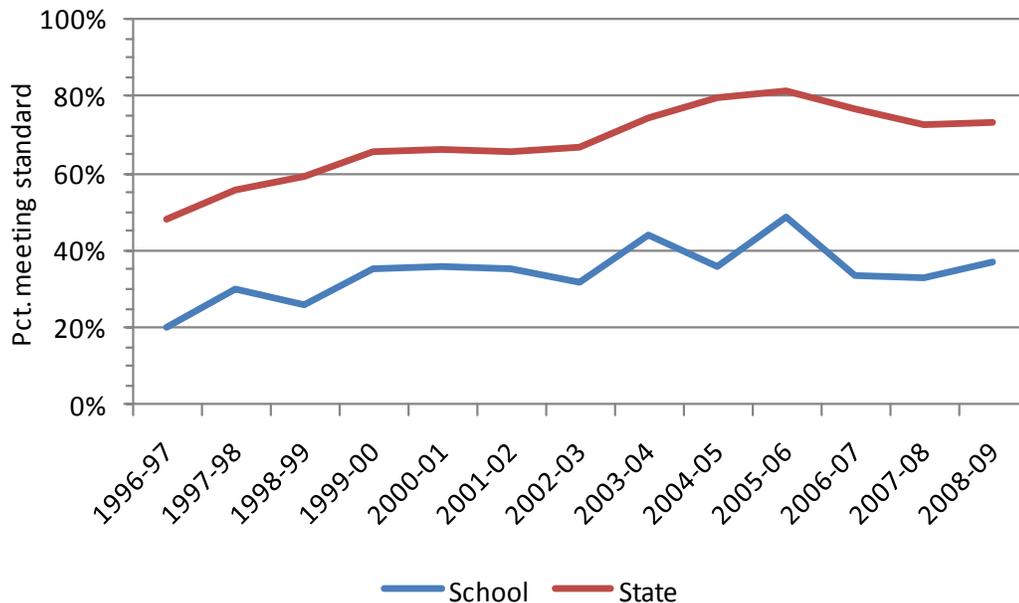
Helping Challenged Schools Accelerate Improvement – Schematic



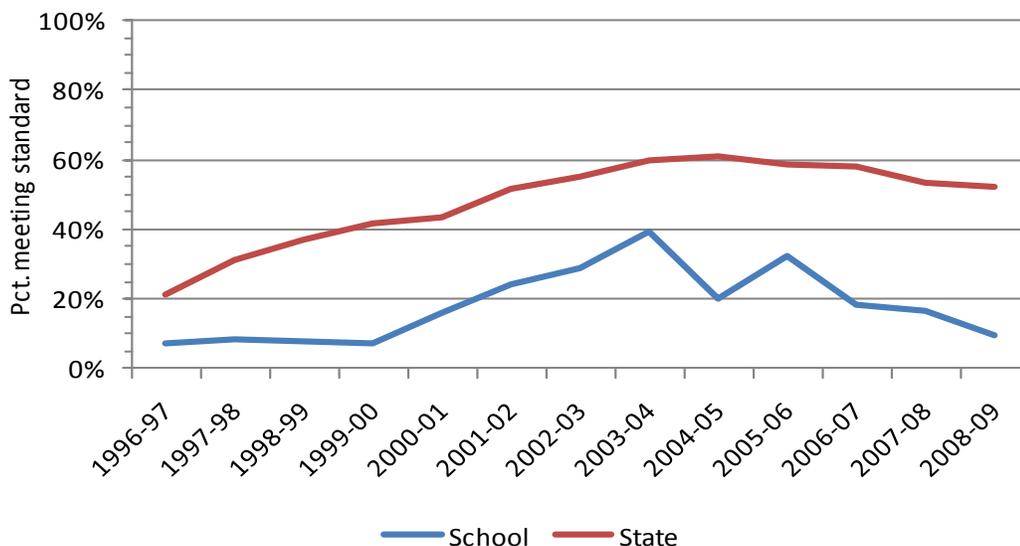
After identifying the lowest achieving five percent of all Title I schools that are in a step of improvement, corrective action or restructuring, OSPI will select the lowest achieving schools and their districts for further analysis, using additional state criteria.

Figure 3 & 4: An example of one Washington elementary school with 500 students that has had low achievement for many years and would be identified under the federal measures is illustrated below:

Grade 4 Reading WASL Results



Grade 4 Math WASL Results



Once initially identified, the school and district will undergo a deeper analysis utilizing additional state criteria. Examples of the criteria that will be used (others may be included):

Duration of low achievement and greatest number of students and schools affected:

- Six years of performance data on state assessments for elementary, middle, and high schools.
- Feeder school patterns to determine if there is a progression that continues to have low achievement from elementary through high school.
- Number of students and schools in the district with consistently low achievement.

Examination of details of low achievement in schools:

- Extended graduation rates.
- Number of credits ninth graders earned.
- Subgroup performance on state assessments.
- English Language Learners' performance on Washington Language Proficiency Test.
- District capacity in terms of financial and human resources.
- Perception data from local school board, staff, students, parents and community members on student achievement.
- Local district data on student achievement.

This deeper analysis is necessary to ensure that school improvement efforts are targeted where they are most needed and will be most productive. This analysis will also help identify schools that are tackling persistent achievement issues effectively, as well as those where effort is lacking or ineffective.

Following this deeper analysis, districts with “challenged” or persistently low-achieving schools will be notified of their status as Voluntary Action Districts or Required Action Districts.

- A Voluntary Action District can include both Title I and Title I-eligible schools that have extremely low overall student achievement and have not demonstrated sufficient performance gains in reading and math for all students in *four years* (plus additional state-defined criteria).
- A Required Action District is defined as one that includes Title I and non-Title I schools that have extremely low overall student achievement and have not demonstrated sufficient performance gains in reading and math for all students in *six years*, plus additional state-defined criteria.

All districts identified as Required Action Districts will be invited to participate as Voluntary Action Districts. If a Required Action District chooses not to participate, it may move into Required Action status as defined above. Districts may appeal Required Action status to a joint OSPI/SBE staff panel for review. This panel will

make recommendations to SBE, and SBE will rule on this appeal within three months.

For Voluntary Action Districts, OSPI will conduct an external district needs assessment. The district will select a federal model for school improvement based on the final school improvement guidelines. OSPI will focus on building the district's capacity to improve its low-performing schools.

For Required Action Districts, OSPI will conduct an external Academic Performance Audit using experts in comprehensive school reform and district results. No staff or member of OSPI, SBE, or the local school district may participate in the audit team.

The audit will focus on student achievement and will include (but not be limited to):

- Strengths and weaknesses of current leadership in district and schools.
- Human resources policies as outlined in the collective bargaining contracts and other school board policies (how staff is evaluated, hired, compensated, assigned, and replaced, as well as professional development opportunities).
- Alignment of curriculum and instruction to state standards.
- Use of data to inform instructional practice.
- Quality, use, and amount of instructional time.
- Current resources (federal, state and local) targeted on lowest performing schools.
- Quality of current district and school improvement plans and implementation.
- Family and community partnerships with schools.
- The most effective model for improvement based on the Academic Performance Audit.

Following the audit, the local school board, in collaboration with its staff and community, will develop a Required Action Plan based on the audit findings and select an appropriate model for change from among the four required federal models listed or a state/local model:

Four federal models:

- Turnaround: Replace the principal and at least 50 percent of the staff, adopt a new governance structure, and implement a new or revised instructional program.
- Restart: Close the school and reopen it as a charter school or a school run by an educational management organization.

- Closure: Close the school and transfer students to a higher-performing school.
- Transformation: Implement a transformation strategy that:
 - Develops teacher and school leader effectiveness.
 - Implements comprehensive instructional reform strategies.
 - Extends learning and teacher planning time.
 - Creates community-oriented schools.
 - Provides operating flexibility and intensive support.

See [Appendix B](#) for a more detailed description of these federal models.

State model “The Innovation Zone”

The SBE Innovation Zone which addresses the key elements of the federal transformation model listed above but doesn’t require specified activities if those activities are not applicable to the audit findings.

Local model

A local model that is based on research proven practices>

The school board in the Required Action District, will collaborate with its staff and community to develop an implementation plan, budget requirements, and metrics for measuring outcomes. This Required Action Plan must specify how the district will address the audit findings.

Federal funds will be available for use in Title I and Title I-eligible schools. State funds would be needed for non-Title I schools or if the district chooses to use the state Innovation Zone model. No state funds would be available for districts that choose a local model. OSPI will provide a list of education management organizations and technical assistance providers that can aid districts.

Required Action Districts must specify the planned interventions. The leading indicators could include measures such as instructional minutes per school, teacher attendance, student achievement outcomes, and middle and high school student enrollment in advanced coursework.

The SBE, in consultation with OSPI, must approve the Required Action Plan, which then becomes a binding agreement between the district and SBE. The state will then provide resources for the district to implement the plan.

Required Action Districts are required to report to SBE and OSPI quarterly on their progress, identifying the strategies and assets utilized to solve problems, the evidence of plan implementation, the evidence of impact on student achievement, and progress monitoring data.

After three years under Required Action status, OSPI will notify the SBE that a Required Action District is ready to exit Required Action status or that it is not making sufficient progress, as measured by the metrics of the district's plan and marked improvements in meeting the federal and state criteria that resulted in the district's initial placement in Required Action.

SBE will then either approve the district's release from Required Action status or require the local school board to adopt a different model or revise its strategies in a new Required Action Plan in collaboration with its staff and community.

Resources and Timeline

There is approximately \$42.5 million in federal school improvement funding that would be available to fund a beginning three year cohort of Voluntary and Required Action Districts in 2010. Additional state or Race to the Top funds would be needed to fund non-Title I schools or the Innovation Zone state model.

A detailed plan of both the timeline and resources needed for Voluntary and Required Action are provided in [Appendix C](#) and [Appendix D](#).

State and Federal Actions for 2010

After two and a half years of diligent work with its stakeholders, the SBE will propose a bill to the Washington legislature that incorporates the elements of the Required Action framework outlined above. This will allow the state to enter into a collaborative but required relationship with the local school board of a Required Action District to conduct an academic audit, create a plan, and provide the resources and authority for implementation.

The bill will propose a process to permit the school districts and their local education associations to reopen the applicable provisions of the collective bargaining agreement to include any items based on the audit findings as subjects of mandatory bargaining. These items must be acted upon those contract provisions in an expeditious manner. The bill will also include a provision to allow school districts to contract with education management organizations to provide assistance with any model selected. The potential for withholding state or federal funds will be considered if the local school board is unable to create a plan that meets the audit requirements.

The federal government is expected to provide the funding for the group of persistently lowest achieving Title I and Title I-eligible schools in 2010 through its school improvement program. To receive this federal school improvement funding and to be eligible for a Race to the Top grant, a state must not have any law or rule that prohibits the state from intervening in low achieving schools.

Effective Programs for School and District Improvement

Under the proposed new school improvement guidelines, the federal Department of Education has announced it will allocate funding for Title I and Title I-eligible schools for three years if they choose to implement one of the four federal models – turnaround, restart, closure, or transformation. SBE and OSPI will make any adjustments needed to the Required Action proposal if there are changes in the final federal school improvement guidelines.

The SBE proposes to go beyond this new federal guidance in two important ways.

1. Seek state funding to include non-Title I eligible schools in its accountability and improvement system.
2. Add state and local models to the list of models for change.

The state model the SBE proposes is called the Innovation Zone. This is a model for school transformation that incorporates many of the ideas in the federal Department of Education's transformation model, including developing teacher and leader effectiveness, promoting comprehensive instructional strategies, extending learning time, providing operating flexibility, and changing budget and staffing. While the Innovation Zone is similar to the federal Transformation model, the Innovation Zone is more flexible and less prescriptive; however, no federal funds are available through this model.

The SBE would also like to provide flexibility to use additional local models of change and innovation. Proposed local models must address the performance audit findings and use research-based principles and practices for achieving enduring success.

A Call to Action

Parents send their children to school with great hope – one that we all share. Each of our children deserves the opportunity to thrive and reach his or her full potential. We must insist on boldness now and hold ourselves accountable to act. No child's education should hold them hostage from a bright future.

Appendices:

- A. Proposed Legislation
- B. Description of Federal Models in New Draft School Improvement Guidelines
- C. Implementation Timeline
- D. Resources Needed for Voluntary and Required Action Districts and State Support
- E. List of SBE Systems Performance Accountability (SPA) Work Group Members
- F. List of SBE Studies Conducted For Accountability Framework 2007-2009.
- G. List of SBE Members

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Appendix A: Proposed Legislation

Material Pending. . .

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Appendix B: Description of Federal Models in New Draft School Improvement Guidelines

[Federal Register: August 26, 2009 (Volume 74, Number 164)]
[Notices]
[Page 43101-43114]
From the Federal Register Online via GPO Access [wais.access.gpo.gov]
[DOCID:fr26au09-38]

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[Docket ID ED-2009-OESE-0010]
RIN 1810-AB06

School Improvement Grants--American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009; Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

ACTION: Notice of proposed requirements.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Secretary of Education (Secretary) proposes requirements for School Improvement Grants authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA), and funded through both the Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2009 and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The proposed requirements would define the criteria that a State educational agency (SEA) must use to award school improvement funds to local educational agencies (LEAs) with the lowest-achieving Title I schools that demonstrate the greatest need for the funds and the strongest commitment to use those funds to provide adequate resources to their lowest-achieving Title I schools in order to raise substantially the achievement of the students attending those schools. The proposed requirements also would require an SEA to give priority, through a waiver under section 9401 of the ESEA, to LEAs that also wish to serve the lowest-achieving secondary schools that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds. Finally, the proposed requirements would require an SEA to award school improvement funds to eligible LEAs in amounts sufficient to enable the targeted schools to implement one of four specific proposed interventions.

Excerpt: . . .
Proposed Requirements

The Secretary proposes the following requirements with respect to the allocation and use of School Improvement Grants.

I. SEA Priorities in Awarding School Improvement Grants

A. Defining Key Terms

To award School Improvement Grants to its LEAs, consistent with section 1003(g)(6) of the ESEA, an SEA must define three tiers of schools, in accordance with the requirements in paragraph 1, to enable the SEA to select those LEAs with the greatest need for such funds. From among the LEAs in greatest need, the SEA must select, in accordance with paragraph 2, those LEAs that demonstrate the strongest commitment to ensuring that the funds are used to provide adequate resources to enable the lowest-achieving schools to meet, or be on track to meet, the LEA's three-year student achievement goals in reading/language arts and mathematics. Accordingly, the Secretary proposes to require an SEA to use the following definitions to define key terms:

1. Greatest need. An LEA with the greatest need for a School Improvement Grant must have one or more schools in at least one of the following tiers:
 - a. Tier I schools: A Tier I school is a school in the lowest-achieving five percent of all Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State, or one of the five lowest-achieving Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State, whichever number of schools is greater.
 - i. In determining the lowest-achieving Title I schools in the State, an SEA must consider both the absolute performance of a school on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics and the school's lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years as defined in paragraph (a).
 - ii. (ii) A school has not made progress if its gains on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics, in the "all students" category (as used in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(I) of the ESEA), are less than the average gains of schools in the State on those assessments.
 - b. Tier II schools: A Tier II school is a secondary school (middle school or high school) that is equally as low-achieving as a Tier I school and that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I, Part A funds.
 - c. Tier III schools: A Tier III school is a Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that is

- not a Tier I school. An SEA may establish additional criteria to encourage LEAs to differentiate among these schools in their use of school improvement funds and to use in setting priorities among LEA applications for funding.
2. Strongest Commitment. An LEA with the strongest commitment is an LEA that agrees to implement, and demonstrate the capacity to implement fully and effectively, one of the following rigorous interventions in each Tier I and Tier II school that the LEA commits to serve:
 - a. Turnaround model. A turnaround model must include—
 - i. Replacing the principal and at least 50 percent of the staff;
 - ii. Adopting a new governance structure, which may include, but is not limited to, reporting to a new "turnaround office" in the LEA or SEA, hiring a "turnaround leader" who reports directly to the Superintendent or Chief Academic Officer, or entering into a multi-year contract with the LEA or SEA to obtain added flexibility in exchange for greater accountability;
 - iii. Implementing a new or revised instructional program;
 - iv. Implementing strategies designed to recruit, place, and retain effective staff;
 - v. Providing ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development to staff to ensure that they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning;
 - vi. Promoting the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of individual students;
 - vii. Establishing schedules and strategies that increase instructional time for students and time for collaboration and professional development for staff; and
 - viii. Providing appropriate social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports for students.
 - b. Restart model. A restart model is one in which an LEA closes a school and reopens it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization (CMO), or an education management organization (EMO) that has been selected through a rigorous review process. A

- restart model must admit, within the grades it serves, all former students who wish to attend the school.
- c. School closure. An LEA closes a school and enrolls the students who attended that school in other, high-achieving schools in the LEA, which may include charter schools.
 - d. Transformation model. A transformation model must include each of the following strategies:
 - i. Developing teacher and school leader effectiveness.
 1. Required activities. The LEA must—
 - a. Use evaluations that are based in significant measure on student growth to improve teachers' and school leaders' performance;
 - b. Identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff who improve student achievement outcomes and identify and remove those who do not;
 - c. Replace the principal who led the school prior to commencement of the transformation model;
 - d. Provide staff ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development (e.g., regarding subject-specific pedagogy, instruction that reflects a deeper understanding of the community served by the school, or differentiated instruction) that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed to ensure staff are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies; and
 - e. Implement strategies designed to recruit, place, and retain effective staff.
 2. Permissible activities. An LEA may also implement other strategies to develop teachers' and school leaders' effectiveness, such as—

- a. Providing additional compensation to attract and retain high-quality educators to the school;
 - b. Instituting a system for measuring changes in instructional practices resulting from professional development; or
 - c. Ensuring that the school is not required to accept a teacher without the mutual consent of the teacher and principal, regardless of the teacher's seniority.
3. Comprehensive instructional reform strategies.
- a. Required activities. The LEA must—
 - i. Use data to identify and implement comprehensive, research-based, instructional programs that are vertically aligned from one grade to the next as well as aligned with State academic standards; and
 - ii. Promote the continuous use of individualized student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of individual students.
 - b. Permissible activities. An LEA may also implement other strategies for implementing comprehensive instructional reform strategies, such as—
 - i. Conducting periodic reviews to ensure that the curriculum is being implemented with fidelity, is having the intended impact on student achievement, and is modified if ineffective;
 - ii. Implementing a school-wide "response-to-intervention" model; or
 - iii. In secondary schools—
 - 1. Increasing rigor by offering opportunities for students to enroll in advanced coursework (such as Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate), early-college high schools, dual enrollment programs, or thematic learning academies that prepare students for college and careers, including by providing appropriate supports designed to ensure that low-achieving students can take advantage of these programs and coursework;

2. Improving student transition from middle to high school through summer transition programs or freshman academies; or
3. Increasing graduation rates through, for example, credit-recovery programs, smaller learning communities, and acceleration of basic reading and mathematics skills.
4. Extending learning time and creating community-oriented schools.
 - a. Required activities. The LEA must—
 - i. Provide more time for students to learn core academic content by expanding the school day, the school week, or the school year, or increasing instructional time for core academic subjects during the school day;
 - ii. Provide more time for teachers to collaborate, including time for horizontal and vertical planning to improve instruction;
 - iii. Provide more time or opportunities for enrichment activities for students (e.g., instruction in financial literacy, internships or apprenticeships, service-learning opportunities) by partnering, as appropriate, with other organizations, such as universities, businesses, and museums; and
 - iv. Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.
 - b. Permissible activities. An LEA may also implement other strategies that extend learning time and create community-oriented schools, such as—
 - i. Partnering with parents, faith- and community-based organizations, health clinics, the police department, and others to create safe school environments that meet students' social, emotional and health needs;
 - ii. Extending or restructuring the school day to add time for such strategies as advisory periods to build relationships between students, faculty, and other school staff; or
 - iii. Implementing approaches to improve school climate and discipline, such as implementing a system of positive behavioral supports or taking steps to eliminate bullying and student harassment.
5. Providing operating flexibility and sustained support.
 - a. Required activities. The LEA must—

- i. Give the school sufficient operating flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes; and
 - ii. Ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from the LEA, the SEA, or a designated external lead partner organization (such as a school turnaround organization or an EMO).
- b. Permissible activities. The LEA may also implement other strategies for providing operational flexibility and intensive support, such as—
 - i. Allowing the school to be run under a new governance arrangement, such as a turnaround division within the LEA or SEA; or
 - ii. Implementing a weighted per-pupil school-based budget formula.

In determining the strength of an LEA's commitment to using school improvement funds to implement these interventions, an SEA must consider, at a minimum, the extent to which the LEA's application shows the LEA's efforts to:

1. Analyze the needs of its schools and match the interventions to those needs;
2. Design interventions consistent with this notice;
3. Recruit, screen, and select external providers to ensure quality;
4. Embed the interventions in a longer-term plan to sustain gains in achievement; (5) align other resources with the interventions;
5. Modify its practices, if necessary, to enable it to implement the interventions fully and effectively;
6. Sustain the reforms after the funding period ends.

Moreover, the SEA must consider LEA's capacity to implement the proposed interventions and may approve the LEA to serve only those schools for which the SEA determines that the LEA can implement fully and effectively one of the proposed interventions.

Note: The official version of this document is the document published in the Federal Register. Free Internet access to the official edition of the Federal Register and the Code of Federal Regulations is available on GPO Access at: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/nara/index.html>.

Appendix C: Implementation Timetable

Fall 2009	Winter 2010	Spring 2010	Summer 2010
<p>State</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SBE lays out the details of its Accountability Framework with stakeholders. 2. OSPI and SBE identify persistently low achieving schools to determine Voluntary and Required Action Districts. 3. SBE completes the report and SBE/OSPI send a joint bill to the legislature on the Accountability Framework. 4. SBE incorporates report and draft legislation in Round 1 of the Race to the Top Application (including a request for funding for state models and non Title 1 schools funding under Required Action). 	<p>State</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Legislature acts upon the SBE proposed Accountability bill. <p>District</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Districts selected for Voluntary or Required Action (pending legislative approval). 	<p>State</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Voluntary Action Districts and potential Required Action Districts are offered the opportunity to participate in the voluntary state assistance program (OSPI) under new federal school improvement guidelines. 1. If necessary, Washington will submit a round 2 application including a request for funding state models and non Title I schools funding under Required Action. <p>District</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Voluntary Action Districts begin work on evaluation and pre-work to receiving addition state assistance. 	<p>State</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. SBE will determine the designation of Required Action Districts. 3. Required Action Districts will have an OSPI Audit. <p>District</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Required Action Districts may appeal designation to SBE within one month of recommendation.
Fall 2010	Winter 2011	Spring 2011	Summer 2011
<p>State</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SBE and OSPI will submit a request for fiscal year 2011-2013 funding for state support to Voluntary and Required Action Districts. 	<p>State</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OSPI provides a list of resources and assistance to Required Action Districts. 2. Legislature acts on budget request for state funding for accountability pieces. <p>District</p> <p>Required Action District's local school board creates the Required Action Plan for SBE approval.</p>		

Fall 2011	Winter 2012	Spring 2012	Summer 2012
			<p>State</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> OSPI may conduct an additional audit to review why there's a lack of progress. <p>District</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary Action Districts who do not participate in the state and program and whose schools have made limited or insufficient progress based on federal and state identified criteria will go into Required Action. OSPI may conduct additional audits. Required Action Districts must demonstrate improvement based on federal and state criteria as well as their own metrics. Local Board must supply remedy for insufficient progress.
Fall 2012	Winter 2013	Spring 2013	Summer 2013
			<p>State</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> OSPI will recommend to SBE that Required Action Districts, if successful, no longer be designated Required Action Districts. SBE will review and take appropriate action. <p>District</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Pending state funding, Voluntary Action Districts who do participate in the state program and whose schools do not make progress based on federal and state criteria will go into Required Action.

Appendix D: Resources Needed for Voluntary and Required Action Districts and State Support

Materials Pending. Note: Majority of funding for this support will come from the Federal School Improvement funding, which is estimated to be \$42.5 million over three years, which is double the amount that OSPI currently receives for its federal school improvement program.

Appendix E: List of SBE Systems Performance Accountability (SPA) Work Group members

Past and Present SPA Members

Kristina Mayer, SBE Lead

1. Ann Walker, Wiley Elementary
2. Bill Williams, PTA
3. Bob Harmon, OSPI
4. Caroline King, Partnership for Learning
5. Don Rash, AWSP
6. Edie Harding, SBE
7. Erin Jones, OSPI
8. Gary Kipp, AWSP
9. George Juarez, Othello School District
10. Janell Newman, OSPI
11. Karen Davis, WEA
12. Mack Armstrong, WASA
13. Marc Cummings, Director, Public Affairs, Battelle
14. Marilee Scarbrough, WSSDA
15. Martha Rice, WSSDA
16. Mary Alice Heuschel, Renton School District
17. Mike Bernard, Madison Cooke, Inc.
18. Myra Johnson, PESB, Clover Park School District
19. Nancy Smith, PESB, Lake Stevens School District
20. Phil Brockman, Ballard School District
21. Roger Erskine, PESB
22. Ted Thomas, WSSDA

Past members

SBE members attend the SPA meetings

Appendix F: List of SBE Studies Conducted for Accountability Framework 2007-2009

Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession. "Trends in Teacher Retention and Mobility in Selected Washington Middle and High Schools." A technical report prepared for the SBE September 2007.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. "Study of State and Local Barriers to Raising Student Achievement Dramatically for All Students." July 2008.

SBE Staff. "The National Picture of State Intervention Authority in Low Performing Schools and Districts." August 2008.

Mass Insight Education. "Serving Every Child Well: Washington State's Commitment to Help Challenged Schools Succeed." Final report to the SBE December 2008.

SBE Staff. "Recent Actions and Research for Consideration Under SBE Accountability Framework." June 2009.

Bylsma, Pete. "Washington's New Accountability Index A Final Report to the Board." November 2009

Appendix G: State Board of Education Members

1. Mary Jean Ryan, Chair
Seattle (Governor Appointed)
2. Warren T. Smith Sr., Vice Chair
Spanaway (WSSDA Elected, Western WA, Position 5)
3. Amy Bragdon
Spokane (Governor Appointed)
4. Dr. Bernal Baca
Yakima (Governor Appointed)
5. Bob Hughes
Seattle (WSSDA Elected, Western WA, Position 4)
6. Eric Liu
Seattle (Governor Appointed)
7. Jeff Vincent
Bainbridge Island (Governor Appointed)
8. John C. Schuster
Ocean Shores (Private Schools Representative).
9. Dr. Kristina L. Mayer
Port Townsend (Governor Appointed)
10. Phyllis Bunker Frank
Yakima (WSSDA Elected, Eastern WA, Position 2).
11. Randy Dorn
Superintendent of Public Instruction
12. Dr. Sheila Fox
Bellingham (Governor Appointed)
13. Dr. Steve Dal Porto
Quincy (WSSDA Elected, Eastern WA, Position 1)
14. Connie Fletcher
Issaquah (WSSDA Representative via Appointment)
15. Austianna Quick
Oroville (Student, Eastern WA)
16. Anna Laura Kastama
Tacoma (Student, Western WA)

Executive Summary

Washington's New Accountability Index Final Report to the State Board of Education

November 2009

Pete Bylsma, EdD, MPA
BYLSMAPJ@COMCAST.NET

*The full report is available on the
State Board of Education Web site at
<http://www.sbe.wa.gov/spa.htm>.*

CREATING THE ACCOUNTABILITY INDEX

The Legislature requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to develop a statewide accountability system to help improve academic performance among all students. SBE was required to “adopt objective, systematic criteria” to identify schools and districts for recognition and for receiving additional state support. The 2009 Legislature required the Board to develop an index for such purposes. To meet this requirement, the Board has developed a provisional Accountability Index to sort schools and districts into different “tiers” based on multiple measures. The Board believes the index plays a key role in providing feedback about the status of education reform in schools and districts and in supporting continuous improvement efforts. Schools and districts in most need will be eligible to receive more significant state support and will be required to participate in a state system of support if initial offers of more support are not accepted and substantial improvement does not occur after several years. The creation of the index comes at a time when changes in the state’s assessment and data systems and at the U.S. Education Department provide an opportunity to consider new accountability ideas. However, the recommendations made under this index cannot be used by the state to identify struggling schools for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) until the U.S. Education Department approves it through either a waiver or through the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act that allows this system.

Various principles guided the development of the index. The index needs to (1) be transparent and simple to understand, (2) use existing data, (3) rely on multiple measures, (4) include assessment results from all grades and subjects tested statewide, (5) use concepts of NCLB and its AYP system when appropriate, (6) be fair, reasonable, and consistent, (7) be valid and accurate, (8) apply to both schools and districts, (9) apply to as many schools and districts as possible, (10) use familiar concepts when possible, (11) rely mainly on criterion-referenced measures instead of norm-referenced measures, (12) provide multiple ways to reward success, and (13) be flexible enough to accommodate future changes.

The provisional index is based on how schools and districts perform on a set of five outcomes and four indicators. The five outcomes are the results of state assessments in four subjects (reading, writing, mathematics, science) and the “extended” graduation rate (for high schools and districts). These five outcomes are examined using four indicators: achievement of (1) non-low income students, (2) low-income students, (3) all students compared to those in similar schools/districts (controlling for the percentage of students who are learning English, have a disability, live in a low-income home, are mobile, and are designated as gifted), and (4) the level of improvement from the previous year. The results of the 20 measures form the 5x4 matrix shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Matrix of Accountability Measures

INDICATORS	OUTCOMES				
	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Ext. Grad. Rate
Achievement of non-low income students					
Achievement of low income students					
Achievement vs. peers					
Improvement from the previous year					

Each cell of the matrix is rated on a 7-point scale (from 1 to 7) using fixed benchmarks. Each of the four subjects is rated using the same set of benchmarks across the entire school (i.e., all subjects have the same set of benchmarks, and the assessment results are the aggregate totals for students in all the tested grades). **The index is the simple average of all the ratings** and ranges from 1.0 to 7.0. High schools and districts have 20 measures, while elementary and middle/junior high schools have only 16 measures because they do not have graduates. Table 2 shows how each of the five outcomes are measured using the four indicators and the benchmarks that produce the ratings.

Table 2: Benchmarks and Ratings for Outcomes and Indicators

	READING	WRITING	MATH	SCIENCE	EXT. GRAD. RATE ¹
ACHIEVEMENT (NON-LOW INCOME)	<u>% MET STANDARD</u>				<u>RATE</u>
	<u>RATING</u>				<u>RATING</u>
ACHIEVEMENT (LOW INCOME)	90 - 100%				> 95.....
	80 - 89.9%				90 - 95%
	70 - 79.9%				85 - 89.9%
	60 - 69.9%				80 - 84.9%
	50 - 59.9%				75 - 79.9%
	40 - 49.9%				70 - 74.9%
ACHIEVEMENT VS. PEERS²					
		<u>DIFFERENCE IN LEARNING INDEX</u>		<u>DIFFERENCE IN RATE</u>	
		<u>RATING</u>		<u>RATING</u>	
		> .20.....		> 12.....	
		.151 to .20.....		6.1 to 12.....	
		.051 to .15		3.1 to 6.....	
		-.05 to .05		-3 to 3.....	
		-.051 to -.15		-3.1 to -6	
		-.151 to -.20		-6.1 to -12	
		< -.20		< -12.....	
IMPROVEMENT³					
		<u>CHANGE IN LEARNING INDEX</u>		<u>CHANGE IN RATE</u>	
		<u>RATING</u>		<u>RATING</u>	
		> .15.....		> 6.....	
		.101 to .15.....		4.1 to 6.....	
		.051 to .10.....		2.1 to 4.....	
		-.05 to .05		-2 to 2.....	
		-.051 to -.10		-2.1 to -4	
		-.101 to -.15		-4.1 to -6	
		< -.15		< -6.....	

Note: Assessment results are the combined results from both the state content assessments (e.g., WASL) and the WAAS (assessments for students with disabilities) from all grades.

¹ This outcome only applies to schools and districts that are authorized to graduate students.

² This indicator adjusts the outcomes using statistical methods (multiple regression) to control for five student characteristics beyond a school’s control: the percentage of low-income, ELL, special education, gifted, and mobile students. (Mobile students are those who are not continuously enrolled from October 1 through the entire testing period.) Scores are the difference between the actual level and the predicted level of the Learning Index. Scores above 0 are “beating the odds” and negative scores are below the predicted level. Separate analyses are conducted for schools for each of the four assessments for each type of school (elementary, middle, high, multiple grade levels). District calculations also control for the level of current expenditures per pupil (adjusted for student need).

³ Measured in terms of the change in the Learning Index from the previous year.

The proposed system holds *districts* accountable using the same indicators, outcomes, and criteria that are used for schools. The results are based on districtwide data for all grades rather than being

disaggregated by grade bands (elementary, middle, high). In addition, financial data are used in the “peers” analysis to control for the amount of total operating expenditures per pupil (adjusted for student need).

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Schools and districts fall into five tiers based on the index score. In-depth analyses of the data and conditions occurs for schools and districts that do not make AYP two years in a row to see if they merit further support.

Table 3 shows the ranges for the tier assignments and the number of schools and districts that would have been placed in each tier in 2007 using the above criteria. Schools show a greater range than districts—far fewer districts were in the top and bottom tiers compared to the school results. The 228 schools in the Struggling tier enrolled 74,000 students (1 in 14 students statewide). Of the schools in this tier, 98 (43%) were alternative schools or served other special populations, and enrolled a total of 12,400 students. The 130 “regular” schools in the Struggling tier enrolled 61,600 students. Over the 2-year period, 149 schools (7.4%) had an average index below 2.50, and 89 were regular schools that enrolled approximately 39,000 students (roughly 4% of statewide enrollment). The 17 districts in the Struggling tier in 2007 tended to be rather small, averaging roughly 1,000 students. However, some larger districts had many schools in a struggling tier—17 districts had at least two regular schools and four districts had at least five regular schools with a 2-year index average below 2.50.

Table 3: Tier Ranges and Preliminary Results (2007)

Tier	Index Range	# of Schools	% of Schools	# of Students ¹	# of Districts	% of Districts	# of Students ¹
Exemplary	5.50 – 7.00	81	4.0%	28,650	1	.3%	360
Very Good	5.00 – 5.49	131	6.5%	64,500	9	3.1%	31,500
Good	4.00 – 4.99	591	29.4%	314,700	87	29.9%	278,500
Fair	2.50 – 3.99	980	48.7%	523,000	177	60.8%	692,500
Struggling	1.00 – 2.49	228	11.3%	74,000	17	5.8%	17,500

¹Approximate number (some schools did not provide enrollment data).

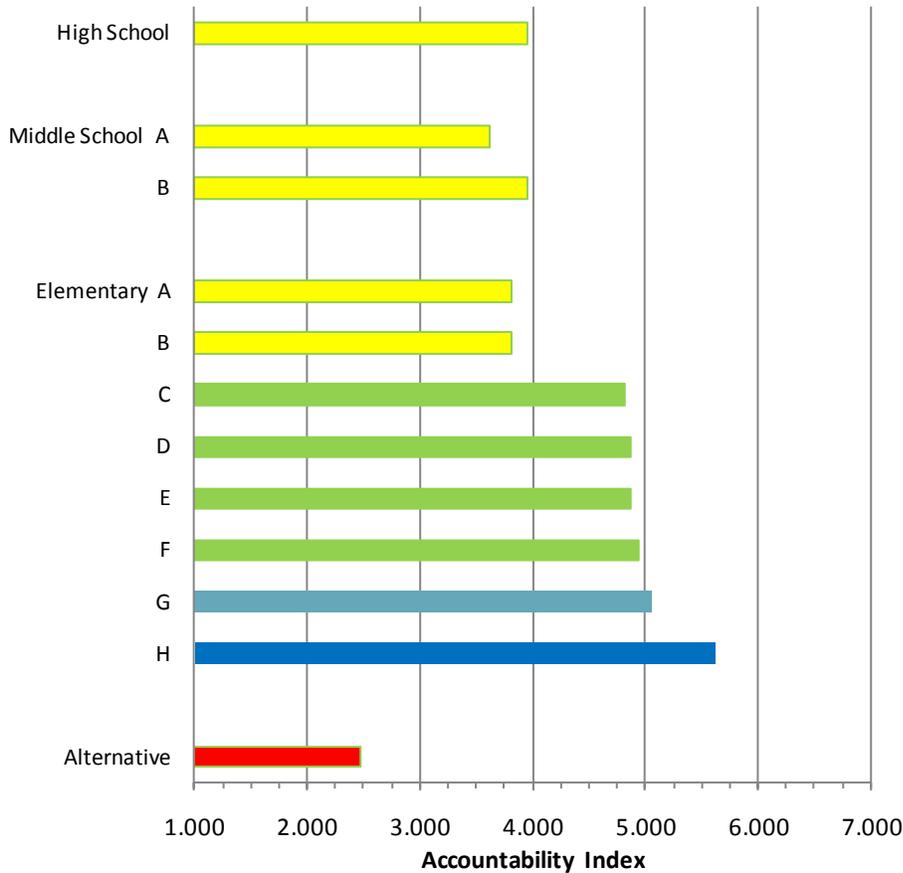
Table 4 provides an example of the ratings for an actual high school and how the average of the individual ratings generates the index/tier assignment. The school’s average rating of 3.40 is the index score, which puts the school in the middle of the Fair tier. The average ratings have been color-coded so the overall results can be seen at a glance. These types of results should be made public on the state Web site (the format for presenting the results must be determined). Results presented in this “dashboard” give policymakers, educators, and the public a quick snapshot of where a school is strong and weak, and it provides transparency about how the index is determined.

Table 4: “Actual” High School, 2007

Indicator	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Grad Rate	Average
Non-low inc. ach.	5	6	3	1	5	4.00
Low-inc. ach.	4	4	1	1	7	3.40
Ach. vs. peers	2	2	2	2	6	2.80
Improvement	1	4	1	4	7	3.40
Average	3.00	4.00	1.75	2.00	6.25	3.40 ← INDEX

Various charts can illustrate district results as well. Figure 1 shows an example of how the index could be shown for each school in a district. In this example (an actual district), one school reached the Exemplary tier.

Figure 1: Accountability Results in “Actual” District, 2008



HANDLING SPECIAL CASES

The accountability system needs to be flexible enough to accommodate some special situations. These include holding alternative schools accountable using additional data, excluding some ELL results from the index calculations, and not counting the improvement cells when achievement is at very high levels.

Holding **alternative schools** accountable poses unique challenges. Many alternative schools exist in the state, and they vary greatly in their focus, structure, and clientele. Most are relatively small (total enrollment is less than 4% statewide), and more than half serve at-risk students in grades 9-12. Some believe these schools have taken on more challenging students while allowing traditional schools to generate better outcomes with their remaining students. On the other hand, some alternative schools offer special programs for students who are not at-risk and who meet rigorous academic requirements for admission. Some are considered “alternative” because they do not use a normal school approach, and a growing number of schools serve students through digital learning via the Internet. Parent Partnership Programs are a type of “school” where parents are the primary instructor and the district provides instructional support. Some target special student populations (e.g., special education, gifted, ELL). Given this variation, no “peer” indicator is computed for these schools.

Some alternative schools intentionally target student populations facing significant challenges and therefore are more likely to be in the Struggling tier. These schools should receive the normal index score based on calculations used for all schools. Alternative schools that do not make AYP in two consecutive years should be examined more closely to determine if they are using research-based best practices and showing progress. Areas for improvement should be identified and should be the focus of analysis if the alternative school does not make AYP again in the future.

Results for ELL students are currently included in AYP calculations in the student's second year of enrollment in a U.S. public school. OSPI has asked the U.S. Education Department to exclude ELL results until a student has been enrolled in a U.S. public school for three years or until the student achieves an advanced level of English proficiency on the WLPT, whichever comes first.¹ This request is based on research that shows it takes many years for an ELL student to acquire "academic" proficiency in English and because must be able to read and write English to understand and respond to each test item. Moreover, testing students who do not understand English violates widely-adopted testing standards because of threats to validity and mistreatment of human subjects. However, the Department has denied OSPI's repeated request to use this policy.

Nevertheless, computing the accountability index should exclude the results for ELL students who have not achieved advanced proficiency (Level 3 composite) on the WLPT or who are in their first three years of enrolling in a U.S. public school, whichever comes first, for any test that requires reading and writing in only English.² In addition, OSPI should begin reporting WLPT results on its Report Card in a way that allows educators, parents, and other stakeholders to monitor the progress ELLs make in terms of learning English and meeting state content standards. Finally, all ELLs should be required to take the state assessments after their first year of enrollment, and OSPI should analyze the various content assessments and WLPT results to determine the extent to which ELLs are on track to meet state standards.

Most ELL results would still be included in the accountability index, even with this "extended exclusion," because (1) most ELLs enter school in kindergarten and have attended school for three years before taking state assessments for the first time in grade 3, and (2) most ELLs enrolled in the assessed grades (3-8 and 10) reach the advanced level of the WLPT. As a result, the exclusion has little impact on the index results. Nevertheless, the combination of recommendations improves the validity of the accountability system and provides more information about the progress of ELLs.

Schools and districts that perform at very high levels are not able to improve much from the previous year. To avoid "penalizing" these schools for a lack of improvement, the ratings for this indicator should not be included in the index calculations under certain conditions. Without this policy, schools/districts with nearly all of their students achieving Level 4 on an assessment and graduating nearly all their students would not be able to achieve a rating above 4 (little or no improvement). Specifically, the improvement indicator should be excluded when computing the index whenever a Learning Index reaches 3.85 out of 4.00 and remains at or above that level for two consecutive years. (A school or district needs to improve by more than .15 to receive a rating of 7, which is impossible when their Learning Index reaches 3.85.) The first year the Learning Index falls

¹ The composite score from the annual Washington Language Proficiency Test (WLPT) reflects proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The three-year exemption period reflects the views of most stakeholders and is the average time required for ELL students to exit the program.

² The math and science tests are available in Spanish and Russian for the first time in 2009 but responses must be made in English.

above 3.85, a school/district would get a rating based on its improvement. If the Index stays at or above 3.85, the maximum rating is not possible and the indicator should not be calculated.³ The same policy applies to the extended graduation rate outcome (when the rate reaches or exceeds 94% in two consecutive years.⁴

INTEGRATING THE FEDERAL AND STATE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

No Child Left Behind requires accountability for nine groups of students in reading, math, and one more indicator.⁵ Accountability for performance at the student group level is widely viewed as a positive feature of the law. Federal law also requires states to have a single accountability system. However, stakeholders across Washington believe the current federal system is overly complex and that the AYP results do not provide an accurate picture of school and district quality. As a result, stakeholders have provided advice on how elements of the provisional Accountability Index could be used to make AYP decisions. They also suggested changes in the consequences schools and districts face when they do not make AYP and when they make AYP while in improvement status.

Determining AYP

The following rules are recommended to hold schools and districts accountable for performance of various student groups.

- Hold the **All students** group accountable using the Accountability Index when there are at least 4 rated cells in the matrix.⁶ Specifically, *schools and districts with a 2-year average Accountability Index below 3.00 AND an index that declines two years in a row do not make AYP*. Using the Index in this way for AYP provides consistency in the accountability measure, and the required level is easy to understand and identifies a reasonable number of schools.
- Hold **subgroups** accountable using a separate modified matrix that uses the same concepts as the Accountability Index. Two more subgroups (Pacific Islanders, multi-racial) should be added to provide more complete coverage. However, only the outcomes used for federal accountability—reading, math, and the extended graduation rate—should be used, and the two income-related indicators should be combined. A “row average” should then be calculated for each subgroup. *Schools and districts do not make AYP if any row average declines two years in a row.*

Table 5 gives an example for a hypothetical high school with at least 10 students in each subgroup (very few schools have at least 10 students in every group). Ratings are based on the performance of each group in three outcomes (reading, math, extended graduation) and three indicators (achievement of all students, achievement vs. peers, and improvement).⁷ In this example, six groups had a row average in 2009 that was less than the row average in 2008. If the

³ Of the schools and districts with reportable data (at least 10 students assessed), two schools reached this level on the Learning Index in 2006 (one in both reading and writing and the other in writing), but no district reached this level in 2006 and no school or district reached this level in any subject in 2007.

⁴ Of the schools with graduation data, 11% had a rate that was at least 94% in two consecutive years.

⁵ The nine groups are “all” students, five race/ethnic groups, two program groups (students with disabilities and English language learners), and students from low income families. In Washington, the unexcused absence rate is the additional indicator at the elementary and middle school levels, and the extended graduation rate is the additional indicator for high schools.

⁶ Schools with fewer than 4 rated cells should submit an improvement plan to OSPI for review.

⁷ The current AYP system requires the use of unexcused absence rates at the elementary and middle school levels. Data for these rates are not included because they are not part of the index system, and nearly all schools meet the required goals.

row average in 2010 declines again for any of these groups, the school would not make AYP in that group. Colors are used to highlight ratings that are better or worse than the previous year.

Table 5: 2009 Results, Hypothetical High School

2009 Subgroup	READING			MATH			EXT. GRAD. RATE			Average rating	Change from previous year
	(all st.)	Peers	Improve.	(all st.)	Peers	Improve.	(all st.)	Peers	Improve.		
American Indian	4	4	4	1	5	4	1	4	4	3.44	0.33
Asian	6	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	6	4.78	0.56
Pacific Islander	4	4	4	1	5	4	1	4	4	3.44	0.22
Black	3	3	3	1	3	5	1	3	2	2.67	-1.00
Hispanic	3	4	4	1	4	4	1	4	4	3.22	-0.11
White	5	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	3.78	-0.22
Multi-racial	4	4	4	2	4	4	2	4	4	3.56	-0.22
Special education	2	4	4	1	4	4	1	2	1	2.56	-1.22
ELL	1	5	5	1	4	4	1	3	3	3.00	-0.11
Low income	4	5	5	1	5	4	1	4	4	3.67	0.22
Average	3.60	4.10	4.20	1.60	4.20	4.10	1.70	3.60	3.60	3.41	-0.16

NOTE: Ratings in red are less than the previous year, ratings in green are more than the previous year.

Using this modified matrix has a number of benefits. It preserves the simplicity of the Accountability Index matrix, uses the same metrics as the provisional Index to provide greater simplicity,⁸ provides more detailed information about subgroups, focuses on improvement from each group’s baseline, relies on multiple cells when computing row average to reduce fluctuations in averages from year to year, and treats every group with equal weight regardless of the size of the group.

- Create an alternate method for the ELL group to make AYP by linking the results of the Washington Language Proficiency Test (WLPT) to the content assessments. *Schools and districts do not make AYP if the percentage of ELLs in WLPT Levels 2 and 3 who are on track to meet standard in the content areas (i.e., reading and math) when they become proficient in English declines two years in a row.*⁹ OSPI has developed a method to calculate the percentage of ELLs who are on track to meet the content standard when they become proficient in English.¹⁰ This alternative method is a fairer way to hold this group accountable because it emphasizes improvement in both English proficiency and academic performance and considers English language ability when examining students’ performance in the academic subjects.

Hence, the system is “compensatory” in nature—having one low rating in a matrix does not automatically result in a school/district not making AYP. The index blends performance across multiple ratings, and low ratings are compensated by higher ratings, a concept similar to how a GPA works. This is different from the “conjunctive” model now used to determine AYP. In a conjunctive model, a single missed target results in a school/district not making AYP. This is analogous to labeling a student as a failure when a single low grade occurs. The increasing level of proficiency currently required to make AYP will make it even less likely a school/district will meet the target.

⁸ The modified matrix relies on the same rules as the Accountability Index. For example, the results for all grades are combined, there must be at least 10 students to report results, there is no margin of error, the percent meeting standard is used for achievement indicator, the Learning Index is used for the peers and improvement indicators, and the same rating system is used.

⁹ OSPI has developed a method to calculate this percentage. This alternative method is a better way to hold this group accountable because it emphasizes improvement in both English proficiency and academic performance.

¹⁰ ELLs should be counted in WLPT Level 1 for only one year to provide an incentive to help new ELLs as much as possible.

So in this analogy, a student would have to get higher and higher grades in all subjects to avoid being labeled a failure.

Consequences

State law currently prohibits the use of some consequences authorized by NCLB. For example, the state has no authority to require schools/districts to accept state help, and it has no authority to require corrective action or restructuring (e.g., remove staff, change curriculum, change governance). NCLB currently requires schools and districts to undergo increasing levels of “sanctions” if they do not make AYP over an extended period of time. NCLB also requires schools and districts that are in an improvement step to make AYP two years in a row in order to exit improvement status.

Many stakeholders believe these sanctions have flaws that need to be corrected. For example, students must be allowed to transfer to another school before their current school is required to provide additional services to help these students. Schools must also allow all students to transfer, including those performing well. Even when a school in “improvement” status makes AYP, all the sanctions must remain in effect. Finally, the consequences do not apply to non-Title I schools that do not make AYP, even though in Washington these schools outnumber Title I schools, enroll more students, and are more likely to have low index results (see Table 6). In fact, almost half the students in the state attended non-Title I schools that did not make AYP in 2008, and a large number of these schools are in “improvement” status but evade the teeth of the accountability system because they are not required to face any of the NCLB sanctions.

Table 6: Index Results for Schools Not Making AYP in 2008

Tier	Title I Schools		Non-Title I Schools	
	Number	Students enrolled	Number	Students enrolled
Exemplary	5	2,445	8	4,973
Very Good	27	13,211	31	30,637
Good	165	82,518	217	184,184
Fair	326	157,312	333	227,112
Struggling	56	19,184	83	24,388
Total	579	274,670	672	471,294

As a result, Washington proposes using a different set of consequences that reflect common sense changes to the current NCLB rules. These consequences should apply to all schools and districts, not just those receiving federal Title I funds.¹¹

- Schools/districts not making AYP for the same reason (e.g., same subgroup) in consecutive years move into “improvement” unless there is a compelling reason not to, based on the results of a deeper review (see below).
- If the reason for not making AYP is due to the performance of a different group than a group responsible for not making AYP in the previous year, the school/district does not move to the next step of the process.

¹¹ This should occur as long as the state does not lose any Title I funding due to federal “supplant” rules.

- School choice and supplemental educational services must be made available to the students in the subgroup(s) whose results are responsible for the school not making AYP. (Currently it applies to all students in the school, even if they are in a group that has performed well.)
- Those in improvement status that make AYP move back a step (e.g., from Step 2 to Step 1). Those making AYP two years in a row exit improvement status. This allows a gradual withdrawal of state support over time. (Under the current AYP rules, schools and districts in “improvement” must make AYP in two consecutive years to exit this status entirely, and no credit is given for making AYP in one year.)

Identifying Schools and Districts Needing Improvement

Each fall OSPI will compute the accountability index and apply the rules for making AYP. All schools and districts in all tiers will be given an AYP status, not just those receiving Title I funds. The first time a school or district does not make AYP, it is in a “warning” year. Schools and districts that do not make AYP two years in a row should not automatically fall into “improvement” status. Instead, they should undergo an in-depth review. The results of this review would determine if the school/district should move into an “improvement” step and be required to take certain actions.

The data to be reviewed fall in five general categories. The list below provides examples in each.

- **Contextual Data**
 - Type of school
 - Changes in student population
 - Programs served by the school
- **Assessment Results (State content assessments/WAAS/WLPT)**
 - Trends over multiple years for each subject area
 - Subgroup trends (e.g., race/ethnicity, ELL, special education)
 - Results for students who have been enrolled for at least two years
- **Teaching and Learning Issues**
 - Teacher education and experience levels
 - Student/teacher ratio
 - Recent changes in leadership (key central office staff and principals) and teachers
 - Alignment of curriculum and materials across grades and with state standards
- **Other Data**
 - Graduation and dropout rates for subgroups
 - Funding from local levies/bonds and outside sources
 - Problems with data that generate the index (e.g., reporting errors related to graduates)
 - Participation rates for all subgroups
 - Other indicator data (unexcused absence and graduation rates) for all subgroups
 - Perception survey results

Data will be closely reviewed for schools and districts that have not made AYP four years in a row, or meet other federal or state criteria. The state may determine that a school/district would benefit from a significant amount of additional support and move it to Voluntary Action for at least two years. If extra assistance is not accepted and significant improvement does not occur during the two-year period, the school would move to Required Action and a binding corrective action plan should be established between the district and the state, if authorized by the Legislature.¹² SBE and OSPI

¹² ESHB 2261, passed by the 2009 Legislature, contains language on this issue.

are working together to develop a process to identify schools that would move into Voluntary and Require Action in a way that conforms to newly emerging federal regulations. Moreover, the details of what assistance would be provided are still being developed.

When the details of the proposed system are finalized in the coming months, SBE and OSPI will submit a unified accountability plan to the U.S. Education Department that will recommend using the state accountability system for federal accountability purposes. A new administration may provide more flexibility to states that design alternative systems that provide more rigorous and valid accountability. All the data current reporting requirements of NCLB would continue to be met (i.e., making public the disaggregated data for the assessments, participation, and “other indicators” for the various student subgroups). Moreover, new data elements would be made public to further increase the rigor of the system.

Advantages Over the Current System

The proposed accountability system has many desirable features that make it a better alternative to the current rules used to measure AYP. The proposed state accountability system increases the system’s validity and rigor, reduces volatility and unintended consequences, makes the system easier to understand, supports the continued use of high standards and expectations, and provides more appropriate consequences when performance falls short of expectations.

- The Index is a *more valid* measure of school and district performance because it is based on the performance of all students in more subjects, is more nuanced than a Yes/No (pass/fail) system, and addresses several unintended consequences created by the current AYP system (e.g., narrowing the curriculum, focusing on students performing close to meeting standard).
- The Index is *more inclusive/comprehensive* because it uses a smaller minimum number for reporting (10 students across the entire school/district), includes the results of all students (not just those continuously enrolled through the testing period), includes both writing and science (this helps prevent a narrowed curriculum), and uses the Learning Index to measure performance across the range of assessment results (reduces the focus on “bubble” students who perform close to the proficiency cut point at the expense of students who are farther above and below that level).
- The Index is *less volatile* over time because assessment results are combined across all grades in a school and district (which raises the N) rather than using results for individual grades where students change from one year to the next.
- The Index is *more transparent/easier to understand* because it does not include a margin of error, the benchmarks are the same over time and among the different subjects for both schools and districts, there are fewer rules and “cells” to examine, and schools and districts have the same minimum number required for reporting the results.
- Using the Index to determine AYP helps the state *maintain high performance standards*. Two recent studies found that Washington has some of the nation’s toughest AYP requirements, resulting in a high percentage of schools not making AYP.¹³ Using the index in a compensatory manner reduces the incentive for the state to lower its standards so all students can be counted as proficient by 2014, a target viewed as unrealistic if standards are kept high.

¹³ See “*The Accountability Illusion*,” Thomas B. Fordham Institute (February 2009) and “*Schools Struggling to Meet Key Goal on Accountability*,” Education Week (January 7, 2009).

- The proposed system has *more appropriate consequences* and provides *stronger intervention* measures when improvement does not occur.

RECOGNITION

Index results can be calculated retroactively and used for recognition purposes. Providing recognition based on 2009 results would be considered “Phase I” in the implementation of the accountability system, with full implementation contingent upon the provision of adequate funding. Using the index in this way will provide a more valid picture of school/district performance than AYP results, and it will introduce the concepts to the various stakeholders prior to its full implementation.

The recognition system should (1) be transparent and simple to understand, (2) rely mainly on criterion-referenced measures, and (3) provide multiple ways to demonstrate success. The recognition system is based on the belief that people are motivated more by success than by blame or guilt, and they need clear, challenging, and attainable goals.

SBE and OSPI are working together to create a unified recognition system based on the index results. SBE should give recognition for “Outstanding Overall Performance” while allowing OSPI to develop forms of recognition of their own. For example, OSPI could recognize a certain percentage of schools in math and science. Monetary compensation is not recommended, although matrix data could be used to generate schoolwide bonuses if the Legislature includes these as part of any law or reforms of the basic education finance system in the future.

Outstanding Overall Performance (7 types)

SBE has approved using the results from the Accountability Index to provide recognition when performance is very high. To ensure only truly outstanding performance is recognized, schools and districts must meet certain conditions. Theoretically all schools should be able to achieve recognition because it is a criterion-referenced system. Seven areas will be recognized for “Outstanding Overall Performance” using the following criteria.

(1) For the **index**, the 2-year average was at least 5.50, at least 10 cells of the matrix were rated each year, and there were fewer than 10% students designated as gifted each year.

(2-5) For **language arts** (reading and writing combined), **math**, **science**, and the **extended graduation rate**, the overall (column) 2-year average was at least 6.00, at least 2 of the 4 cells in the column were rated each year, and there were fewer than 10% students designated as gifted each year.¹⁴

(6) For the **achievement gap**, there were at least 10 students in at least 2 of the 5 outcomes (columns) in both of the income-related cells (non-low income and low income), there was no rating of 1 in any income-related cell or peer cell, there was no more than a 1-point difference in the rating between the two income-related cells,¹⁵ and there were fewer than 10% students designated as gifted each year. Each of the above criteria had to be met two years in a row.

¹⁴ For language arts, both reading and writing must have a 2-year average of at least 6.00 and at least 2 of the cells rated each year.

¹⁵ For example, if the reading non-low income cell is rated 5, the reading low-income cell could be rated no lower than 4 and no higher than 6.

Each of the above six recognition areas requires fewer than 10% of the students to be gifted each year. Statewide approximately 3% of all students received this designation in 2008, so schools with 10% or more gifted students have unusually high concentrations of the most capable students. The exclusion criterion prevents a school from receiving recognition because it will likely have much higher than normal ratings. To ensure these types of schools are eligible to receive recognition, a seventh recognition area was established.

(7) For **schools with gifted programs**, the top 5% of schools in grade band—elementary, middle, high, and multi-level—that have at least 10% gifted students should receive this type of recognition, based on the 2-year average peer ratings in all four subjects.¹⁶

Table 7 shows the number of schools that would have been recognized by SBE in 2008. In all, 99 schools would have been recognized in 2008 if these criteria were in effect at that time, which is nearly 5% of all schools statewide. Of the 99, there were 8 alternative schools represented among the four school types.

Table 7: Distribution of Schools Meeting Recognition Criteria, by Grade Type (2008)
(Number of alternative schools in parentheses)

	Elementary	Middle/ Jr. High	High	Multiple Levels	Total*
Total Recognized	52 (1)	8 (3)	23 (0)	16 (4)	99 (8)
Number of All Schools	1,059	359	400	298	2,116
Percentage of All Schools Recognized	4.9%	2.2%	5.8%	5.4%	4.7%

CONCLUSION

President Obama has cited his concerns about the current AYP system, such as its failure to acknowledge when significant improvement has taken place. The President believes we can improve and evolve in all aspects of education, including how AYP decisions are made. We join him in his desire to change NCLB and the current AYP system in order to hold our schools and districts accountable in a more rigorous, more valid, and more transparent way. Washington has taken the initiative to lay out a new accountability model using a new index. Use of the index for making AYP decisions addresses fundamental weaknesses in the existing system and encourages the state to maintain rigorous content and performance standards. Stakeholders in Washington believe this new system and the use of the new index paves a way forward to increased clarity and accuracy in assessing our education system, thereby offering educators and stakeholders a transparent means to ensure each and every student receives an excellent and equitable education.

¹⁶ Results for the peer indicators control for the types of students attending the school (the percent gifted, low income, ELL, special education, and mobile). This ensures schools with the highest concentrations of gifted students do not automatically receive this form of recognition.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY FOR STUDENT GROUPS

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 November 12, 2009

The No Child Left Behind law (NCLB) requires accountability for nine groups of students in reading, math, and one more indicator.¹ Accountability for performance at the student group level is widely viewed as a positive feature of the law. This document presents recommendations for a different way the state can hold schools and districts accountable for performance of various student groups and for making decisions about Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) based on those results. The recommended system is consistent with the guiding principles established by the State Board of Education, and it reflects the same concepts used in the Accountability Index. However, the recommendations cannot be implemented until the U.S. Education Department approves it through either a waiver or through the reauthorization of NCLB that allows this system.

1. Hold the “All” group accountable using the Accountability Index.

Recommendations:

- The Accountability Index matrix is unchanged (no subgroups are added to the matrix).
- There must be at least 4 rated cells in the matrix when making AYP decisions (schools with fewer than 4 rated cells must submit an improvement plan to OSPI for review).
- *Schools and districts with a 2-year average Accountability Index below 3.00 AND an index that declines two years in a row do not make AYP.*

Impact of recommendations on schools (2009)

	School Type				
	All Types	Elem	Middle	High	Multiple levels
Total Schools with 2 years of data	2,009	1,046	360	362	241
Schools with < 4 rated cells	61	1	0	24	36
Pct. excluded from analysis	3.0%	0.1%	0.0%	5.5%	14.9%
Rated Schools (Subtotal)	1,948	1,045	360	338	205
Schools not making AYP in All group¹	311	168	52	55	36
Pct. of all schools	15.5%	16.1%	14.4%	15.2%	14.9%
Pct of subtotal	16.0%	16.1%	14.4%	16.3%	17.6%

¹School had at least 4 rated cells each year, a 2-yr average index < 3.00, and the index did not improve in either year.

Rationale: Using the Index for AYP provides consistency in the accountability measure, simplicity of the matrix is maintained, and the required level is easy to understand and identifies a reasonable number of schools.²

¹ The nine groups are “all” students, five race/ethnic groups, two program groups (students with disabilities and English language learners), and students from low income families. In Washington, the unexcused absence rate is the additional indicator at the elementary and middle school levels, and the extended graduation rate is the additional indicator for high schools.

² If the Index level is lowered from 3.00 to 2.90, the number of schools not making AYP would stay the same.

2. Hold more “subgroups” accountable and make AYP decisions using subgroup results from a separate modified matrix.

Recommendations:

- Continue reporting all subgroup results for each grade (the current state practice).
- Add two more subgroups (Pacific Islanders, multi-racial) for a total of 10 subgroups.
 - 7 race/ethnic groups: American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic, White, multi-racial
 - 3 other groups: students with disabilities, English language learners (ELLs), low income³
- Continue using the same measures used to compute the Accountability Index (i.e., results for all grades are combined, minimum N of 10 students, no margin of error, percent meeting standard is used for achievement indicator, Learning Index is used for the peers and improvement indicators, same rating system).
- Use only the outcomes now used for federal accountability—reading, math, and the extended graduation rate—and combine the two income-related indicators to compute a “row average” rating for each subgroup.
- For students with disabilities, there is no restriction on the percentage of students who meet standard on the Washington Alternate Assessment System (WAAS), and students are considered meeting standard if they perform as described in their individualized educational program (IEP).⁴
- A school/district does not make AYP if any row average declines two years in a row.

The example below shows the 2009 results for a hypothetical high school with at least 10 students in each subgroup (very few schools have at least 10 students in every group). Ratings are based on the performance of each group in three outcomes (reading, math, extended graduation) and three indicators (achievement of all students, achievement vs. peers, and improvement).⁵ In this example, six groups had a row average less than that in 2008. If the row average in 2010 declines again for any of these groups, the school would not make AYP in that group. Colors are used to highlight ratings that are better or worse than the previous year.

2009 RESULTS, HYPOTHETICAL HIGH SCHOOL

2009 Subgroup	READING			MATH			EXT. GRAD. RATE			Average rating	Change from previous year
	(all st.)	Peers	Improve.	(all st.)	Peers	Improve.	(all st.)	Peers	Improve.		
American Indian	4	4	4	1	5	4	1	4	4	3.44	0.33
Asian	6	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	6	4.78	0.56
Pacific Islander	4	4	4	1	5	4	1	4	4	3.44	0.22
Black	3	3	3	1	3	5	1	3	2	2.67	-1.00
Hispanic	3	4	4	1	4	4	1	4	4	3.22	-0.11
White	5	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	3.78	-0.22
Multi-racial	4	4	4	2	4	4	2	4	4	3.56	-0.22
Special education	2	4	4	1	4	4	1	2	1	2.56	-1.22
ELL	1	5	5	1	4	4	1	3	3	3.00	-0.11
Low income	4	5	5	1	5	4	1	4	4	3.67	0.22
Average	3.60	4.10	4.20	1.60	4.20	4.10	1.70	3.60	3.60	3.41	-0.16

NOTE: Ratings in red are less than the previous year, ratings in green are more than the previous year.

³ The preferred approach is to have students with disabilities and ELLs be held accountable through IDEA and Title III. If the U.S. Education Department requires these two groups to be used to make AYP decisions, both groups should include those who have exited the program.

⁴ Current federal regulations allow districts to count only 1% of their students as meeting standard using the WAAS portfolio, even if a greater percentage pass the assessment. The regulations also do not allow students with disabilities to count as meeting standard if they pass a test at a lower grade than their assigned grade, even if a student’s IEP requires it. (For example, a student with a disability in 6th grade may have an IEP that requires taking the 4th grade reading test, but the student would not be considered meeting standard if he/she passes that test.) Finally, students whose IEP calls for them to reach Level 2 on the state test will be considered meeting standard and be coded that way in the Learning Index.

⁵ The current AYP system requires the use of unexcused absence rates at the elementary and middle school levels. Data for these rates are not included because they are not part of the index system, and nearly all schools meet the required goals.

Rationale: This approach keeps the system simple and aligned with the current Index measures, provides detailed information to look at performance and improvement from each group's baseline, provides more complete and unaltered results, relies on multiple cells when computing row average to reduce fluctuations in averages from year to year, and treats every group with equal weight regardless of the size of the group.

3. Create an alternate method to make AYP for the ELL group by tying the results of the Washington Language Proficiency Test (WLPT) to the content assessments.

- *A school/district does not make AYP if the percentage of ELLs in WLPT Levels 2 and 3 who are on track to meet standard when reaching proficiency in English declines two years in a row.*⁶

Rationale: OSPI has developed a method to calculate the percentage of ELLs who are on track to meet the content standard when they become proficient in English. ELLs should be counted in WLPT Level 1 for only one year to provide an incentive to help new ELLs as much as possible. This alternative method is a fairer way to hold this group accountable because it emphasizes improvement in both English proficiency and academic performance and considers English language ability when examining students' performance in the academic subjects.

4. Revise the rules for moving in and out of "Improvement" status to reflect common sense practices.

- Schools/districts not making AYP for the same reason (e.g., same subgroup) in consecutive years move into "improvement" unless there is a compelling reason not to, based on the results of a deeper review.
- If the reason for not making AYP is due to the performance of a different group than a group responsible for not making AYP in the previous year, the school/district does not move to the next step of the process.
- School choice and supplemental educational services must be made available to the students in the subgroup(s) whose results are responsible for the school not making AYP. (Currently it applies to all students in the school, even if they are in a group that has performed well.)
- Those in improvement status that make AYP move back a step (e.g., from Step 2 to Step 1). Those making AYP two years in a row exit improvement status.

Rationale: The above rules reflect common sense rules related to school and district improvement. Consequences should be applied based on the results of under-performing groups, resources should be focused on groups that are not being well served in a logical order, and fewer consequences should be imposed when improvement occurs.

⁶ OSPI has developed a method to calculate this percentage. This alternative method is a better way to hold this group accountable because it emphasizes improvement in both English proficiency and academic performance.

UPDATE ON CORE 24 IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE

BACKGROUND

The State Board of Education (SBE) adopted the purpose of a diploma, CORE 24 Graduation Requirements Framework, and chartered the CORE Implementation Task Force (ITF) before ESHB 2261, the 2009 Legislature's education reform bill, was passed. Although ESHB 2261 incorporated key elements of the SBE's work on the purpose of a diploma and meaningful high school graduation requirements, it created a timetable for full implementation of all reforms different from the Board's timetable for CORE 24. When CORE 24 was approved, the SBE expressed its intent to implement CORE 24 graduation requirements fully for the graduating class of 2016, contingent upon funding.¹ ESHB 2261 expressed the legislative intent to phase in all education reforms by 2018, with phase-in beginning no later than September 1, 2013.

ESHB 2261 supports the SBE's work in several ways; most fundamentally, by including graduation requirements in its definition of basic education.

The legislature defines the program of basic education under this chapter as that which is necessary to provide the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the state-established high school graduation requirements that are intended to allow students to have the opportunity to graduate with a meaningful diploma that prepares them for postsecondary education, gainful employment and citizenship...².

Furthermore, ESHB 2261 calls for each school district to make available to students the following minimum instructional offering each school year:

For students enrolled in grades one through twelve, at least a district wide annual average of 1000 hours, which shall be increased to at least 1,080 instructional hours for students enrolled in each of grades seven through twelve...³

It also requires the instructional program of basic education provided by each school district to include:

Instruction that provides students the opportunity to complete twenty-four credits for high school graduation, subject to a phased-in implementation of the twenty-four credits as established by the legislature.⁴

¹ The SBE passed the following motion: Establish the CORE 24 Graduation Requirements Policy Framework, per the attached Adoption Document, consisting of subject area requirements, Culminating Project, and High School and Beyond Plan to be phased in over four years, beginning with the class of 2013 and becoming fully implemented with the class of 2016, contingent upon funding approved by the Legislature.

² ESHB 2261, Section 101, 2.

³ ESHB 2261, Section 104, 2.

⁴ ESHB 2261, Section 104, 3(b).

Where graduation requirements fit in the overall package of funding reforms is the issue the SBE will be working on with the Quality Education Council and legislature. The SBE asked the ITF to advise the Board on strategies needed to implement the CORE 24 graduation requirements. The ITF met for the first time in March 2009, and has met six times to date, steered by Board Co-Leads Steve Dal Porto and Jack Schuster.

ITF Preliminary Phase-in Recommendations

The ITF devoted its entire November 2, 2009, meeting to the discussion of phase-in recommendations. A presentation on the Education Finance Reform Bill, ESHB 2261, laid the foundation for the discussion. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Senior Budget Analyst, Isabel Muñoz-Colón, described the factors contributing to the current fiscal issues districts face and the proposed solutions outlined in ESHB 2261. She provided examples of ways that different groups (including Superintendent Dorn, representing OSPI) have proposed to address the various categories of funding needs (e.g., class size, educational staff support, guidance counselors, etc.). These values are subject to change, and other groups (including the QEC) have not yet weighed in.

After much debate, the ITF landed on the following general recommendations. The ITF believes:

- CORE 24 can be implemented once funding is attained.
- CORE 24 funding must incorporate funding for middle school CORE 24-related requirements.
- Six years will be needed once funding begins: one year for planning, and five years to make the relevant changes needed, beginning with students in the eighth grade of the first graduating class affected by the new requirements.
- Funding should begin as soon as possible.
- The ultimate success of CORE 24 depends on the funding of systemic changes in K-12, not just in the high school.

Since the meeting of the ITF, there has been a new development. Ever since CORE 24 emerged, the SBE has asserted that funding for six instructional hours would be needed for CORE 24 to be implemented—and in fact, the 1,080 instructional hours included in ESHB 2261 was a nod to this concern.⁵ However, the Funding Formula Technical Work Group provided a different perspective when it informed the QEC at its November 2-3, 2009 meeting that the state is already paying for six instructional periods, plus a planning period. Districts are choosing to increase class size to a state average of 28.77 in order to provide the six periods. At this time, the issue has not been definitively resolved.

Timeline for SBE/ITF/QEC/Legislative Work

The Quality Education Council (QEC), created by ESHB 2261⁶ to “recommend and inform the ongoing implementation of an evolving program of basic education and the funding necessary to support such program,” has met several times since August, 2009. State Superintendent of Public Instruction Randy Dorn chairs the QEC. The QEC will consider as one of its first priorities “phase-in of the changes to the instructional program of basic education and the implementation of the funding formulas and allocations to support the new instructional program of basic education...”

⁵ 1,080 hours divided by 180 days = 6 instructional periods per day

⁶ <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2009-10/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Law%202009/2261-S.SL.pdf>

The charge of the QEC is much broader than the implementation of CORE 24, and the work of the QEC will be informed by working groups formally-established by ESHB 2261⁷ and key stakeholders. The SBE's representation on the QEC assures that key SBE initiatives will be voiced. The CORE 24 ITF will advise the SBE on graduation-related issues (e.g., phase-in) that may come before the QEC in the next six months.

The table in Attachment A illustrates the intersections of the work of the SBE, ITF, QEC, and Legislature. Briefly, key checkpoints are:

- May 2010—SBE begins to review ITF recommendations and consider policy changes.
- Fall 2010—SBE reviews draft CORE 24 graduation requirement rules.
- Winter 2011—SBE forwards proposed CORE 24 graduation requirements changes to legislature with OSPI fiscal impact statements.
- Summer 2011—SBE adopts CORE 24 graduation requirement rules.

NEXT STEPS

The SBE acknowledged in the ITF charter the challenge of maintaining momentum in an uncertain funding environment:

Although it is the SBE's intent for the CORE 24 requirements to be fully implemented by the graduating class of 2016, assuming funding by the Legislature, the ITF should take into consideration ways to move the system forward toward CORE 24 requirements in the event only partial funding is attained.

Given the complexity and timetable of the state's education reform process, staff will work further with the ITF to prioritize the funding elements that are essential for the implementation of CORE 24. The ITF's advice will assist the SBE with its advocacy for the implementation of this graduation requirement component of education reform, and will help the SBE consider what steps to take if only partial funding is attained initially.

⁷ The following working groups have been established: Funding Formula, K-12 Date Governance, Levy and Levy Equalization, Compensation

**CORE 24 2009-2011 Work Plan for SBE and Its Work With
Implementation Task Force, Quality Education Council and Legislature**

SBE Task	Date	State Board of Education (SBE)	Quality Education Council (QEC)	Legislature
Receive second interim report from the ITF on phase-in.	November/ December 2009	SBE receives second interim report with preliminary recommendations from ITF on: phase-in.	Brief QEC on CORE 24 and advocate for graduation requirements funding priority (QEC initial report due January 1, 2010).	
Work with OSPI on fiscal impact of proposed changes.	Fall 2009 through Summer 2010	SBE staff works with OSPI staff on fiscal impact of key elements of CORE 24—instructional hours, struggling students, comprehensive guidance, and curriculum/materials.	Continue to represent SBE interests to QEC during its meetings.	
Refine policy for High School and Beyond Plan and Culminating Project.	January 2010	SBE reviews policy recommendations from MHSD work group.	Continue to represent SBE interests to QEC during its meetings.	
Conduct outreach on ITF considerations.	Fall 2009 and Winter/ Spring 2010	SBE staff, Board members, and ITF members seek and receive feedback on implementation considerations.	Continue to represent SBE interests to QEC during its meetings.	Advocate for funding during the 2010 session.
Receive final report from the ITF.	May 2010	SBE receives final report with recommendations on each of the assigned tasks given to the ITF. Each recommendation will include advantages and disadvantages. SBE begins consideration of policy implications of ITF recommendations.	Continue to represent SBE interests to QEC during its meetings.	
Adopt CORE 24 Implementation Policies.	July 2010	SBE adopts implementation policies and gives direction to staff for development of draft CORE 24 rules.	Continue to represent SBE interests to QEC during its meetings.	
Review draft CORE 24 rules.	Fall 2010	SBE reviews draft CORE 24 rules.	Continue to represent SBE interests to QEC during its meetings.	
Conduct outreach on draft CORE 24 rules.	Fall 2010/Winter 2011			
Present CORE 24 to legislature.	Winter 2011		Continue to represent SBE interests to QEC during its meetings.	Present proposed changes to the high school graduation requirements to

SBE Task	Date	State Board of Education (SBE)	Quality Education Council (QEC)	Legislature
				education committees for review, in conjunction with OSPI fiscal impact analysis. Advocate for funding and go-ahead from Legislature.
Adopt CORE 24 rules for the Class of 2016.	Summer 2011	SBE adopts rules for the Class of 2016. (The Class of 2016 will enter 9 th grade in 2012).	Continue to represent SBE interests to QEC during its meetings.	

THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

PILOT PROGRAM FOR WAIVERS FROM THE 180-SCHOOL DAY REQUIREMENT FOR THE PURPOSES OF ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY “FLEXIBLE CALENDAR”

BACKGROUND

The 2009 Legislature created a pilot program in which the State Board of Education (SBE) was given authority to grant waivers from the requirement for a one hundred eighty-day school year to school districts that propose to operate one or more schools on a flexible calendar for purposes of economy and efficiency (RCW 28A.305.141). Only five school districts are eligible for these waivers, two of which have student populations under 150 and three of which have student populations between 150 and 500. The requirement that school districts offer an annual average instructional hour offering of at least one thousand hours cannot be waived.

At the September 2009 Board meeting, SBE adopted an application, criteria to evaluate waiver requests, and indicators for determining effects on student learning. SBE will analyze empirical evidence from school districts with waivers to determine whether the reduction in days is affecting student learning. If SBE determines that student learning is adversely affected, the school district will need to discontinue the flexible calendar as soon as possible but no later than the beginning of the next school year after the determination has been made.

SBE will examine the waivers granted and make a recommendation to the education committees of the Legislature by December 15, 2013, regarding whether the waiver program should be continued, modified, or repealed. All waivers for this pilot program expire August 31, 2014.

Applications for Consideration:

SBE staff and the Waivers Committee have reviewed the applications from Bickleton School District, Lyle School District, and Paterson School District and have determined that they meet the eligibility requirements and criteria outlined by the Legislature and SBE.

1. Bickleton School District

Student Count:

	Count	Year
Most recent Student Count for the district? (please identify year)	92	2009
Estimate for the next student count? (if available)	105	2010

Current waiver status:

Any active waivers?	NO
If yes, please identify.	

Is the request for all schools in the district?

Yes or No	Yes, we only have one.
If no, which schools or grades?	

How many days are being requested to be waived and for which school years?

Number of Days	18 days	30 days	30 days
School Years	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012

Will the district still meet the requirement under RCW 28A.150.220 that school districts offer an annual average instructional hour offering of at least one thousand hours?

Yes or No	Yes (1150 hours)
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Details of Request:

(Please include as much detail as possible. The spaces will expand as you type or paste text)

Item 1: Gains from compressing the instructional hours into fewer than one hundred eighty days:

a. Explain and estimate the economies to be gained.

The areas that will help us with economies are transportation, utilities, and maintenance. Our school district is over 500 square miles. Over 50% of our student body utilizes the bus to get to school. With a flexible schedule we estimate we can save \$35,000 in transportation alone. This includes bus driver salaries, bus maintenance and fuel. Utilities savings will be approximately \$7,000. We took an average of our utility bills over the past three years to determine this estimate. We also believe that the savings in building and ground maintenance will be approximately \$1000. Aide salaries savings will be around \$7,000.

b. Explain and estimate the efficiencies to be gained.

We believe the key to a successful pilot program is the assurance of a non-interrupted school day. Our students are pulled from classes in the current system because of athletics, activities, and appointments. Staff misses student contact time for the same reasons. Presently, due to our location, when students or staff members need to go to appointments, they typically miss an entire day. For staff, that means hiring a substitute teacher to fill the position. This is expensive and teaching is not the same as it would be with the regular classroom teacher. The flexible schedule will afford students and staff a day to schedule appointments and activities that will not detract from classroom contact time. After comparing the traditional calendar with the flexible calendar, it appears that there will be as much or more teacher-student contact time with the flexible calendar. The extended day of the flexible calendar creates longer blocks of time available to complete lessons such as science labs and vocational classes. This allows the teaching staff more opportunities to personalize education to meet the needs of our students

with additional direct instruction particularly in math and reading interventions.

Item 2: Explain the effect that the waiver will have on the financial position of the district.

The waiver will allow us to maintain the fidelity of our all ready successful programs. Without it, our programs will suffer do to the inability to maintain the current staffing structure. As we collect data we will be interested in involving students, parents, staff and community and even our ESD to quantify student and staff outcomes from a flexible schedule. Because there will be financial savings to the district and to the state, our data will necessarily involve all levels in a partnership to evaluate outcomes. Although the stimulus funds have helped the larger school districts, Bickleton's allocation was \$13,000 less than the states allocation reduction. We will not receive stimulus money for basic education, only for special education.

Item 3: Estimate the expected savings in expenditures for substitutes, fuel, food service, utilities, and salaries of district and school employees.

Transportation	\$ 35,000
Utilities	7,000
Sub Costs	4,000
Aide Salaries	7,000
Building Maintenance	1,000
Potential Savings	\$ 54,000.00

Item 4: Explain how monetary savings from the proposal will be redirected to support student learning.

Monetary savings is a misnomer. What we are really trying to accomplish is recouping lost revenue that supports the very programs in which our students have had so much success. This past year we have lost \$100,000 in Reading First funds, \$50,000 in I-728 funds and have had a reduction in Title dollars. This has been devastating for our district. All of the money saved from the flexible schedule will be used for para pro salary and benefits. We have combination classrooms (i.e. 1-2, 3-4, 5-6. etc.). To make the reading and mathematics programs work, the classrooms need to be split into single classes for the appropriate grade levels. We utilize the classified staff to accomplish this and to keep the intervention structure intact. It is this structure that bring below average students up and beyond standard. Without the savings from the flexible schedule, the district will have to look at eliminating some classified staff positions. This would have a domino effect on our programs. The para pros are also our bus route drivers. Without employment as a para, they would not be able to sustain a living with just driver wages. This would force them into seeking employment somewhere else. The district does not have any spare route drivers so not only do we upset the classroom structure, we now have no one to get the students to school.

Item 5: Explain how unscheduled days may be used for activities such as professional development, planning, tutoring, special programs, and to make up for lost days due to weather or other disruptions to the calendar.

This is probably the most exciting potential that we would have with a flexible schedule. Two days per month the staff would participate in professional development that is unique to the Bickleton School District. The flexible schedule will allow enough time to develop and enhance our existing programs K-12. It gives staff opportunity to discuss curriculum issues, define and set goals, revisit what works and what does not, as well as, student development from classroom to classroom. This is one of the reasons a flexible schedule would work in a very small, rural district. On the student side, this would be the first time Bickleton School would have an opportunity to develop a bona-fide school to work program. We partnered with the new wind turbine industry to develop apprenticeship programs for our students. The apprenticeships would be in the discipline of electricians, office tech, environmental engineering, wildlife biology, Junior Firefighter program, and certification in Emergency Medical Training. At no time in the history of Bickleton Schools have there been the potential opportunities that would exist with the 180 day school waiver. All extra-curricular activities will be held on the unscheduled day. Historically we have had to adjust our end of the year calendar which makes it difficult to schedule graduation due to weather disruptions. The flexible calendar would not affect previous scheduled end of the year events.

Item 6: Summarize the comments received at one or more public hearings on the proposal and how concerns will be addressed.

On April 14, 2009 we held an advertised public meeting to discuss the waiver and the process. The information presented was well received from the public. There was absolutely nobody not interested in trying the flexible schedule. Our agricultural base community can see a true benefit from having the waiver. This was a very positive meeting and has total support from the Board of Directors of the Bickleton School District. The community's concerns at the public meeting were centered on how a flexible calendar would affect our student's academic progress and the delivery of curriculum. The questions were focused on whether curriculum would be less concentrated; more concentrated, or stay the same. The secondary concern was how it will affect other students activities i.e. sports, student leadership activities, clubs, etc. There was an intense discussion of students' academic outcomes, and our educational offerings being able to preserve the high level of success we have achieved throughout the past. Due to our small, rural demographic, our parents and community are very "hands on" and most are cognizant of student achievement, graduation rates, and post-secondary education success. There was great satisfaction with our projection of maintaining academic concentration here at Bickleton, and the community is very supportive of our being part of the pilot program.

Item 7: Child nutrition program:

a. Explain the impact on students who rely upon free and reduced-price school child nutrition services.

N/A Bickleton School District does not offer a child nutrition program.

b. Explain the impact on the ability of the child nutrition program to operate an economically independent program.

N/A Bickleton School District does not offer a child nutrition program.

Item 8: Explain the impact on the ability to recruit and retain employees in education support positions.

As stated above, without the monetary savings, the district will not be able to maintain the fidelity of our classrooms through the help of employees in support positions. These people understand that it is in their best interest to work around a flexible schedule being employed as opposed to not having employment at all. We have looked at the possibility of financing out of the General Fund and found that if we do that, we would have to cut other areas such as drama and vocational classes. That is not in our best interest either.

Item 9: Explain the impact on students whose parents work during the missed school day.

Again, this is another reason that a flexible schedule would work in Bickleton. All of our students have moms and dads, grandparents, and aunts and uncles that live in the community. Most parents have farms and are home working. All students have a place to go that is safe (typically with a relative). Others will have jobs or work at home on the farm. This was discussed at the community meeting and it was determined that there would not be an impact on the students during the missed day and total support from the School Board.

Item 10: Explain how content is being accommodated from the waived days to the remaining days for elementary and secondary grades levels.

With an extended day, students have a longer block of time (about 15%) available to complete lessons such as science labs and vocational classes. It creates an opportunity to personalize education to meet the needs of all students. It allows additional direct instruction time available for math and reading interventions. The key is the uninterrupted school day. After comparing schedules from previous years to the flexible schedule, there is as much quality instruction time spent on a shortened uninterrupted calendar as there is on the traditional calendar. As we have studied the ramifications of a flexible calendar for the past year or better, there has been constant communication with the staff. At our weekly staff meetings, there were open and very frank discussions as to the projected effects of a concentrated schedule/ calendar. Teachers were asked to consider, and have dialogue about each of their programs and how they would handle curriculum delivery and student progress monitoring to maintain or even increase student achievement. Strategies were formed for delivery and reporting and the staff understands that there will be expectations of increased progress monitoring to insure that the integrity of the educational program at Bickleton School is not compromised.

Item 11: Student achievement:

a. Describe the assessments and observations will the district use to analyze student achievement over the course of the waiver?

WASL (MSP), Diebels, Progress Monitoring, CBA's , Star Reading, Star Math, PSAT for Sophomores and Juniors.

b. Provide a set of student achievement data for the two previously-analyzed years (provide attachments, if preferred).

Provided to SBE staff.

Item 12: Indicate the potential academic benefits that the district expects from a flexible calendar and why the district anticipates such results (e.g., lower absenteeism of students and staff, fewer long commutes for students, additional time on off day to provide enrichment and enhancement activities, enhanced quality of instruction).

The potential academic benefits will be uninterrupted student-teacher contact time, lower absenteeism from staff and students which academically will keep the regular teacher in the classroom. Professional development will give opportunities for staff collaboration which will have a direct impact on student achievement. Because of the size of our district, students will have fewer long commutes to school. Formation of a solid school to work program will provide enriched and enhanced activities for students. We have been researching a school to work program with businesses in our area and have succeeded in getting verbal commitments to such programs. Students have been made aware of the opportunities that this program would provide. The staff is prepared to work with industry and students to make a viable program work in our area. This is primarily set up for students 9-12. For K-8, Bickleton School, community and staff support the necessity of maintaining our para pro structure because we have witnessed the immense benefit to our reading and math programs over the past six years. Bickleton K-8 school is made up of combination classrooms i.e. 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8. Our successful reading and math classes are dependent on being able to break these combinations apart so teachers and staff can work with individual classes. Bickleton School is at a point financially to lose its ability to maintain the support structure that makes all this work. We believe that a flexible schedule will allow us to keep the current structure intact. Without it, the only way to maintain is to cut programs in other areas. This is a "rob Peter to pay Paul" scenario. For K-12 as a whole, all out of district educational experiences will be made available on the off day. This will keep students in the regular classroom during the uninterrupted time and also allow us to expand their educational experiences when they will have more time to commit to the activity which can be linked back to the regular classroom.

Bickleton School District Information from OSPI Report Card Web page

Free or Reduced-Price Meals (May 2009)	0	0 %
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2007-08	2006-07	2005-06
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Annual Dropout Rate				
On-Time Graduation Rate	100 %	100 %	100 %	
Extended Graduation Rate	100 %	100 %	100 %	
2008-09 WASL Results				
Grade Level	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
4th Grade	61.5 %	30.8 %	42.2 %	
8th Grade	100 %	78.6 %		85.7 %
2007-08 WASL Results				
Grade Level	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
3th Grade	100 %	72.7 %		
7th Grade	92.9 %	57.1 %	71.4 %	
10th Grade	100 %	80 %		20 %
2006-07 WASL Results				
Grade Level	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
6th Grade	91.7 %	83.3 %		
Met AYP in 2009? In Improvement? Summit District?				
Yes	No	No		

2. Lyle School District

Student Count:

	Count	Year
Most recent Student Count for the district? (please identify year)	311.4 FTE	10/2009
Estimate for the next student count? (if available)	312-316	11/2009

Current waiver status:

Any active waivers?	Yes
If yes, please identify.	Waiver for 4 additional Learning Improvement Days

Is the request for all schools in the district?

Yes or No	Yes
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If no, which schools or grades?	
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How many days are being requested to be waived and for which school years?

Number of Days	12 days for the remainder of the 2009-10 school year. 24 days for the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years. Fewer may be used depending on the annual review and needs assessments. The core of this program is to establish a flexible calendar that meets or exceeds the 1000 hour requirement and provides an educational program that fits the community.
School Years	Remainder of 2009-10, 2010/11, 2011/12, and first semester of 2012/13 if the whole year is not allowed.

Will the district still meet the requirement under RCW 28A.150.220 that school districts offer an annual average instructional hour offering of at least one thousand hours?

Yes or No	Yes
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Details of Request:

(Please include as much detail as possible. The spaces will expand as you type or paste text)

Item 1: Gains from compressing the instructional hours into fewer than one hundred eighty days:

Explain and estimate the economies to be gained.

The economies of the flexible calendar are gained from not spending tax dollars in transportation, maintenance, utilities, personnel and supplies.

Transportation- Estimated 20% savings on bus routes- \$15,000, prorated to approximately \$91.00 per day. Funding from the State will be reduced by whatever formula they decide on for the flexible schedule. We project that it will be a prorated formula due to the fact that each pilot program will not have the same amount of days at each campus.

Previously waivers have not suffered loss of transportation revenue from the State. This would call for a prorated reduction across the board to those districts that do not operate on a full 180 day calendar.

Local funds, as always, will subsidize any transportation shortfalls.

Maintenance- Buses last 20% longer- \$80,000 over the life of the waiver request if a bus will not have to be purchased.

Mechanical and diagnostic savings are an estimated \$12,000 due to less brake jobs, tire wear, electrical problems, towing during bad winter trips and other overlooked costs of running a bus line.

Utilities- Lyle campus \$2500, savings at the HS/MS will be less due to community input on expanded programs to be run by staff and patrons.

Dallesport campus \$4,000, Learning Improvement Days and LAB days will be held in one portable building affording a bigger savings on utilities.

Personnel- \$2,000 estimated from voluntary leave without pay requests. Substitute costs will be reduced by \$12,400 after analyzing figures from previous years.

Supplies- \$3,000 will be saved on daily toiletries, laundry, water usage, health supplies, paper products and computer supplies.

Total savings is estimated at \$50,900, not looking at the long term cost savings of \$80,000 for a bus.

Explain and estimate the efficiencies to be gained.

The anticipated effect of the flexible calendar will increase interest and involvement from the students, staff and patrons.

Attendance- Student attendance will be monitored very closely during the required scheduled school days. The motivating factor of the school year being different will increase attendance. Substitutes will be used less due to increased staff attendance. The improvement in staff attendance will not only help in costs but increase achievement among students. It is beneficial to have a high level of instruction be consistent throughout the year. Fewer sub days equate to improved learning in the classroom which raises scores, which brings about happier students, followed by teachers seeing a difference and parents liking what they see.

Program Enhancement- The 6 community meetings held in Dallesport and Lyle have produced a sense of involvement from not only parents but patrons that hope to see some vocational and more life skill classes offered.

The LAB days, these are days that the school is opened and staffed but no transportation is provided, offer students, teachers and community members a chance to facilitate and participate in shop, music, science, community garden, archery, hunting, fishing, attend sporting events, tutoring, mentoring and job skill related activities that can be held on this nontraditional day.

Student Work- Students can opt to attend LAB days, work independently, job shadow or fill the need for workers in area businesses. This is an opportunity that will help support the monetary needs of families for college savings, transportation and living expenses.

Item 2: Explain the effect that the waiver will have on the financial position of the district.

A \$50,000 savings to the district will help make up the loss in student count, state and federal funding shortfalls and provide some assistance in maintaining the current personnel roster.

Enrollment has declined from 454 K-12 students in 1994 to 312 in October of 2009. The district has lost 18 students in the past year. This student reduction is a direct loss of funding to Lyle.

The district had to RIF 2.7 staff, combine bus routes, put a hold on K-12 math adoption and not fund the cross-country and golf teams.

The savings is money that is not spent hopefully this will help offset the falling enrollment and staff reduction.

Item 3: Estimate the expected savings in expenditures for substitutes, fuel, food service, utilities, and salaries of district and school employees.

Substitutes- \$12,400

Fuel- \$15,000

Food- \$0, Lunches will be served on LAB days. There are no plans to cut this item.

Utilities- \$6,500

Salaries- \$2,000 from voluntary Days Without Pay.

Supplies- \$3,000

Maintenance/Grounds- \$12,000

Item 4: Explain how monetary savings from the proposal will be redirected to support student learning.

The monetary savings from the proposed waiver will not infuse a large amount of money to support student learning. This may help maintain a respectable fund balance of 6-8% and hopefully enable the district to purchase a new math curriculum.

Item 5: Explain how unscheduled days may be used for activities such as professional development, planning, tutoring, special programs, and to make up for lost days due to weather or other disruptions to the calendar.

The label that has been attached to these unscheduled days at Lyle School District is LAB days. These are non-transportation Fridays in which both campuses will be open for students to come in for tutoring, vo-tech enrichment classes, senior projects, co-curricular practices, catch up on homework and mentoring.

This will not be set up as a child care facility on a LAB day. Students will be studying, working on projects, mentoring and tutoring other students.

Food service will provide a mid morning meal to all attending the LAB day. This will be the same as the regular school lunch at no charge to the students.

There will be certified and classified staff along with community volunteers at both campuses to assist students with their chosen projects.

Programs that are outside the core curriculum will be taught on LAB days. The current after school program does offer some of these opportunities during the week for those that don't attend LAB days.

The classes will be open to those who live in the district, not just students. These include house wiring, welding, carpentry, gardening, drama production, music lessons, choir, digital photography, food service certifications, sports practice, hunting and fishing clubs and

renaissance club. The benefit of these classes will be to enhance life skills and allow students, parents and patrons to work and learn together.

The flexible schedule not only allows a variety of offerings but will make the school year different and more exciting to all involved. There is anticipation in this project that is allowing the public to get involved, participate and provide a positive learning environment for students and the adults.

LID days are scheduled with LAB days to accommodate classes and provide hours for staff that are not involved in the Learning Improvement given that day.

Snow days can be substituted for a LID/LAB day in the event of a school closure. Lyle is not in the habit of taking days off for weather unless it is extreme; there were no days off in the 08-09 year due to weather.

Item 6: Summarize the comments received at one or more public hearings on the proposal and how concerns will be addressed.

Lyle Schools have held 6 public meetings over the last 2 years of planning the flexible calendar. There were 3 no comments in the surveys that were sent home with the students. Two of those were inquiries to 'how it would work' after some discussion they were OK. The third was just a NO, this came from a family that was concerned with childcare. They are located very close to school enabling their child to walk to LAB days.

Comments were positive. "I am glad to have more time with my kids." "Seems like a logical thing to do." "Go for it." "Good time to save a little cash." "The Dalles does it. Why can't we?"

The last two public meetings at Dallesport Elementary and Lyle High School were sparsely attended. People called in and voiced support but were surprised we hadn't already started the flex schedule. Some asked if they had to come or just say yes over the phone.

Concerns were addressed by either a phone call or personal contact with the questioning parent. The annual Title I survey will also include feedback on the new schedule.

Patrons are able to contact the office and visit the school anytime. The superintendent's phone number is in the book and all calls are answered.

Item 7: Child nutrition program:

Explain the impact on students who rely upon free and reduced-price school child nutrition services.

Lyle and Dallesport are presently operating under Provision 2 which provides free lunch for all students. We will be serving a lunch on LAB days.

Dallesport serves breakfast, lunch and an after school snack along with the weekend backpack program run by the County of Klickitat.

Lyle serves lunch and an after school snack to high school and middle school students.

The drama program serves a dinner on the nights of play practice, I just finished doing the dishes from my homemade potato soup, cheese, wheat and pizza bread and juice feed.

Explain the impact on the ability of the child nutrition program to operate an economically independent program.

The child nutrition program can be run at the same or less cost than the National School Lunch program.

We eliminated the NSL program for a year, did our own shopping, gleaned fruit and veggies from orchards, received donations from farmers and ranchers and utilized the Klickitat County food bank to have a very successful program.

Students were served soup/sandwiches along with fruit/veggies, juice, water, milk and desserts for lunch. This came without regulations and a lot of paperwork ending in a push on the cost of the program.

We returned to the Provision 2 only because we could offer free lunch to all students in the school. Portion control is prohibitive but we try to feed our students often and well.

Item 8: Explain the impact on the ability to recruit and retain employees in education support positions.

The Lyle School District is in a unique and active area that lends itself to easy recruitment and retention has not been a problem. We currently have 7 staff that can retire and the majority of the staff has over ten years with the district.

Item 9: Explain the impact on students whose parents work during the missed school day.

Working parents are encouraged to arrange their schedule to meet their family needs. The school plans to provide lists of daycare providers, train students in childcare, offer community service hours for childcare and offer a space for parents to meet and form a childcare coop if they find the need or opportunity.

The childcare coop will only meet on campus. Services will be provided out in the community as organized and run by the parents and patrons of the district.

Item 10: Explain how content is being accommodated from the waived days to the remaining days for elementary and secondary grades levels.

Weekly staff meetings are held at both campuses, Dallesport- Wed. 2:30 Lyle-Friday 7:30. The flexible calendar and curriculum are frequently discussed. It is the consensus and conclusion that the same level of instruction will be maintained during a flexible schedule.

Improved student and staff attendance will enhance instruction and curriculum delivery by increasing the time teachers have with their students. It is known that having a substitute is not the same as the regular classroom teacher.

Classes will be slightly longer, 12 minutes and the 1000 hour of required instruction time will be exceeded.

Current curriculum will be taught as required and covered by students and staff. There is no

indication that learning will be compromised by extending the day.

Increased attendance by staff and students will afford the opportunity to reach higher levels of competency than with the substitutes of past practice. This is an anticipated goal but seems to have a lot of realism in it.

The more contact we provide the student with their regular teacher the better the curriculum and academic achievement should rise.

Item 11: Student achievement:

Describe the assessments and observations will the district use to analyze student achievement over the course of the waiver?

We presently use the WRMT, DIBELS, STAR test, Accelerated Reader, Stanford Diagnostic and WASL scoring to analyze student achievement.

Students will be level tested in math and reading at the beginning and towards the end of each year. This is a standard practice that is presently being used by the after school program.

These scores will help us to determine if the flex schedule will be reinstated year to year. The district is committed to analyzing, testing and determining the outcomes of the pilot program. If the pilot is not showing positive results then it will be terminated.

Provide a set of student achievement data for the two previously-analyzed years (provide attachments, if preferred).

Provided to SBE staff

Item 12: Indicate the potential academic benefits that the district expects from a flexible calendar and why the district anticipates such results (e.g., lower absenteeism of students and staff, fewer long commutes for students, additional time on off day to provide enrichment and enhancement activities, enhanced quality of instruction).

We have been looking at the flex calendar for over 4-5 years. Knowing that the 180 day rule was the obstacle holding us back. The flexible calendar is a way to provide a different and exciting viewpoint to the school year. This seems to be an opportunity to advance forward and provide an educational environment that lets students, staff and parents feel involved.

The district currently has a waiver for 4 Learning Improvement Days for staff development. These days will be incorporated into the new flexible calendar, knowing that we will not be operating on the premise of two waivers.

Professional Development is a priority for the district staff. A current survey shows that staff is 60% satisfied with the current level of PD and parents are 85% satisfied with the way PD is used to develop curriculum and determine the needs of students.

The biggest positive is increased student and staff attendance. This will help all involved move forward with curriculum goals and achievement. Students will receive more instruction just by the proposed fact of better attendance. If the student and the teacher are in contact with each

other on a very consistent basis then the end product will be better teaching and more learning. No matter how anyone looks at it, the substitute in the class does not deliver the same as the assigned certified staff member.

Some students are now riding at least 60-90 minutes one way on a bus route. Some have to walk only a few blocks. The playing field is a little askew when this goes on for an extended period of time, students perform better when not subjected to those long rides 5 days a week. This is one of the reasons that we don't have the half-day Wednesday.

We have the philosophy of 'have school or don't have school'. This rings true with the 2 hour delays, we rarely have them because of the way the day is thrown off.

The Lyle School District would like the opportunity to PILOT this flexible calendar to provide a school year to students, staff and patrons that is not only a little different but allows the community as a whole to have some fun, be creative and in the end find out if our ideas will work on a long term basis.

Lyle School District Information from OSPI Report Card Web page

Free or Reduced-Price Meals (May 2009)	330	97.60%
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	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06
Annual Dropout Rate	5.20%	7.30%	12.70%
On-Time Graduation Rate	77.10%	70.70%	54.80%
Extended Graduation Rate	77.10%	74.10%	54.80%

2008-09 WASL Results

Grade Level	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
4th Grade	43.50%	52.20%	52.20%	
7th Grade	53.60%	42.90%	53.60%	
10th Grade	73.30%	43.80%	85.70%	20.00%

2007-08 WASL Results

Grade Level	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
4th Grade	46.70%	20.00%	43.30%	
7th Grade	37.50%	22.70%	40.90%	
10th Grade	63.20%	42.10%	68.40%	16.70%

2006-07 WASL Results

Grade Level	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
4th Grade	56.80%	27.00%	21.60%	
7th Grade	44.40%	22.20%	50.00%	
10th Grade	58.60%	37.90%	75.90%	13.80%

Met AYP in 2009?	In Improvement?	Summit District?
No	No	No

3. Paterson School District

Student Count:

	Count	Year
Most recent Student Count for the district? (please identify year)	102	09/10
Estimate for the next student count? (if available)	105	10/11

Current waiver status:

Any active waivers?	NO
If yes, please identify.	

Is the request for all schools in the district?

Yes or No	YES
If no, which schools or grades?	

How many days are being requested to be waived and for which school years?

Number of Days	26	36	36	14
School Years	09/10 (Start 1/4/10)	10/11	11/12	12/13 (thru Dec 12) Rationale: The pilot is for the equivalent of three school years. We plan to start ½ way through 09/10 and will plan to execute the Waiver through December 2012.

Will the district still meet the requirement under RCW 28A.150.220 that school districts offer an annual average instructional hour offering of at least one thousand hours?

Yes or No	YES
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Details of Request:

Item 1: Gains from compressing the instructional hours into fewer than one hundred eighty days:

a. Explain and estimate the economies to be gained.

Reduction in classified TA time from 5 days/week; to 4 days/week.	\$9000
Reduced food service costs: staffing and food products	6500
Reduced utility costs – heat, lights, AC, garbage	3000

Reduced transportation costs – staff, fuel, tire wear	8500
Reduced substitute teacher expenditures (We paid \$126/day)	1500
ESTIMATED SAVINGS Per Year:	\$28,500

b. Explain and estimate the efficiencies to be gained.

Potential Academic Benefits:

- Longer blocks of time available to complete lessons such as science labs
- More opportunities to personalize education to meet the needs of our students.
- Lower absenteeism of students and teachers.
- Additional direct instruction time available for math and reading interventions. (This will positively impact our fragile learners, and in particular our ESL students.)
- More opportunities to continue our curriculum review and purchase of materials.
- Fewer long commutes for students. (Many of our children spent more than 1.5 hours per day riding the school bus.)
- Provide additional support to the academic learning process by rehiring a partial FTE classified teacher assistant and recapturing a portion of the time lost by the certified reading specialist.
- District plan includes up to an additional 15 off-schedule Fridays to provide enrichment and enhancement activities such as field trips, fine arts, special project support, homework support – this will limit the disruptions to the regular instructional schedule. The 15 enhancement/enrichment days (70 hours) are in addition to the 143-days (1000 hours) of direct instructional time. Total direct instructional time available to students is increased to 1070 hours.

Item 2: Explain the effect that the waiver will have on the financial position of the district.

The reduction in funding from the State, beginning with the 2009/10 school year, put the Paterson School District in a situation where we had to eliminate two of our classified teacher assistant positions. We also lost the funding for part of our certificated reading specialist. It is our hope to be able to rehire a partial FTE classified assistant as well as recapture a portion of the certificated reading specialist's time.

Item 3: Estimate the expected savings in expenditures for substitutes, fuel, food service, utilities, and salaries of district and school employees.

Reduction in some classified TA time from 5 days/week; to 4 days/week.	\$9000
Reduced food service costs: staffing and food products	6500
Reduced utility costs – heat, lights, AC, garbage	3000
Reduced transportation costs – staff, fuel, tire wear	8500
Reduced substitute teacher expenditures (We paid \$126/day)	1500
ESTIMATED SAVINGS Per Year:	\$28,500

Item 4: Explain how monetary savings from the proposal will be redirected to support student learning.

The reduction in funding from the State, beginning with the 2009/10 school year, put the Paterson School District in a situation where we had to eliminate two of our classified teacher assistant positions. We also lost the funding for part of our certificated reading specialist. It is our hope to be able to rehire a partial FTE classified assistant as well as recapture a portion of the certificated reading specialist's time.

Item 5: Explain how unscheduled days may be used for activities such as professional development, planning, tutoring, special programs, and to make up for lost days due to weather or other disruptions to the calendar.

- We plan to utilize up to 15 of the unscheduled Fridays each year to provide enriching and enhancing activities. We will utilize some of our Federal dollars (21st Century and Gear Up Grants) to bring children BACK into the school on these days.
- Activities will include field trips, drama, art, music, special project support, additional intervention time, and homework support.
- Building staff meetings and staff development opportunities will be planned outside of the student instructional day. This will reduce the need for substitutes and will reduce the disruption to the student learning process.
- Days lost to inclement weather or other disruptions to the school year will be made up on the unscheduled Fridays. This will allow the District to maintain the integrity of the calendar year.

Item 6: Summarize the comments received at one or more public hearings on the proposal and how concerns will be addressed.

The issue of the modified/flexible calendar has been brought before parents and staff at a variety of different meetings (PTO, PAC, school board, 1:1 and small group discussions) since early last winter.

Mrs. Douglas provided information on three different scenarios for length of school day and school year. She noted that there would be no change in the start of the day - 8:20 AM. The end times reviewed included 3:30, 3:35 and 3:40. The unanimous consensus of the group was to support starting the modified calendar schedule January 4, 2010. Parents also unanimously approved a daily schedule that would have students start at 8:20 AM and end the day at 3:40 PM. This day would provide 7 hrs of instruction daily; with a minimum of 143 calendar days per year (1000 hrs.).

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS:

- What about kinders? Many are tired at the end of the current scheduled day (3:00), how could we lessen the impact of a longer day for these young children?
- One teacher noted that when she taught kindergarten she would have her students "rest" for 30 minutes right after lunch recess each day. She would use this time to read aloud to the students. At the beginning of the school year some of the younger students fell asleep during this time while others just rested. She noted that everyone benefitted from the short break. By mid-year most students no longer required a nap.
- All parents agreed that this would be a perfect solution to this concern.

- We are a very unique community. Because we are a remote and rural farming community many parents already work a modified schedule during the winter months. (Monday thru Thursday). The pay day for most of the farm workers is Thursday evening so they plan their shopping trips and appointments for Fridays. Because of the long distances (up to 45 miles one way) for parents to travel for services, parents often plan routine medical and dental appointments for their children on the same day that they do their banking and shopping. The new calendar would allow parents to take their children without it negatively impacting their education.
- I really like the plan for the off-schedule Fridays. This day would be a little shorter (10:00 AM to 3:00 PM) so it would be perfect for younger children. It would be parent choice if their child attended 1 or all of these days. I also like the idea of having longer blocks of time for activities such as robotics, drama, sports camps.
- Will parents need to provide lunch on these extra days? No, the district will continue to provide lunch and a snack on the off-schedule Fridays.
- Staff comments:
 - We are excited about the larger blocks of time for instruction.
 - This schedule will make it easier to do projects, science, experiments and reading.
 - Feel that we will be better able to provide interventions to struggling students.
 - Really like the extra Fridays to work with students on big projects.
- Parent comments:
 - What can we do to help make this happen? I like it!
 - Wonderful

The overall consensus of parents and staff is that they are very supportive of the District's proposal to participate in the Modified Calendar Pilot program.

Item 7: Child nutrition program:

c. Explain the impact on students who rely upon free and reduced-price school child nutrition services.

The District will provide up to 15 extra enhancing and enriching days on non-scheduled Fridays for students. All students who attend on these days will be provided with a free snack and lunch.

d. Explain the impact on the ability of the child nutrition program to operate an economically independent program.

The District only receives reimbursement for approximately 55% of the total cost that we spent for food and labor. The unfunded balance of these costs is supported by the community through their M&O taxes or is absorbed through basic education dollars. By moving to a modified/flexible calendar, we will be able to reduce the overall expenditures from our food services program. This will allow some of the dollars pulled from basic education to be reallocated to other areas.

Item 8: Explain the impact on the ability to recruit and retain employees in education support positions.

- The reduction in funding from the State, beginning with the 2009/10 school year, put the

Paterson School District in a situation where we had to eliminate two of our classified teacher assistant positions. We also lost the funding for part of our certificated reading specialist. It is our hope to be able to rehire a partial FTE classified assistant as well as recapture a portion of the certificated reading specialist's time.

- Because of the remoteness of the location, and the lack of housing in the district, most employees must travel up to 70 miles per day to work. By moving to a modified calendar, staff could save 10-20% of their current out-of-pocket travel expenditures.
- The loss of hours for classified employees when we go from a 5-day calendar to a 4-day calendar could be partially recouped by offering them the option of working on the non-scheduled Fridays using Federal dollars.

Item 9: Explain the impact on students whose parents work during the missed school day.

We are a very unique community. Because we are a remote and rural farming community many families have at least one, if not both, parents off from the time harvest ends in the Fall until crops are again ready to be planted in the Spring. We also know that many other parents already work a modified schedule during the winter months. (Monday thru Thursday). The pay day for most of the farm workers is Thursday evening so they plan their shopping trips and appointments for Fridays. Because of the long distance (up to 45 miles one way) for parents to travel for services, parents often plan routine medical and dental appointments for their children on the same day that they do their banking and shopping. The new calendar would allow parents to take their students without it negatively impacting their child's education.

Item 10: Explain how content is being accommodated from the waived days to the remaining days for elementary and secondary grades levels.

It is our intent that by moving to a modified/flexible calendar we will be able to provide our students with a more complete educational experience that covers the full scope of the curricular content. District staff, administration and school board view this Pilot Program as a three stage effort to improve education for children.

Stage 1: Planning stage – 2008 through December 2009

Stage 2: Begins with the implementation of the modified calendar in January 2010. We currently have Pacing Calendars in place for math, reading and/or science. These Pacing Calendars align themselves to the GLEs and to the EARLS. During Stage 2, teachers will review and modified these Pacing Calendars as necessary to ensure that all content in the core curricular areas are completed inside the newly adopted calendar.

Stage 3: Staff will continue to improve upon instructional delivery throughout the three years of the Pilot Program to ensure that the delivery of instruction is more intentional and more deliberate.

- Although the educational week will be structured differently, the District will still maintain at a minimum the number of minutes currently provided in each core curricular area. For example, our 90 minute reading blocks will become 112 minute instructional blocks. (450 minutes per week)
- Longer blocks of time available to complete lessons
- More Tier 1 and Tier 2 Intervention time will be available by adding 10-20 minutes to the core curriculum areas daily (math, language arts, science)
- More learning opportunities will be available for advanced students, including Advanced Math and Honors Reading as well as additional enhancing and enriching activities such as robotics. Some of these activities will take place during the regular school day and others will be provided during the off-schedule Friday activities.
- Enhancing and enriching activities that have been lost due to funding cuts will be restored on non-scheduled Fridays: field trips, college visitations, outside instructional experts, staff support for projects such as science fair

Item 11: Student achievement:

a. Describe the assessments and observations will the district use to analyze student achievement over the course of the waiver?

The Paterson School District will continue to use MAPS (Grade 2-8; 3X Yearly), Dibels, State Assessments (formerly called WASL), WLPT, student and staff attendance records, end of unit tests, teacher created assessments to analyze student achievement over the course of the waiver.

b. Provide a set of student achievement data for the two previously-analyzed years (provide attachments, if preferred).

Provided to SBE staff

Item 12: Indicate the potential academic benefits that the district expects from a flexible calendar and why the district anticipates such results (e.g., lower absenteeism of students and staff, fewer long commutes for students, additional time on off day to provide enrichment and enhancement activities, enhanced quality of instruction).

Potential Academic Benefits:

- Longer blocks of time available to complete lessons such as science labs
- More opportunities to personalize education to meet the needs of our students.
- Lower absenteeism of students and teachers.
- Additional direct instruction time available for math and reading interventions. (This will positively impact our fragile learners, and in particular our ESL students.)
- More opportunities to continue our curriculum review and purchase of materials.
- Fewer long commutes for students. (Many of our children spent more than 1.5 hours per day riding the school bus.)
- Additional support to the academic learning process by rehiring a partial FTE classified teacher assistant and recapturing a portion of the time lost by the certified reading specialist.
- District plan includes up to an additional 15 off-schedule Fridays to provide enrichment and enhancement activities such as field trips, fine arts, special project support, homework support – this will limit the disruptions to the regular instructional schedule. The 15 enhancement/enrichment days (70 hours) are in addition to the 143-days (1000 hours) of direct instructional time. Total direct instructional time available to students is increased to 1070 hours.

Paterson School District Information from OSPI Report Card Web page

Free or Reduced-Price Meals (May 2009)	61	55.5 %
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2008-09 WASL Results

Grade Level	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
4th Grade	45.5 %	45.5 %	81.8 %	
7th Grade	80.0 %	50.0 %	50.0 %	
8th Grade	90.9 %	54.5 %		27.3 %

2007-08 WASL Results

Grade Level	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
4th Grade	81.8 %	54.5 %	72.7 %	
7th Grade	60.0 %	40.0 %	60.0 %	

2006-07 WASL Results

Grade Level	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
4th Grade	50.0 %	8.3 %	50.0 %	
8th Grade	66.7 %	72.2 %		44.4 %

Met AYP in 2009?	In Improvement?	Summit District?
Yes	No	No

POLICY CONSIDERATION

SBE staff and the Waivers Committee have reviewed all three applications and have determined that they meet the eligibility requirements and criteria required by the Legislature and SBE.

In review of statute, any application that spans more than three school years in whole or part should be amended to only span three school years.

In order to prevent the complication of overlapping waivers, any current waiver from the 180 school day calendar should be found to be null and void before an economy and efficiency pilot program waiver is granted.

The savings in transportation outlined in the applications may not be realized in whole or part by the districts. The office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) will be working with each district that receives a waiver to determine if transportation funds will be prorated due to the reduced number of school days. SBE staff has informed each district of this possibility and has been working with OSPI on the issue.

EXPECTED ACTION

Approval of the application under the following conditions:

- Lyle School District's and Paterson School District's applications should be amended to only span the 2009-10, 2010-11, and 2012-13 school years.
- Lyle School District's waiver from the 180 school day calendar, which was approved in September 2009, should be found to be null and void and all planned activities for that waiver should be incorporated into the economy and efficiency waiver and rescheduled to occur during one of the economy and efficiency waived days.

THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

JOINT MEETING WITH THE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR STANDARDS BOARD NATIONAL COUNCIL ON TEACHER QUALITY: EFFECTIVE TEACHING STATE POLICY IMPLICATIONS BASED ON SEATTLE HUMAN CAPITAL STUDY AND OTHER STATES' EXPERIENCES

BACKGROUND

As a part of the Board's retreat in July 2009, the Board requested that staff begin some discussions on effective teaching policy. At the upcoming November meeting, SBE members will participate in a joint meeting with the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB). The PESB has been newly reconstituted, and its membership has decreased from 21 members to 12 members (see "Attachment A" for a list of the PESB members). Approximately one half of the PESB members are new to their Board as of September 2009 (all members are appointed by the Governor).

Sandi Jacobs, vice president for the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), will present recommendations for Washington to consider on effective teaching quality (based on the NCTQ recent study of Human Capital in the Seattle Public School District as well as her work with other states on effective teaching policies). This study was done at the request of Seattle's Alliance for Education, which is an independent, nonprofit organization focused on improving Seattle's public schools.

NCTQ advocates for reforms in a broad range of teacher policies at the federal, state, and local levels in order to increase the number of effective teachers. In particular we recognize the absence of much of the evidence necessary to make a compelling case for change and seek to fill that void with a research agenda that has direct and practical implications for policy. We are committed to lending transparency and increasing public awareness about the four sets of institutions that have the greatest impact on teacher quality: states, teacher preparation programs, school districts and teachers' unions. Based in Washington, D.C., the National Council on Teacher Quality was founded in 2000 to provide an alternative, national voice to existing teacher organizations and to build the case for a comprehensive reform agenda that would challenge the current structure and regulation of the profession.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

See Attachment B for a description of the Executive Summary on the Human Capital Study as well as implications for state policy changes.

EXPECTED ACTION

None, although there are implications for Washington's Race to the Top application in terms of teaching effectiveness.

Attachment A
List of Professional Educator Standards Board Members

Stephen Rushing is Chair of the PESB and is a Principal in the Bethel School District.

Bruce Becker is a Technology Integration Specialist in the Lake Washington School District.

Lori Blanchard is Chair of the Montesano School Board.

June Canty is a Professor and a Director of Education Programs at Washington State University, Vancouver.

Randy Dorn is the Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Colleen Fairchild is a Third Grade Teacher in the North Kitsap School District.

Molly Hamaker-Teals is a Math Teacher/Math Coach in the Kennewick School District.

Myra Johnson is a School Counselor in the Clover Park School District.

Roshni Jokhi is a Special Education Teacher in the Sedro-Woolley School District.

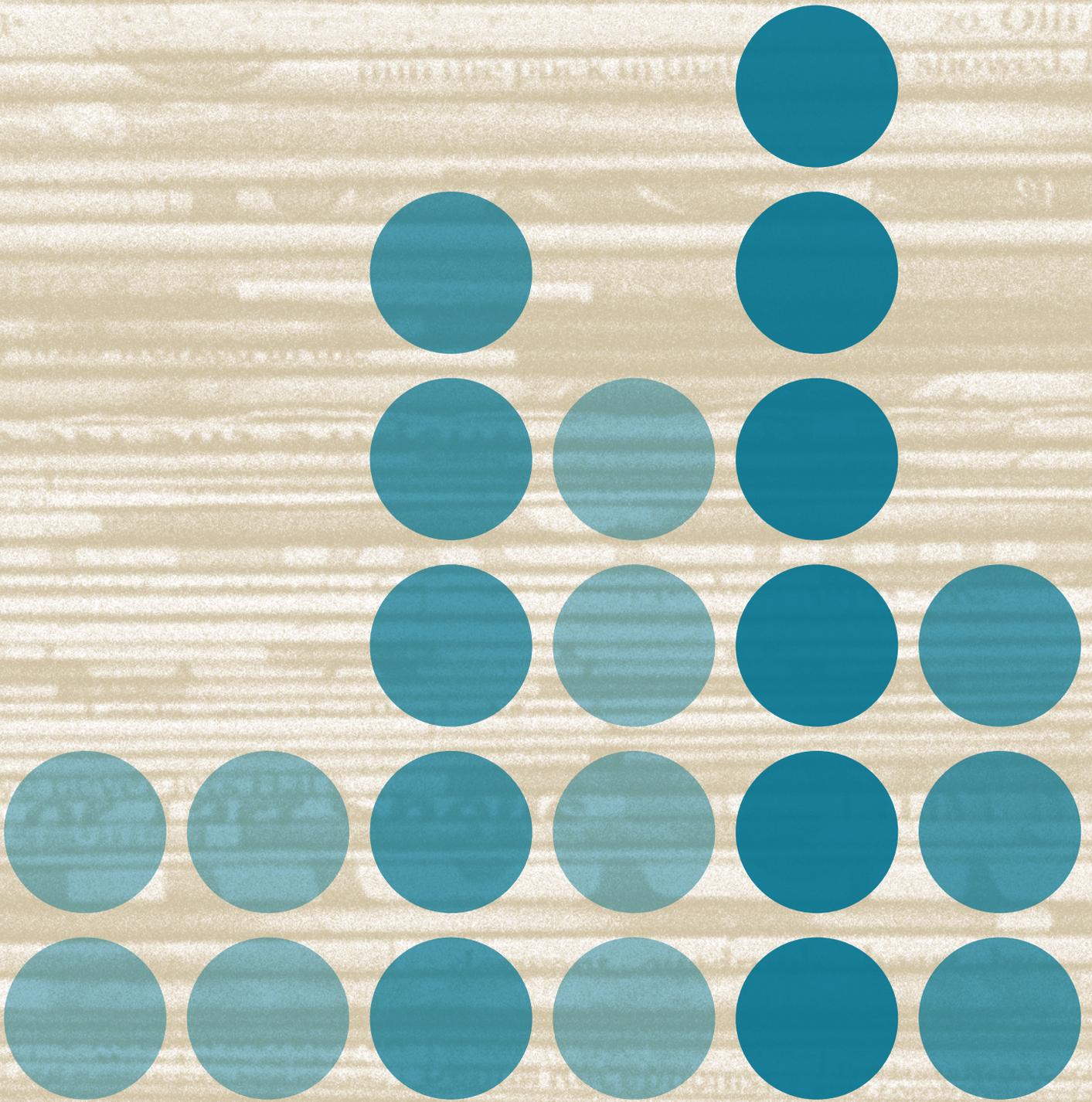
Shannon Lawson is a K-8 Teacher on special assignment as Program Director of HomeWorks! in the Cheney School District.

Gil Mendoza is Superintendent of the Sumner School District.

Nancy Smith is a Highly Capable and Mentor Program Coordinator in the Lake Stevens School District.

Barbara Taylor is an Integrated Science and Biology Teacher in the Othello School District.

Attachment B
Summary of NCTQ Human Capital in Seattle Public Schools



Human Capital in Seattle Public Schools

Rethinking How to Attract, Develop and Retain Effective Teachers

About this study

This study was undertaken on behalf of the 43,000 school children who attend the Seattle Public Schools.

About NCTQ

The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) is a non-partisan research and advocacy group committed to restructuring the teaching profession, led by our vision that every child deserves effective teachers.

Partner and local funder

This report is funded by a grant from the Alliance for Education. Additional funding was provided by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The NCTQ team for this project

Emily Cohen, Project Director
Bess Keller, Aileen Corso, Valerie Franck, Kate Kelliher
and Betsy McCorry

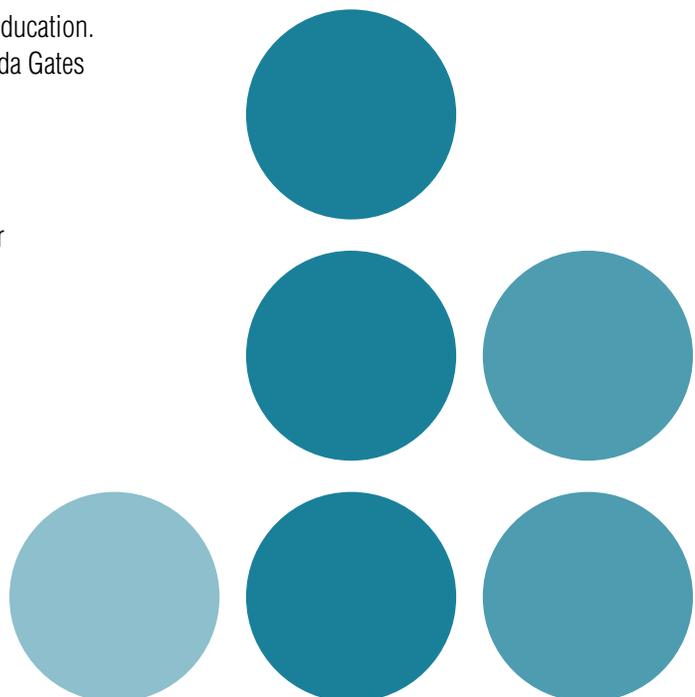


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Human Capital in Seattle Public Schools: Rethinking How to Attract, Develop and Retain Effective Teachers

Preface

Staffing each classroom with an effective teacher is the most important function of a school district. Doing so requires strategic personnel policies and smart practices. This analysis reviews the Seattle Public Schools' teacher policies linked most directly to teacher effectiveness. We put forward ten policy goals that frame our analysis. Each of these goals is supported by a strong rationale that is grounded by research and practitioner insight. See our online appendix for more information (www.nctq.org/tr3).

The study was undertaken at the request of the Alliance for Education, an independent organization that works in close partnership with the Seattle Public Schools.

To produce this analysis, we took the following steps:

- First, a team of analysts reviewed the collective bargaining agreement for teachers, school board policies and the district's strategic operating plan. We also looked at any state laws that might impact local policy.
- We compared the laws and policies in Seattle and the state of Washington with the 99 other school districts and 49 other states found in our TR³ database (www.nctq.org/tr3). This exercise allowed us to determine where the school district falls along the spectrum of teacher quality policies and to identify practices that Seattle might emulate. In a number of areas, we also compare Seattle with the surrounding school districts, its biggest competitors for teacher talent.
- We spoke with local teachers, principals, parents and community leaders to understand how policies play out in practice.
- We requested teacher personnel data, filed through an open records request, to give us a better understanding of teacher hiring, transfer, and placement data, as well as teacher ratings on their performance evaluations. The district provided some but not all of the data we requested.
- We submitted a draft of our analysis to both the Seattle Public Schools and the Seattle Education Association. Both provided factual corrections and other valuable feedback that have been incorporated into this report.

An astute reader will notice that some important areas of teacher governance are not addressed in this analysis, such as teacher working conditions and teachers' ability to contribute to school decision-making. While these factors are important for teacher recruitment, job satisfaction and retention, they are heavily dependent on the culture and day-to-day practices of individual principals and their faculty members. This analysis focuses only on areas of teacher governance that can be more readily affected by a *change in policy, regulation or law*.

Executive Summary

Staffing each classroom with an effective teacher is the most important function of a school district. Doing so requires strategic personnel policies and smart practices.

The National Council on Teacher Quality, at the request of Alliance for Education in Seattle, undertook an analysis of the Seattle Public Schools' existing teacher policies, reviewing the teachers' contract and other relevant documents; collecting personnel data; talking with local stakeholders to learn how the rules play out in practice and comparing Seattle to other districts, both local and national.

We examined four areas of teacher governance in which better policies—both state and local—could improve teacher quality. These areas are:

- I. **COMPENSATION:** The structure of Seattle's salary schedule, which teachers benefit from the current schedule and which teachers are at a disadvantage.
- II. **TRANSFER AND ASSIGNMENT:** The process for hiring and assigning teachers in Seattle, and particularly how the district handles the thorny process of teacher transfers.
- III. **WORK DAY:** An examination of the teacher work day and year, including leave policies and their impact on student instructional time.
- IV. **DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND EXITING INEFFECTIVE TEACHERS:** The quality of support provided to Seattle's new teachers, the rigor and quality of feedback of its evaluation system, the meaning of tenure and, lastly, what it takes to dismiss a substandard teacher.

Here are our principal findings and recommendations.

I. COMPENSATION

Seattle has achieved real success in making teacher salaries, especially starting salaries, competitive with other districts in the Puget Sound area. Still, we find a number of structural deficiencies in the current salary schedule.

Excessive emphasis on coursework. Most notably Seattle's pay structure is built on a popular but erroneous premise that the more coursework a teacher takes, the more effective he or she is likely to become. Districts that heavily incentivize teachers to take more courses—and Seattle is in the extreme among the 100 districts we track closely—are making poor choices with their limited resources.

Seattle is spending a considerable portion of its annual teacher payroll (22 percent) on incentives persuading teachers to take more courses. Teachers are required to take a far greater number of courses (or their equivalent in professional development hours) than what other districts require, in effect the equivalent of a second undergraduate degree and a master's degree combined. *Seattle needs to redesign its salary schedule, eliminating these coursework incentives and reallocating pay to target the district's challenges and priorities.*

Little experimentation with differential pay. The district could make much better use of funds available for teacher salaries by targeting three important but unaddressed areas of need for the district: 1) more money to effective teachers willing to work in the most challenging schools or who are willing to teach lower status courses (e.g., 9th grade standard English versus 12th grade honors English); 2) more money to teachers with skills that are in short supply, particularly mathematics, science and special education; and 3) more money to teachers who are highly effective. With the exception of providing more funding to high-needs schools, Seattle is behind the curve on these pay reforms. *Seattle needs to redouble its efforts to initiate differential pay, as attempted by the current superintendent in the latest contract negotiation.*

Inequitable pay raises. We were dismayed to find a pay structure that worked so clearly against the interests of younger, newer teachers. Unlike most districts which provide relatively equal raises for each additional year of service to teachers, regardless of their experience, Seattle reserves the more sizeable raises for its veteran teachers (approximately \$2,000 a year), while teachers with five or fewer years of experience are eligible for only about a third as much (approximately \$800). *Seattle needs to provide equitable pay increases—with one exception: the year a teacher earns tenure should bring a sizeable pay increase.*

II. TRANSFER AND ASSIGNMENT

Equitable distribution of teachers. Seattle enjoys clear advantages in the quality of teachers it attracts. The district is attracting a high percentage of teachers who have attended more selective colleges. Fifty-eight percent of its new hires last year attended “more selective” or “most selective” colleges as ranked by U.S. News & World Report. Appropriately, these teachers work in both Seattle’s affluent and poor schools.

The “academic capital” that individual teachers bring into schools will help to improve school performance, yet Seattle collects little data about teachers’ own academic backgrounds nor does it know enough about turnover and retention at individual schools. *Seattle needs to collect important data on teachers, such as the number of times it takes a teacher to pass licensing tests and scores on aptitude tests, to ensure that teachers are equitably distributed among schools.*

Hiring timelines. When hiring new teachers, Seattle could better compete with surrounding districts by more aggressive action from the HR department and changing its timelines for hiring. *First, in January and February, Seattle needs to offer generic contracts to particularly talented individuals and those skilled in shortage subject areas. Second, Seattle should begin its spring transfer and hiring season in March, when principals would ideally receive their budgets for the following school year.*

Notification deadlines. Many districts have problems persuading resigning and retiring teachers to give notice early enough to allow the district time to hire a good replacement. *Seattle should give an early notification bonus for resigning and retiring teachers who tell the district by April 30. All resignations should be effective June 30 no matter when notice is given so that insurance coverage continues through the summer months.*

Site-based hiring. Seattle needs to do more to ensure that schools only have to accept teachers into their buildings that they want. There are a number of technical problems that stand in the way of this principle playing out smoothly, primarily: 1) displaced teachers are often assigned by HR without school consent and 2) teachers with super seniority (those with a physical disability and those leaving schools which have been targeted for intervention because of poor performance) can fill a vacancy, regardless of a principal’s view on the matter. *Seattle needs to eliminate all “forced placements,” whether by the HR office or the result of super seniority privileges. Principals should approve of all hires. If a displaced teacher is unable to find a new assignment, s/he should receive temporary work as a substitute with no more than a year on the payroll. If, during that year, the teacher still does not find a new assignment, s/he should be exited from the district.*

District-wide layoffs. With the high number of layoffs taking place in schools across the country this year, much attention has gone to the policy of using seniority as the determining factor in layoffs. A layoff policy that works in order of reverse seniority necessitates the highest number of jobs eliminated and can wreak havoc on schools, forced perhaps to give up teachers regardless of performance and often dismantling an effective team or program. *Seattle's next contract should allow performance to be a consideration when teachers are laid off.*

III. WORK DAY

Work day. While Seattle's secondary teachers put in a contractual work day (7 hours, 30 minutes) that is comparable to the national average, its elementary teachers have the shortest work day in the region at 7 hours, comparing unfavorably to an average of 7 hours, 38 minutes in the surrounding districts, and also well under the national average of 7 hours, 25 minutes, reported by the 100 TR³ districts (www.nctq.org/tr3). A 30-minute difference in a school day is equivalent to cutting 2½ weeks out of the school year. *Seattle should increase the contractual work day not just for elementary teachers but also secondary teachers up to 8 hours.*

Work year. All of Seattle's students are shortchanged on instructional days, receiving three fewer days this school year than the 180 days required by state law. (SPS obtained a waiver to convert three instructional days into professional development days.) *Seattle should adhere to the state requirement of 180 instructional days.*

Leave. Seattle teachers are away from the classroom too often, approximately 9 percent of the school year or 16 days in the school year. Teachers use, on average, almost all of their 10 days of sick leave, their 2 personal days per year, as well as 3 days for professional development purposes. *Teacher attendance should be a factor on the teacher evaluation. Seattle should put in place more forceful language, both prohibiting the taking of personal leave on Mondays and Fridays and limiting professional development activities during instructional time.*

Unlike many districts, there is no correlation in Seattle between high rates of absences and working in high-poverty schools. However, there is clearly a correlation between high rates of absences and student grade level, with elementary schools reporting twice the absence rate as high schools. Certain schools in Seattle stand out for their high absence rates, which we theorize reflects school leadership's degree of tolerance for absences. *Seattle needs to do a better job producing absence reports that provide monthly status reports on where individual schools stands in relation to district totals and averages and highlighting those teachers with above-average absence rates. Principals need to be allowed to request a second opinion from a doctor hired by the school district in the case of teachers whose habitual use of sick leave is excused by a doctor's note.*

IV. DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND EXITING INEFFECTIVE TEACHERS

Support for new teachers. Not all new teachers in Seattle receive a mentor. In the 2007-2008 school year, there were 145 first-year teachers; however, only 94 were assigned a mentor. While the mentor-to-teacher ratio is good—only 9 mentees per consulting teacher—mentors appear to work at a large number of schools, potentially limiting interaction between teachers and mentors. *Seattle should ensure that all first-year teachers are assigned a mentor.*

Teacher evaluations. Seattle is not identifying its poor-performing teachers. In the most recent school year, only 16 teachers out of a workforce of nearly 3,300 received an unsatisfactory evaluation, 0.5 percent of the workforce. While the frequency and timing of Seattle's evaluation system is exemplary, the current evaluation suffers from a number of structural flaws as shown in the following table:

Problems with the current evaluation system	Solutions
Student achievement is not adequately considered nor are any objective measures of student learning considered.	<i>Student achievement should be the preponderant criterion of a teacher's evaluation and include objective measures.</i>
There are only two ratings a teacher can receive (satisfactory or unsatisfactory).	<i>Evaluation ratings should distinguish between at least four levels of performance.</i>
The district deems a teacher who has merely tried to meet his/her goals to have met a satisfactory standard of performance, even if s/he has not been successful.	<i>Teachers should not receive a satisfactory evaluation rating if found ineffective in the classroom, even if s/he is deemed to have tried.</i>
There are few opportunities to evaluate a teacher in unannounced visits.	<i>Principals and other school leadership should observe all teachers regularly in brief, unscheduled visits.</i>
Principals are not held accountable for the quality of their ratings.	<i>Principals should be held responsible for evaluation ratings by such means of random third-party verifications.</i>

Support for struggling teachers. Struggling teachers in Seattle are offered a number of supports including a peer intervention program, and if performance is enough of a problem, then teachers are placed in an improvement plan. Principals are required to be heavily involved in teacher improvement plans, though much of this responsibility could easily be assigned to consulting teachers with subject-area expertise. Principals may be more inclined to more accurately rate teacher performance if the burden of remediation does not fall so heavily on their shoulders. *Consulting teachers should play an important role in teacher improvement plans.*

Exiting ineffective teachers. A teacher's right to due process can be unfairly disruptive to student learning. Teachers are entitled to a 60-classroom-day remediation plan (essentially three months), which is allowed to extend from one year into the next if teachers do not receive an unsatisfactory rating until the spring. This means that students can start a new school year with a teacher whose job is on the line. *Instead, any teacher whose remediation plan that spills over from one school year into the next should be assigned as a co-teacher the following school year so as to minimize the disruption to students if the principal decides to dismiss the teacher.*

Making tenure meaningful. Evidence of teacher effectiveness is not adequately considered when Seattle makes its tenure decisions. As virtually all teachers receive a satisfactory evaluation rating, virtually all teachers earn tenure, regardless of their actual performance. The decision to award tenure is a \$2 million investment by the state and district that is treated like a minor purchase. *District officials should take an active role in deciding tenure so that the distinction is more meaningful. Teachers should be given a large pay raise for earning tenure.*

What WASHINGTON STATE needs to do

I. COMPENSATION

Washington State's intervention on pay issues is a substantial obstacle to needed pay reforms. The state's efforts at equalizing pay across districts are ineffective. The state should not dictate how its districts pay its teachers, particularly since the state structure is based on a flawed logic that deems teachers with the most coursework as the most effective. *The state should eliminate the salary schedule and TRI structure—and should support district efforts at creating new compensation systems that reward effectiveness or that provide bonuses to attract teachers to hard-to-staff subjects and schools.*

II. TRANSFER AND ASSIGNMENT

Each year, districts are forced to reassign staff due to changes in enrollment or changes in the budget. Though much of this fluctuation is inevitable, some of the disruption to schools could be minimized if districts received their projected budgets earlier. The more time schools have to plan for impending changes in staff positions, the better prepared they will be to staff schools. Along the same lines, too many teachers notify schools of their resignation late, forcing schools to scramble to fill vacancies. *Pass the education budget in March rather than in April and consider a two-year budget. Impose a state deadline for teachers to notify districts of their resignation or retirement by June 30th, so as to provide principals with sufficient time to fill vacancies.*

III. WORK DAY

Allowing teachers to accumulate and be compensated for unused leave may unintentionally encourage teachers to take leave for reasons other than illness, partly because the cash payout isn't a large enough incentive to dissuade teachers from making inappropriate use of the leave. *Eliminate the accumulation of sick leave and any retirement payouts.*

IV. DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND EXITING INEFFECTIVE TEACHERS

Evaluations. Washington State already has a strong state evaluation policy by requiring annual evaluations of all teachers, but it should go a step further and require that all districts include *evidence of student learning as the preponderant criterion in teacher evaluations.*

Teacher dismissal. It takes far too long to dismiss a teacher found ineffective in the classroom. Not only is the 60-day probationary period too long (it should be calendar days, not classroom days, as is the current policy), but teachers can appeal a termination decision far too many times. *Shorten the probationary period to 60 calendar days. Only allow teachers to appeal a termination decision once. Appeals should be made before a panel of educators, not in a court of law.*

Tenure. Tenure in Washington State comes at too early a point in a teacher's career to have collected sufficient and adequate data that reflect teacher performance. *Increase the provisional period for new teachers to four years.*

Introduction

A brief overview of the Seattle Public Schools

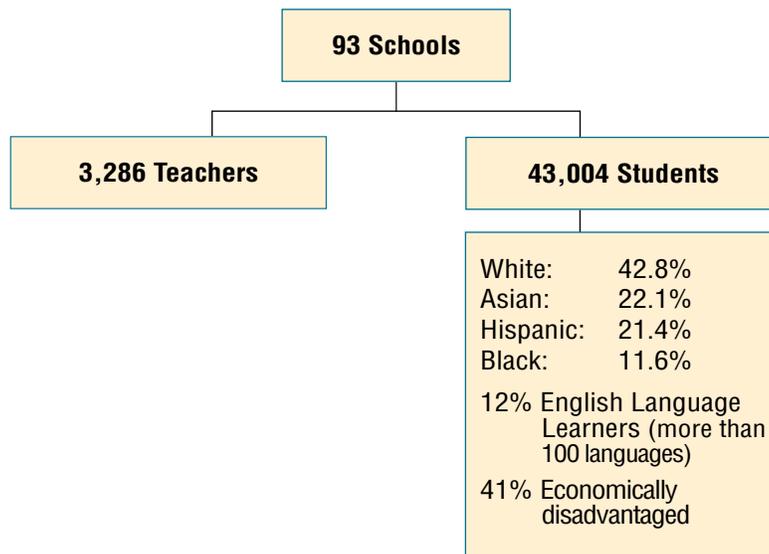
Seattle's public schools face many of the challenges typical of urban districts--children from poor and non-English-speaking families, conflicted attitudes toward race among citizens, declining enrollments. Just as typically, the system is burdened by out-of-date buildings and tangled bureaucratic processes.

But, comparatively, the school system's hurdles are modest. Although Seattle is the state's largest district, with an enrollment about twice that of several suburban districts nearby, it enrolls just 43,000 students. The city of Seattle benefits from more well-off and highly educated residents than the state as a whole, and even the recession has not been able to shake off all the boomtown energy that comes from computer giant Microsoft, headquartered nearby. Seattle has long had a quality of life that has attracted skilled newcomers, a fact reflected in the solid educations and diverse backgrounds of many of the district's teachers.

Many school advocates believe that the district has not fully lived up to these advantages for many of its white, middle-class children let alone for its poor and minority students. In demographic terms, the city divides at the shipping canal and Lake Washington, with the area south of the divide less white and less wealthy. For students in the south end, the record is downright troubling. Achievement gaps between White and Asian students, on the one hand, and Black and Hispanic, on the other, abound. Many are wide. For instance, in 2008 71 percent more White students passed the state's 10th grade math test than did Black students.

Since the 1980s the district has tried to redress inequality and satisfy parents with combinations of mandatory and voluntary busing, on the one hand, and school choice, on the other. The latest plan, to go into effect in the 2010-2011 school year, places greater limits on school choice in an attempt to simplify school assignment and free up transportation money. The effect of the plan on equity is anyone's guess. Its advocates say that new resources and a focus on neighborhood schools will strengthen schools in the south end, while detractors argue that the high levels of parental involvement and fund-raising that have been an advantage for the north end schools will grow.

Demographics of Seattle Public Schools



Starting with Superintendent John Stanford in 1995, district leaders have devolved power to individual schools. Site-based budgeting and hiring continue, but the current superintendent, Maria Goodloe-Johnson, has reined in some of schools' freedom to choose curriculum and teaching practices. Outside reviews that Goodloe-Johnson commissioned when she started the job in 2007 pushed her to take more control. Contended a curriculum audit from the education honor group Phi Delta Kappa: "SPS is buried under so many old plans, initiatives and policies it can't make use of any of them." Nonetheless, tightening control has raised concerns among both parents and teachers, though they acknowledge that the leeway granted in the past could increase the harm done by a poor principal.

Last year the district adopted a five-year strategic plan that, among other priorities, calls for better hiring of teachers and principals, system-wide student assessment, and improved teacher evaluations. As of the last school year, under the provisions of the contract that expired this August, beginning teachers' salaries got a final boost into the realm of most other districts in the Puget Sound area.

Yet this has been a difficult year in Seattle. With a shortfall of \$34 million out of a budget of \$556 million in the 2008-09 school year and anticipating another shortfall in the coming year, the district sent pink slips to 165 teachers (though all but 40 were eventually called back).

Some teachers fear lock-step direction from the central office. Many parents are restless, wondering whether changes will come at the expense of schools that seem to be working well now or whether the promises made for better neighborhood schools will be kept. School advocates hope that the superintendent has garnered enough support in various quarters, including the elected school board, to carry through reforms.

Seattle faces these challenges with a teacher policy framework that has already gone part of the way toward a fully updated approach to human capital. Site-based hiring is well established in the district and the STAR teacher mentoring program shows promise for helping teachers new to the profession. Both are the product of union-district negotiation. Seattle also acknowledges the importance of student achievement in evaluating teachers.

Other policies, however, are missing or askew. The pay schedule gives too much weight to advanced coursework and the master's degree. The evaluation instrument is not rigorous enough and the hiring schedule needs to be tightened if the district is to get its pick of teachers. And leave policies desperately need attention. These and other changes we detail here will help Seattle's schools fulfill the potential of their city.

Teaching Compensation

Goal 1. Compensation is strategically targeted to making the profession attractive to new teachers and teachers in hard-to-staff assignments. Salaries are structured so as to retain effective teachers. Salaries recognize teacher effectiveness in addition to experience.

INDICATORS

- i. The district's starting salary is competitive with other school districts in the area.
- ii. Additional financial incentives, including bonuses, advanced placement on the salary schedule, and tuition reimbursement, are targeted to filling positions or retaining teachers in high-needs schools and critical shortage content areas.
- iii. The salary schedule does not automatically award permanently higher salaries for advanced degrees or credits.

The state's role in setting teacher salaries

Washington State's efforts to equalize pay among all districts appear to be ineffective and impede pay reform.

To a greater degree than most school districts in the United States, the salary paid to Seattle teachers is determined by the state.

In an effort to keep salaries comparable across the 295 school districts in the state, Washington is one of 17 states prescribing a salary schedule for all public schools teachers, establishing the minimum salaries (base pay) that teachers must receive based on how much education they have, but also allocating money for raises based on teachers' years of experience. When the law was created in the 1970s, the state exempted 13 of its school districts from the state caps, including Seattle, part of the reason that the salary disparities have yet to be closed across all districts.¹

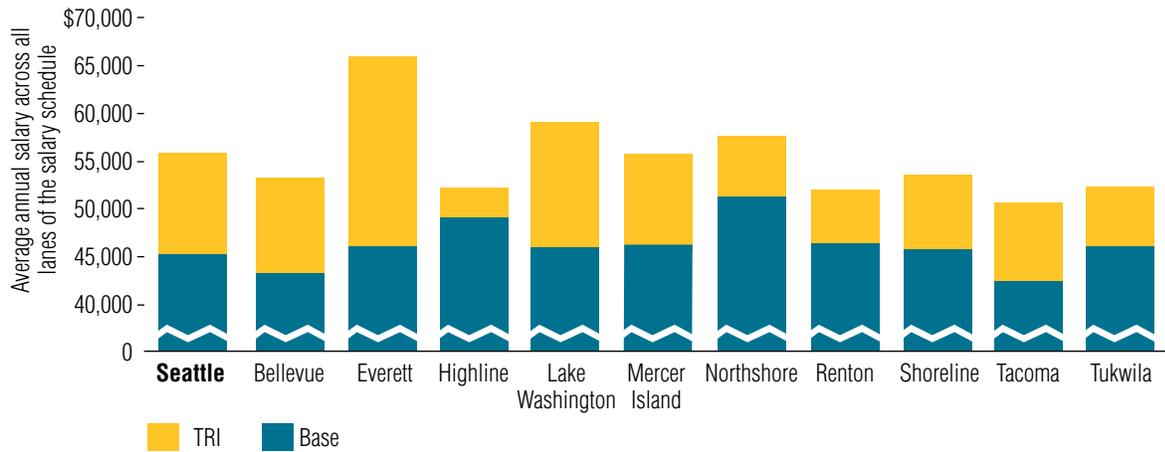
Furthermore, the state allows districts to supplement the mandated state "base pay" with the Time Responsibility Incentive or "TRI," a source of funding that local governments raise through a tax levy. The state exempts 91 districts from caps it imposes on how much districts can raise for the TRI, explaining most of the variation among salaries across school districts.

For these reasons, Washington's effort to equalize salaries appears to be relatively ineffective while also hampering important pay reforms that are needed.

¹ The 13 districts were already exceeding the caps, so rather than raise the cap across the state, which most districts could not afford or force the 13 districts to reduce teacher salaries, they were held exempt from meeting the new state caps. (*2009 Citizen's Guide to the Washington State K-12 Finance*)



Figure 1. Does Washington State law equalize teacher pay across districts?



Source: Salary schedules from the districts surrounding Seattle, available online.

Despite state laws aimed at equalizing teacher salaries across districts, great disparities remain in both the amount of base pay and TRI amounts.

Competitiveness of Seattle’s teacher salaries

Seattle is quite competitive with surrounding districts in salaries for beginning teachers.

Seattle teachers who choose not to pursue a lot of post-baccalaureate coursework earn much less pay than what they would earn in many surrounding districts.

Compared to districts across the nation, Seattle places far greater emphasis on teacher acquisition of course credits as a condition for earning raises.

Typically, districts compete for teachers with other nearby districts. Teacher candidates often make decisions about where to apply based in part on a comparison of salaries among several districts in the same area.

Seattle Public Schools and the local teacher’s union, the Seattle Education Association, have made a concerted attempt to bring starting teacher salaries closer to those of the surrounding district. For the 2007-2008 school year, teachers received a 6.2 percent across-the-board or “cost of living” raise and

Sorting out the sources of teacher pay increases

Public school teachers, including Seattle teachers, generally receive annual raises, often called “cost of living adjustments” or COLA. Such raises generally bear some relation to estimated inflation but can also occur in years with little inflation or even deflation. In the 2008-2009 school year, when inflation was flat, Seattle teachers were still awarded a sizeable 9.7 percent COLA raise.

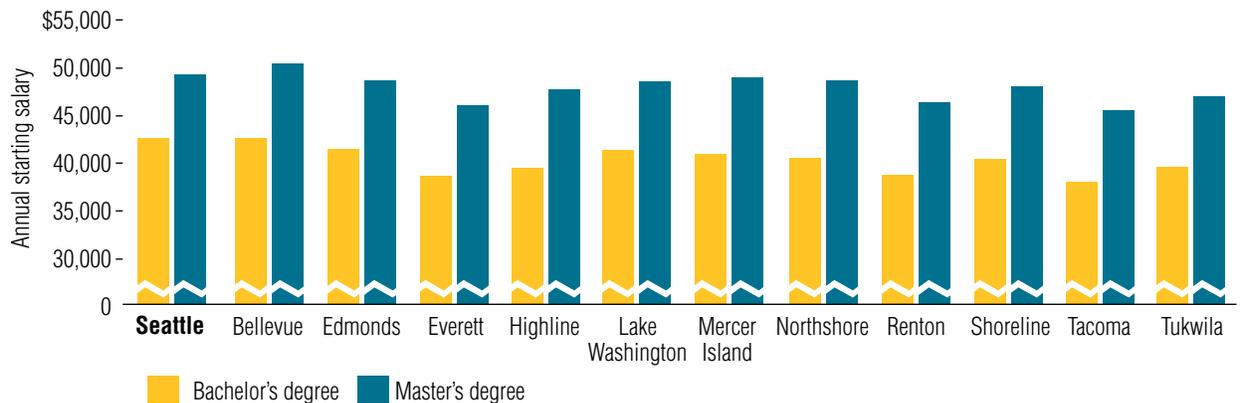
These “COLA” raises are either decided when districts negotiate a new multi-year contract or they are negotiated separately for each year. The COLA is often the only portion of teacher raises reported by the media, but it isn’t the only raise teachers receive.

In addition to COLA raises, public school teachers generally earn additional raises each year for gaining experience, moving up a “step” on the salary schedule typically with each year of service. In 2008-2009, step increases in Seattle averaged \$1,554 or a 1.6 percent increase in salary. However, added to the 9.7 percent COLA raise, teachers received overall an 11.2 percent increase that year.



a similar 9.7 percent increase in the following year.² (Raises were only 1 percent for the 2009-2010 school year, due to the recession.) Because of this effort, essentially **a 16 percent raise over two years**, salaries for Seattle's *beginning* teachers no longer rank near the bottom of area school districts, but are now among the highest.

Figure 2. How do starting salaries in Seattle compare with those in surrounding school districts?



Source: Salary schedules from the districts surrounding Seattle, available online.

Salaries include base compensation, TRI and any additional pay that all teachers in the district receive. Not included in these figures are stipends available to some teachers who take on additional duties such as supervising extracurricular activities.

Two distinct pictures can be painted that portray how competitive Seattle teacher salaries are over the course of a career. On the one hand is the teacher who does not pursue much post-baccalaureate coursework whose salary is noncompetitive both with other districts in the area and with most school districts in the nation. That teacher's salary is unlikely to go above \$43,100 no matter how much experience s/he accumulates. On the other hand is the teacher who is willing to take the coursework equivalent of a second college degree plus a master's degree to qualify for a highly competitive salary of up to nearly \$80,000.

To understand why there are such disparate salaries for teachers in the same district, it is necessary to understand the structure of the Seattle salary schedule.

There are nine lanes on the Seattle salary schedule, nearly double the national average of five. Each lane is associated with increments of coursework and a higher corresponding salary.

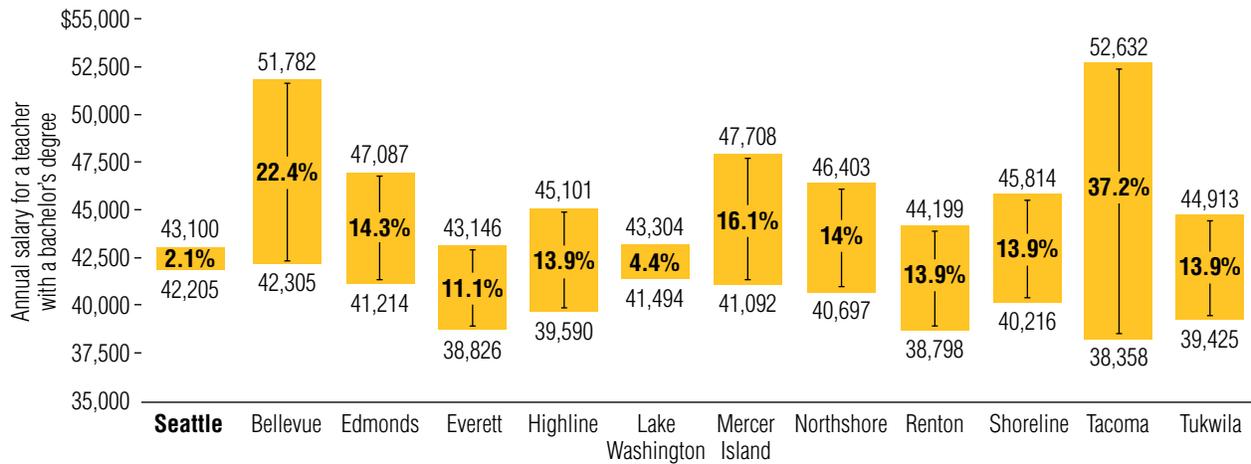
Figures 3 and 4 illustrate how much teachers in the lower lanes of the salary schedule (bachelor's or master's degree) will earn. By way of contrast, Figures 5 and 6 illustrate Seattle's increasingly relatively competitive standing for teachers who have taken enough coursework to qualify for the higher lanes of the salary schedule.

Figure 7 shows the demands placed on teachers in terms of the sheer amount of coursework that the district expects. Seattle requires significantly more coursework to advance lanes than do the surrounding districts.

2 COLAs ranged from 8.9 to 10.7 percent depending on the step (determined by years of service) and lane (determined by amount of advanced coursework) of the salary schedule. Step increases range from \$204 to \$2,509, with a mean of \$1,554. The percentage growth of step increases had a mean of 2.6 for the 2008-2009 school year, and ranges from .4 to 4 percent.



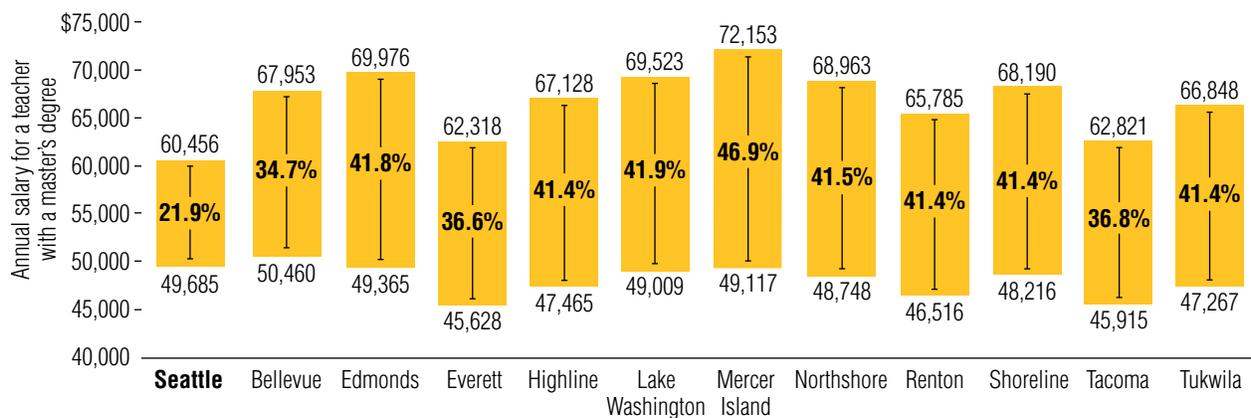
Figure 3. How do starting salaries in Seattle compare with those in surrounding school districts?



Source: Salary schedules from the districts surrounding Seattle, available online.

Teachers with a bachelor's degree have remarkably low growth potential, less than 3 percent (not including cost of living adjustments) over the length of their career! Not only does this increase compare unfavorably with other Puget Sound school districts (which average 16 percent over the length of a teacher's career), but the growth potential is well below the national average of 49 percent.

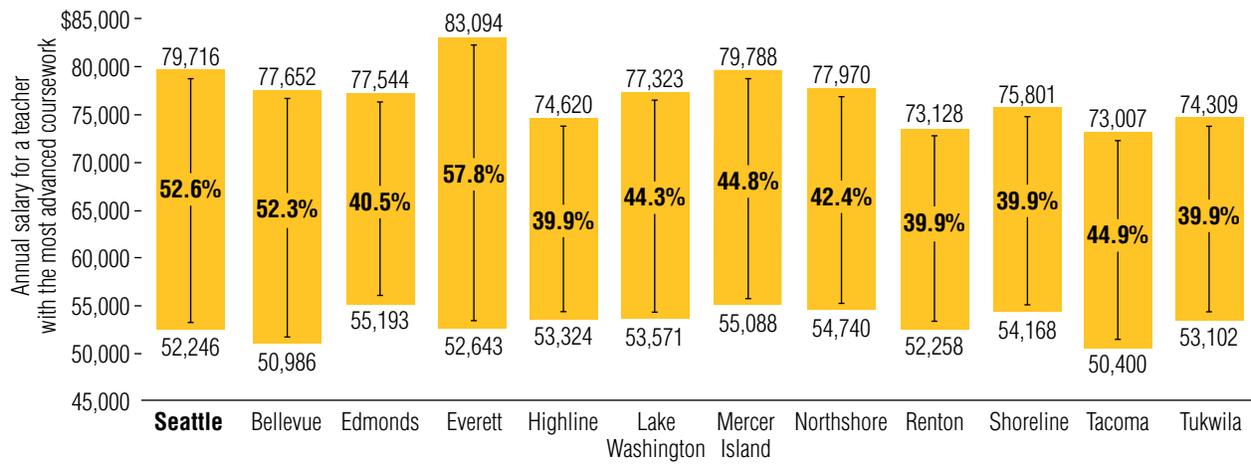
Figure 4. How much can a teacher with a master's degree earn?



Source: Salary schedules from the districts surrounding Seattle, available online.

Seattle teachers with a master's degree see their salary increase 22 percent, far better than the 3 percent growth potential available to teachers with a bachelor's degree, but still comparing unfavorably with other Puget Sound districts, where teachers with equivalent education achieve an average of 41 percent growth. Nationally, teachers with a master's degree see their salaries increase 57 percent over their career.

Figure 5. How much can a teacher who is on the highest lane of the salary schedule earn?³



Source: Salary schedules from the districts surrounding Seattle, available online.

This figure illustrates the competitive standing of salaries of Seattle teachers who take a great deal of coursework, classified in Lane 8 with requirements that teachers have a “BA+155+MA” --even more coursework than what a teacher would have to take to earn a second college degree as well as a master’s degree. For these teachers, Seattle offers the second-highest salary in the region. It is important to note that Seattle allows its teachers to substitute credit-bearing coursework with in-service professional development to qualify for this lane of the salary schedule, an option that is not available in many school districts.

3 This analysis excludes the lane reserved for teachers with a doctorate degree, because a very small number of teachers in Seattle and throughout the country hold doctorates.

Figure 6. How competitive is the maximum salary in each lane?

Ranking	Lane 1	Lane 2	Lane 3	Lane 4	Lane 5	Lane 6	Lane 7	Lane 8	Lane 9
1st	Tacoma	Lake Washington	Lake Washington	Lake Washington	Mercer Island	Everett	Everett	Bellevue	Everett
2nd	Bellevue	Tacoma	Seattle	Everett	Seattle	Seattle	Bellevue	Everett	Seattle
3rd	Mercer Island	Bellevue	Tacoma	Mercer Island	Northshore	Mercer Island	Mercer Island	Mercer Island	Shoreline
4th	Northshore	Mercer Island	Edmonds	Seattle	Edmonds	Northshore	Seattle	Seattle	Tukwila
5th	Edmonds	Northshore	Mercer Island	Bellevue	Everett	Renton	Northshore	Northshore	
6th	Shoreline	Edmonds	Bellevue	Edmonds	Shoreline	Edmonds	Edmonds	Edmonds	
7th	Highline	Shoreline	Northshore	Northshore	Bellevue	Bellevue	Shoreline	Shoreline	
8th	Tukwila	Everett	Shoreline	Tacoma	Highline	Highline	Highline	Highline	
9th	Renton	Highline	Everett	Shoreline	Tukwila	Tukwila	Tukwila	Tukwila	
10th	Lake Washington	Tukwila	Renton	Highline	Renton	Shoreline	Renton	Renton	
11th	Everett	Renton	Tukwila	Tukwila	Tacoma	Tacoma	Tacoma	Tacoma	
12th	Seattle	Seattle	Renton	Renton					

Source: Salary schedules from the districts surrounding Seattle, available online.

This table shows where Seattle teachers stand in terms of their salary relative to surrounding districts. Teachers in the lower lanes—those with the least amount of coursework—earn the least of any teachers in the area. Teachers in the higher lane—those with the most amount of coursework—earn quite competitive salaries.

Figure 7. What does a teacher need to do to advance to higher lanes?

District	Lane 1	Lane 2	Lane 3	Lane 4	Lane 5	Lane 6	Lane 7	Lane 8	Lane 9	Lane 10
Seattle	BA	BA+22.5	BA+45	BA+45 +MA	BA+90	BA+90 +MA	BA+135 +MA	BA+155 +MA	PhD	
Bellevue	BA	BA+15	BA+30	BA+45	BA+90	MA	MA+45	PhD		
Edmonds	BA	BA+15	BA+30	BA+45	BA+90	MA	MA+45	MA+90		
Everett⁴	BA	BA+15	BA+30	BA+45	BA+60	BA+75	BA+90	BA+105	BA+120	BA+135
Highline	BA	BA+15	BA+30	BA+45	BA+90	MA	MA+45	MA+90		
Lake Washington	BA	BA+45	MA/BA+90	MA+45						
Mercer Island	BA	BA+15	BA+30	BA+45	BA+90	MA	MA+45	MA+90/PhD		
Northshore	BA	BA+15	BA+30	BA+45	BA+90	MA	MA+45	MA+90/PhD		
Renton	BA	BA+15	BA+30	BA+45	BA+90	MA	MA+45	MA+90	PhD	
Shoreline	BA	BA+15	BA+30	BA+45	BA+90	MA	MA+45	MA+90		
Tacoma	BA	BA+15	BA+30	BA+45	BA+90	MA	MA+45	MA+90	PhD	
Tukwila	BA	BA+15	BA+30	BA+45	BA+90	MA	MA+45	MA+90/PhD		

As this table shows, a teacher in Seattle has to take a lot more courses (or professional development) to advance in the salary schedule. Seattle requires 45 additional credits beyond what other districts require to qualify for its Lane 4 and 90 additional credits beyond what other districts require to qualify for its Lane 6. The net result? It takes much longer to qualify for more pay

The relationship between teacher pay and coursework

Seattle spends 22 percent of its annual teacher payroll to incentivize teachers to take more coursework.

Does Seattle’s policy of tying pay to coursework make sense? In a word, no.

While one might assume advanced degrees (generally master’s degrees) help teachers to be more effective, the education research over the last 50 years has found little to no evidence to support such a policy. The appendix provides a meta-analysis of this research, showing the weak to nonexistent correlation between teachers’ advanced coursework and higher student achievement.

Why doesn’t more education make a difference? It may be because school districts (and states) routinely boost a teacher’s pay for *any* advanced degree, regardless of whether the degree is likely to help a teacher improve. For example, few teachers elect to get a degree that will advance their subject matter knowledge. Nationally, even at the secondary level, less than one in four degrees is in the teachers’ subject area. At the elementary level, only a small fraction of the degrees (7 percent) is in a content area.⁵ There is some evidence that content specific professional development improves teacher effectiveness.

4 Though it is not shown here, teachers in Everett also receive a stipend if they hold an advanced degree. Because a standard master’s degree requires 45 quarter hours, the master’s stipend was included in all lanes equal to or above the BA+45 for our analysis. Everett pays an annual stipend of \$3,292 to teachers with a master’s degree and \$4,114 for teachers with a Ph.D. regardless of what lane a teacher is in otherwise.

5 National Center for Education Statistics, 2002. *The Condition of Education* 2002. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Table 32-2.

While all school districts in the United States reward teachers for more coursework, Seattle's position on this issue is at the far end of the spectrum:

1. Seattle prematurely caps salaries on the bachelor's lane after only six years. While approximately 25 percent of TR³ districts prematurely cap the salaries of teachers on the bachelor's lane, only a handful of districts (e.g., Fresno and Baltimore) do it as early in a teacher's career.
2. The pay premium given to teachers who have a master's degree versus a bachelor's degree is much higher in Seattle (\$10,500) than the national average of \$2,990 (derived from the 100 districts in TR³).
3. Seattle teachers must take a lot more coursework to stay competitive with teachers in surrounding districts. While all districts provide the most pay to teachers with a doctorate, few districts take Seattle's approach, making it necessary to essentially earn another college degree and a master's (or the equivalent in professional development hours) to earn a competitive salary. Seattle's salary schedule has nearly double the amount of lanes as the national average—and the highest lane on Seattle's salary schedule requires nearly double the amount of coursework as the highest lanes on virtually all other district salary schedules.
4. Seattle has a relatively large number of intermediate lanes, giving teachers pay raises for partial work towards a degree, for example. Although this is largely a reflection of state policy, other Washington districts (such as nearby Lake Washington) have streamlined the salary schedule so that there are fewer lanes devoted to degree-based compensation. While all professions seek ways to encourage professional development, it is rare to see it so integrally linked with pay increases. For instance, psychologists, accountants and doctors all must complete continuing education, but such coursework generally does not qualify them for higher pay.

Currently, Seattle is spending approximately \$48 million a year to reward teachers for taking more coursework. The expenditure represents 22 percent of the teacher payroll.

Figure 8. How much does Seattle spend annually to incentivize teachers to take more coursework?⁶

Lane	Credits needed	Number of teachers in each lane (2008-09)	Additional costs to district for the incentive
1	Bachelor's	213	n/a
2	Bachelor's + 22.5 credits	54	\$33,426
3	Bachelor's + 45 credits	266	\$1,794,968
4	Bachelor's + 45 credits + Master's	515	\$5,446,125
5	Bachelor's + 90 credits	465	\$6,329,580
6	Bachelor's + 90 credits + Master's	618	\$10,240,260
7	Bachelor's + 135 credits + Master's	188	\$3,474,052
8	Bachelor's + 155 credits + Master's	846	\$18,771,894
9	PhD	75	\$1,802,700
Total		3,286	\$47,893,008

Note: Data for individual cells for 2008-2009 teacher salary placements were not available. These figures reflect average differentials between the B.A. and every other lane; differentials increase as teachers gain experience and move down the lane. Actual figures would be higher because teachers accumulate additional credits as they gain experience.

Source: Seattle Public Schools.

6 Washington State recently removed the BA + 135 lane from the state salary schedule; teachers on this salary lane have been grandfathered into this lane.

Figure 9. Is Seattle spending more than other districts on incentives tied to advanced coursework and professional development?



Source: Data from respective school districts.

Seattle spends significantly more than the other districts in NCTQ's sample on raises tied to coursework. The eight districts in the graph were selected from among the 20 largest public school districts.

The relationship between teacher pay and teacher experience

Seattle reserves the largest annual raises for its most experienced teachers and the smallest raises to its newer teachers.

Relatively speaking, Seattle teachers are fortunate in not having to wait many years to qualify for their maximum salary.

Seattle's pay structure is inconsistent with what a large body of research teaches us about the trajectory of teachers' growth, in terms of the contributions they make to student achievement. This research has conclusively shown that teachers improve dramatically between their first and second years of teaching, considerably so between their second and third.

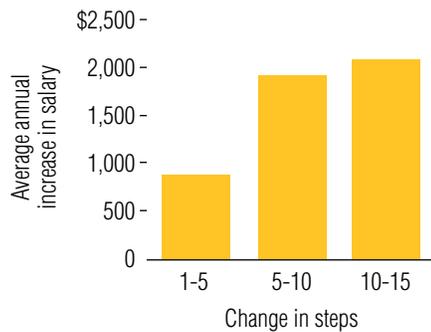
In other words, a 15-year veteran who is considered an exceptional teacher (because she routinely produces well over a year's growth out of her students) was likely just as exceptional in her fourth year of teaching. Also as true, it is statistically unlikely that a weak teacher now in his fifth year of teaching will become measurably more effective given some more years in the classroom.⁷

Given these findings and the advisability of keeping the number of first-year teachers to a minimum (when all teachers are the least effective they will ever be and consistently produce few student gains), a prudent strategy on the part of a district would be to keep these younger teachers longer, averting premature turnover in the first few years. To the extent that the district can target its dollars to incentivize a third-year teacher to stay a fourth, it should do so.

⁷ With better professional development, it may be possible to improve upon these rates, but the degree to which is unknown. These are fairly stable findings produced from many different districts across the United States, where there is presumably quite a variation in the quality of their professional development.



Figure 10. How much are raises for experience in Seattle?



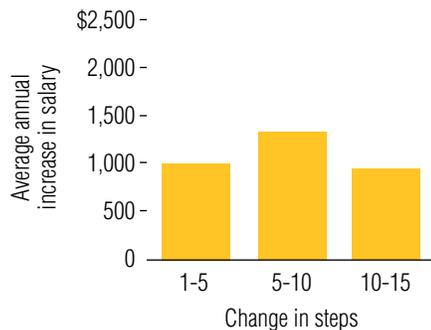
Source: Seattle teachers salary schedule.

Even though teachers improve the most in their first few years of teaching and receive relatively few monetary benefits, newer teachers earn on average an annual pay raise of \$800 compared with experienced teachers who earn a \$2,100 raise each year.

Unfortunately, as Figure 8 illustrates, this is not the strategy in place in Seattle. The salary schedule reserves the largest raises from one year to the next for more experienced teachers. The smallest raises occur in a teacher's first five years in the classroom. As teachers gain more experience, the size of these raises increase quite significantly. In terms of human capital, Seattle's policy does not serve the district well for a number of reasons, particularly because the pension package already serves as a strong incentive for older teachers to stay with the district.

Seattle's approach differs from the 100 TR³ district average, many of which give larger, more equitable raises towards the beginning of the teacher's career, a structure which serves as an important retention strategy.

Figure 11. How are teacher raises structured in the 99 other districts included in TR³?



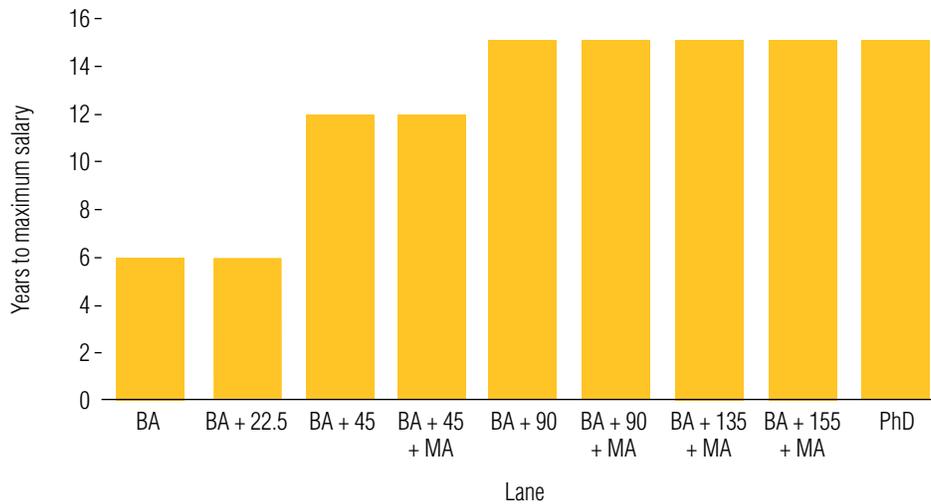
Source: TR³ (www.nctq.org/tr3).

The figure above shows the average raises for teachers in 99 TR³ districts. The structure is fairly equitable, with teachers receiving comparable pay increases over their career.



One strength of Seattle’s otherwise flawed pay structure is the relatively short length of time it takes a teacher to qualify for the maximum salary (in terms of years served) on a particular lane, as shown in Figure 11. With the notable exception of the premature cap on the salaries of teachers in the bachelor’s (and B.A. +22.5) lanes, the length of time it takes teachers to qualify for their maximum salary is at the most 15 years. This span more closely resembles the trajectory of other professionals such as doctors and lawyers and is relatively uncommon among American public school districts, where it often takes teachers 20 to 25 years to qualify for the maximum salary.⁸

Figure 12. How many years does it take for Seattle teachers to qualify for the maximum salary?



Source: Seattle teachers salary schedule.

Teachers with at least 90 additional credits beyond a bachelor’s receive raises every year for 15 years, while teachers without as many courses have their salaries capped after only six years.

Seattle’s progress on differential pay

To date, Seattle has done little to deviate from the traditional pay structure.

Nationally there has been a growing movement to look for ways to reward teachers who work in challenging environments, who can teach subjects in which there is a short supply of teachers (such as science, mathematics and special education) and, most importantly, for being particularly effective.

High-needs assignments

Seattle does have a program in place to provide additional money to teachers who are willing to teach in its most challenging schools.

The district does pay teachers at low-performing schools that have been targeted for improvement a small bonus (\$2,500 for the 2009–2010 school year). The amount teachers receive is comparable to other districts’ bonuses to incentivize teachers to work in a more challenging environment.

8 Vigdor, J. (2008, Fall). Scrap the sacrosanct salary schedule. *Education Next*, 37–42.



Shortage subject areas

Seattle currently does not provide any additional pay to teachers who are qualified to teach shortage subject areas. However, the contract does state that funding for hard-to-fill positions will be sought from outside sources.⁹ The contract also states that any teacher who receives the incentive (though it currently does not exist) must remain in the position for three years, so long as the employee receives satisfactory evaluations and is not released for performance or involuntarily transferred.

In comparison with the 99 other districts in the TR³ database, 51 districts offer some such incentives.

Performance pay

Seattle has been able to make little progress on efforts to reward more effective teachers. In the last round of contract negotiations, concluded in August, the district proposed a pay system that would have rewarded teachers for 1) positive evaluation; 2) student achievement growth; 3) working in a school identified for support or interventions; and 4) taking jobs that the district has a hard time filling. The proposals did not become part of the current contract.

By way of comparison, 28 of the 99 other TR³ districts offer some sort of compensation linked to student learning, whether determined by teacher evaluations, student test scores, classroom evidence, or other means of assessing teacher effectiveness in the classroom.

The state of Washington offers a relatively generous \$5,000 bonus to teachers who are nationally certified (by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards) and another \$5,000 to work in schools where more than 70 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. This policy correctly targets funds to attracting the best teachers to difficult assignments. Seattle does not offer any bonus to its 117 Board-certified teachers beyond what is provided by the state.

“A lot of teachers in my building say at least let’s discuss merit pay; let’s at least have the conversation.”

—Seattle middle school teacher

⁹ The state does provide a scholarship and loan forgiveness program in which prospective teachers seeking certification in a critical-needs area receive priority for the available funds.



Strengths & weaknesses of Seattle’s teacher compensation

Strengths	Weaknesses
Starting salary	
Teachers’ starting salaries are comparable to surrounding districts; SPS recently raised salaries significantly.	None discerned
Structure of salary schedule	
It takes teachers a relatively short amount of time to reach their maximum salary.	<p>Not all lanes on the salary schedule go up by equal increments: e.g., 2.6 percent for teachers with a bachelor’s degree versus 21.9 percent for teachers with a master’s.</p> <p>While some lanes continue for 15 years, other lanes (those requiring the least amount of additional coursework) stop after 6 and 12 years of service.</p> <p>The salary schedule includes too many intermediate lanes for additional credits and coursework beyond a bachelor’s degree (though Seattle is largely emulating the state’s directives).</p>
	The district spends an extraordinarily large percentage of its total teacher payroll (over 22 percent annually) incentivizing teachers to take coursework and professional development.
Differential pay	
SPS offers bonuses to teachers working in low-performing schools targeted for improvement.	There are no incentives to attract teachers to hard-to-staff subject areas nor is there any performance pay initiative.



Recommendations for the Seattle Public Schools

- 1. Work towards the full elimination of all lanes on the salary schedule. Because advanced degrees do not correlate to teacher effectiveness, Seattle should do away with incentives paid for advanced degrees or coursework altogether, while of course grandfathering in teachers already receiving the premiums.**

If this goal is too infeasible to complete all at once (though all of the newly funded Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation “deep dive” districts intend to make exactly this radical change), the district should first eliminate all “intermediate” lanes on the salary schedule that do not equate with an actual degree, including: BA + 22.5, BA + 45, BA + 90, BA + 90 + MA, BA + 135 + MA, and BA + 155 + MA. Teachers who are currently in these lanes would be grandfathered into this new policy.

- 2. Equalize the pay raises that newer teachers receive, and if possible, apportion higher pay raises when teachers earn tenure.** This structure would work towards the district’s retention goals and serve to make the tenure mark a more meaningful distinction. (See Goal 10 for more on this.)

- 3. Reallocate money “saved” from eliminating degree based compensation to raise the salaries of the most effective teachers.** While stipends or bonuses may be appropriate ways to attract teachers to high-needs schools or teach shortage subject areas (including less desirable assignments such as 9th grade English instead of 12th grade honors English), this rather undependable form of compensation is likely not best for rewarding performance and advancing the district’s teacher quality goals.

Consider instead, for example, awarding a certain number of “chaired” positions to highly effective teachers in the districts, paying \$100,000 or more per year.

Another option may be to move a teacher to a higher “step” on the salary schedule for consistently achieving some objective measure of performance with students, such as preparing students to earn 3s, 4s, and 5s on Advanced Placement exams.

Recommendations for Washington State

- 1. Eliminate the state salary schedule and the dysfunctional supplemental pay structure known as the “TRI.”** Exempting districts from following both base pay allocations and money raised through local levies renders the goals of equalizing teacher salaries nearly impossible to meet. Furthermore, the state salary schedule 1) links compensation with coursework, though most coursework has no impact on student achievement, and 2) incorrectly assumes that there is a linear relationship between teacher experience and teacher effectiveness.

Transfer and Assignment

Goal 2. Teacher assignment is based on the mutual consent of principals and teachers; policies minimize the deleterious impact of teachers' reassignment.

INDICATORS

- i. Teachers who lose their current teaching assignment have to actively apply for a new assignment, regardless of whether they are transferring voluntarily out of a school; have lost an assignment through a program change, enrollment shift or school closing; or are returning from a long-term leave or layoff.
- ii. Principals and/or school committees are entitled to select those applicants they wish to interview and have the final say over which teacher is hired.
- iii. When teachers must be moved from one school to another, it is suitable to use seniority status as the determining factor in deciding which teachers must lose their positions.
- iv. Teachers who have lost their current assignment and prove unsuccessful in a year's time in obtaining a new assignment should be terminated.
- v. When teachers need to be laid off and are therefore ineligible for reassignment, teacher performance should be a key factor in deciding who stays or goes.

The district's commitment to site-based hiring

Seattle is not fully committed to site-based hiring; many teachers continue to be placed without principals' approval and often on the basis of seniority.

In the mid-1990s, the district and teachers' union agreed to institute site-based hiring, placing Seattle at the forefront of a movement to give principals and their schools more authority over staffing.

In reality, though, the hiring process is a hybrid: principals and their hiring teams have control over hiring up to a certain point in the spring; then, for the vacancies that remain or emerge following that period, the seniority and job rights of teachers become paramount. A number of exceptions to site-based hiring have been built into the contract, giving principals much less say than it might appear:

1. Teachers transferring *from* schools that have been specifically targeted for improvement--principally the 17 "Flight" schools--are allowed to select new assignments in order

Hiring teams may include any combination of the principal, other staff members and parents, depending on the wishes of the school. Individual schools have discretion in how to reach final staffing decisions, though in most cases principals have the final say. Hiring teams receive training in interview techniques and legal requirements and are allowed to request information from a teacher candidate that goes beyond an application and a résumé.



of seniority without going through any hiring process. (However, teachers transferring to these special schools must be approved by principals, even when the placement is made by HR officials.)

2. Teachers who meet federal and state disability requirements also may bypass the normal hiring procedures, qualifying for new assignments based on their seniority. It is not clear from the contract language whether teachers who lose their current teaching assignment due to a school closing or program change are entitled to these same seniority preferences.
3. Any teacher who has not secured an assignment by July 1 (generally excessed teachers) is placed in a temporary assignment by district HR officials. These assignments are considered “forced placements” because schools are required to accept these transfers without the benefit of site-based hiring.

In the 2004-2009 teachers’ contract, the contract that just expired, teachers who want to transfer schools, teachers who lost their positions because of a program change or school closing and new hires all competed for vacancies at the same time. The new contract alters the process to afford internal candidates—teachers transferring within the system to new assignments—an opportunity to interview for vacant positions before new hires are allowed to apply to fill vacancies. Such a prerogative for internal candidates is common among other school districts and is a fair policy.¹⁰

Figure 13. What are the procedures for transferring and assigning teachers in Seattle?

Phase I

- Internal candidates (voluntary transfers and teachers who lose their current assignment, i.e., “excessed” teachers) apply to vacant positions, advertised on the district’s website.
- School-based hiring teams screen, interview and hire applicants based on criteria for staff selection developed by the team and aligned with the school’s improvement plan.
- Hiring teams are not required to choose from the existing pool of candidates; the school may re-advertise the vacancy during Phase II if no suitable candidate is found during Phase I.
- Teachers may transfer only once in a year. Only high school teachers may transfer during the school year; these transfers may only be at the semester break.

Phase II

- Teachers with a disability and teachers working in targeted low-performing schools have first priority and seniority rights (referred to as “super seniority”) to fill any available vacancies after all internal candidates have had the opportunity to apply. Teachers with super seniority are entitled to choose positions with the most senior teachers choosing first.
- Only schools that are part of either the Flight program or Southeast Educational Initiative program to turn around low-performing schools do not have to accept teachers that the district may want to assign to them. All other schools must.

Phase III

- Schools fill remaining vacancies with new hires and from the pool of remaining displaced teachers.
 - Teachers still without an assignment as of July 1 are assigned by HR into either vacant positions for which they qualify, or in temporary assignments as substitutes. If a displaced teacher is assigned as a substitute, s/he receives full pay and benefits until a permanent position is secured.
-

¹⁰ Although the teachers’ contract explicitly outlines procedures for teacher transfers, there are often modifications to the process to accommodate changes in staffing needs. For example, in 2009, faced with a \$34 million budget shortfall, Seattle was forced to lay off teachers. As a result the district hired few new teachers for the 2009-2010 school year, apart from those filling positions in such critical shortage areas as mathematics and science.

How Seattle handles teacher excessing

On paper, Seattle excesses teachers by seniority, the fairest way to handle the situation.

In practice, principals can manipulate the system by pushing out poor performers who must be placed elsewhere.

Teachers also can manipulate the system to avoid an excess or layoff, and principals have no say as to whether they want to keep that person on staff.

Like most districts around the country, Seattle uses seniority status as the basis for deciding which teachers in a school must be moved into new assignments in another school when staffing changes are needed, and also which teachers should be laid off when there are budget shortfalls. This process is called excessing.

Among educators, there is no consensus about a fair process for deciding which teachers to excess. Many argue that excessing should be decided not by seniority but by teacher performance. While recognizing the inherent appeal in this choice, NCTQ considers a seniority-based excessing process to be ultimately fairer to teachers and better for the health of all schools in a district.

Why seniority? Principals often use excessing as a means to remove teachers they would rather not have on staff.¹¹ The process is far easier than firing a teacher. However, it has led to some troublesome problems within school districts, captured by the term “the Dance of the Lemons.” While savvy principals are able to unload their weakest teachers, or “lemons,” those lemons are generally thrust upon those schools which employ either the weakest or newest principals, the same schools which are also the most likely to serve the poorest and most challenging students in the district. It is generally the children most in need of high-quality teachers who are the unintentional victims of the “Dance of the Lemons.”

Alternatively, in districts where principals are given full authority to decide who can teach in their buildings, many principals are often reluctant to hire teachers from the excess pool. There is a stigma stemming from excessing based on performance, making these teachers often considered less desirable hires, making it more difficult for teachers, even those who may actually be good to be hired. Consequently, in Seattle and elsewhere, HR officials end up having to “force place” teachers without the principal’s input. Some districts have chosen to keep a teacher on the payroll who is not assigned to a classroom, an expensive proposition for any school district.¹²

When excessing is done by seniority—and the process monitored by the HR office to make sure it is adhered to—it *should* be easier to persuade principals to consider teachers who find themselves in the excess pool.

Teachers can switch positions within a school—even across subjects—without the principal’s approval as a means to avoid being excessed or laid off. This is because teachers are allowed to determine their categories for which they are qualified to teach—a more fine-grain distinction than certification. For example, a teacher may be certified in K-8, but has always taught middle school science. The teacher may switch her category, perhaps in anticipation

“If a teacher’s been teaching middle school but has a K-8 endorsement, she can apply to teach kindergarten, even if she’s never taught that grade before. Teachers strategize about [those descriptions], so do principals. It determines who stays and who goes. I may be forced to retain someone as an elementary school teacher, even if I think she’d be a terrible fit.”

—Seattle principal

11 Often the opportunity is created by the principal who says in May he “no longer needs” a French teacher because demand for languages is down. He unloads his weak French teacher, only to find in August that he needs to hire a new French or perhaps, Spanish teacher.

12 For one example, see “Denver teacher placement can add to disparities,” *Denver Post*, August 16, 2009.



of an excess, so that she is also “qualified” to teach first grade. While the teacher may be technically qualified, she may not be good with small children and the principal would have no choice but to keep her on staff.

The 2009-2010 Seattle teachers’ contract places stricter requirements on a teacher’s qualifications to teach a certain subject or grade level (referred to as categories). However, principals still have little say as to whether they think the senior teacher is actually suited to teach in the new assignment, even if they are technically qualified, a loophole that undermines the principal of mutual consent placement.

Figure 14. Transfer policies that support (or undermine) good hiring and placement practices

Policies that support mutual consent:	Policies that undermine mutual consent:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Staffing decisions are made at the school level.■ Teachers apply to vacancies and are selected for interviews by principals and/or their hiring teams.■ Principals and/or hiring teams select those teachers they wish to interview and hire.■ Hiring decisions cannot be grieved.■ Teachers can apply for as many positions as they wish.■ Internal and external candidates compete for jobs at the same time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ District HR office assumes full authority for reassigning teachers who are involuntarily transferred out of a school.■ Teachers are able to secure new assignments based on their seniority.■ Hiring decisions can be grieved.■ Teachers are restricted in the number of vacancies for which they can apply.



Strengths & weaknesses of the current approach to teacher transfer and assignment

Strengths

Weaknesses

Hiring and assignment

School hiring teams fill vacancies during Phase I of hiring on the basis of a teacher's qualifications and fit, not seniority. Teacher placements made during these periods are based on the mutual consent of teachers and school hiring teams.

Teacher placements made during Phase II of hiring are not based on mutual consent. Instead, teachers with "super seniority" secure new positions through seniority preference. Later in the hiring season, the district often places some teachers without regard to the wishes of the school.

Teachers wishing to transfer out of a school targeted for intervention are given "super seniority" status and can choose positions in seniority order. Mutual consent hiring should not be compromised when these teachers can already transfer voluntarily.

Excessed teachers

The collective bargaining agreement requires that "excessing" decisions be based on a teacher's seniority. If excessing is based on performance it can exacerbate the problem of finding new positions for teachers who may have lost their assignment through no fault of their own.

Teachers can switch positions within a school—even across subjects—without the principal's approval as a means to avoid being excessed or laid off.

The district does not have an exit strategy for excessed teachers who do not secure a new permanent assignment. By not placing a limit on how long an excessed teacher can work in a temporary position, teachers can remain without a permanent assignment indefinitely and at great expense to the district.

Seattle schools undergoing district intervention do not have to accept excessed teachers sent by the HR department.



Recommendations for Seattle Public Schools

- 1. Remove super seniority privileges.** Seattle should end the practices of awarding super seniority to teachers who wish to transfer from a school undergoing district intervention. First, this practice affords such teachers preferential status, which is not necessary given that internal candidates already have the first opportunity to apply to vacancies in phase I of hiring. Second, this process undermines site-based hiring, failing to give schools an adequate say in who teaches in their buildings.

In addition, the district should eliminate super seniority for teachers with a disability. Such employees are covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act, which requires that their worksite make accommodations, if necessary. The law should not be interpreted to allow teachers to enjoy an advantage in assignment over other teachers.

- 2. Eliminate Phase II hiring.** Once super seniority privileges are removed, Seattle should do away with its second phase of hiring, which undermines principals' authority in hiring. Instead, Seattle should continue to afford internal candidates first priority for vacant positions early in the spring and extend the period to ensure that teachers who lose their teaching assignment due to staffing changes are notified in time to participate. Following this internal period, the district should simply open up vacancies to all candidates, internal and external, allowing them to compete for open positions and be chosen by school-based teams. This phase of hiring needs to occur early enough in the spring to attract high-quality new teachers to Seattle, before losing them to other districts.

- 3. Track the performance of excessed teachers to make sure principals are not using excessing as a means to pass off poor performers.** Seattle should track which teachers end up in the excess pool more than once and closely examine their performance through third party evaluations.

Too often poor-performing teachers are passed from school to school, with principals using the process to simply weed out their low performers rather than use the evaluation process as a means to dismiss the teacher. Poor performance should be addressed in the evaluation (and if need be, dismissal) process rather than through excessing.

- 4. Institute an exit plan for teachers in the pool of excessed teachers who are unable to secure a permanent position through site-based hiring.** Extending site-based hiring throughout the staffing season gives displaced teachers ample opportunity to interview for vacancies. Those teachers who do not secure a permanent assignment after one year should be exited "without prejudice" from employment in SPS.

- 5. Base teacher layoffs on a combination of factors, rather than on seniority alone.** Layoffs decisions made by reverse seniority result in more positions eliminated than if teachers of different experience-levels were cut. Junior teachers on average make less money than their more experienced counterparts so more inexperienced teachers must be laid off to save a given amount of school funding. Seniority layoffs are also bad for schools, forced perhaps to give up their best performers at the same time they must keep subpar teachers. Seattle's next contract should allow performance to be a consideration when teachers are laid off.

Goal 3. The timeline for hiring new teachers and assigning transfers occurs early enough so as to minimize disruption to schools and ensures the district has optimal access to top talent.

INDICATORS

- i. Budgets are developed and distributed to principals in the late winter or early spring so that vacancies can be determined by April 1.
- ii. Transfers are prohibited during the school year, except in unusual circumstances.
- iii. Teachers who apply to transfer for the following school year are able to secure assignments by the end of the current school year or early in the summer.
- iv. Policies require retiring and non-returning teachers to provide notice to schools in the spring, before the transfer season begins, to ensure schools have sufficient information to identify staffing needs for the following year.
- v. Vacancies are posted online and teachers apply online in a centralized system.

Timeline for hiring and assigning teachers

Seattle does not hire the teachers it is likely to need early enough.

Schools face vacancies each year as teachers leave or change positions. Needless to say, the resulting turnover is disruptive to schools. The earlier districts anticipate and fill vacancies, the better prepared schools are for the new school year. Additionally, earlier hiring timelines help districts compete for top talent, as many talented prospects typically begin looking for positions in the winter and early spring.¹³

While Seattle Public Schools is aware of the importance of an early hiring timeline (it is addressed in both the new teachers' contract and in the Strategic Plan), the district appears to struggle to meet this goal. Too many teachers give notice of their intended departure during the summer, opening up vacancies late in the hiring season and often leaving the district scrambling to fill positions even after the beginning of the school year. In 2008 Seattle schools opened with 76 vacancies. According to district officials, the majority of those vacancies were the result of teachers waiting until the end of the summer to request a leave of absence or to resign.

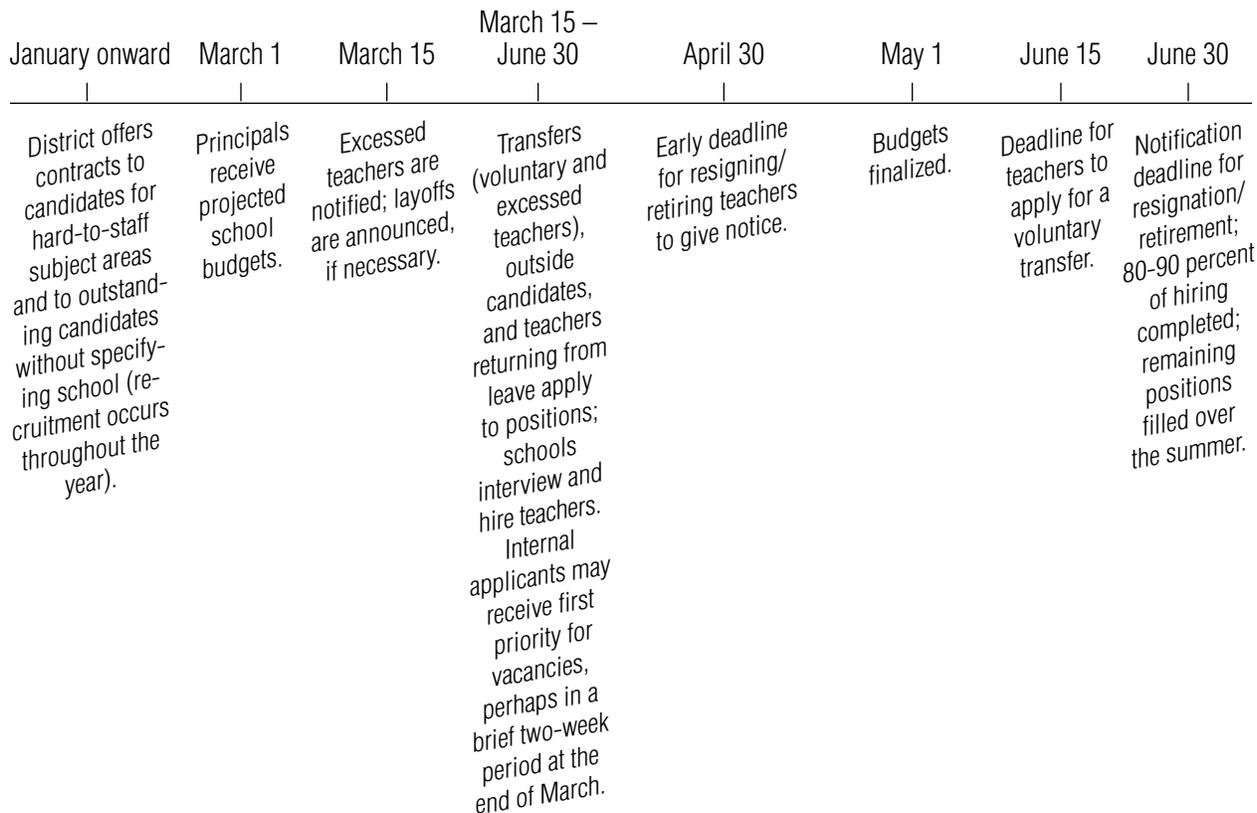
Seattle does not offer contracts before the main hiring season (in January and February) to candidates qualified to teach even hard-to-staff subjects or who are particularly outstanding, something many districts increasingly do. Such contracts are signed with the understanding that the new hire will still need to secure an actual position by applying to and being offered a job by an individual school.

Teachers with "super seniority" rights (teachers transferring from schools targeted for district intervention and those with disabilities) currently have their own placement period, separate from other internal transfers (see Goal 2). This is an unnecessary entitlement since internal candidates already have a period to transfer when they don't have to compete with external hires. Furthermore, it slows down the rest of the transfer and hiring period at precisely the time when it would be most beneficial for the district to begin hiring new recruits.

In the new Seattle contract, an important change in the hiring process was made that prohibits teacher transfers during the school year, except for secondary teachers, who may transfer at the end of the semester.

¹³ Levin, J. & Quinn, M. (2003). *Missed opportunities: How we keep high-quality teachers out of urban classrooms*. New York: The New Teacher Project.

Figure 15. Suggested timeline for ensuring the bulk of hiring is completed by the end of the school year.



Strengths & weaknesses of Seattle’s hiring process and timeline

Strengths

Weaknesses

Transfer and hiring timeline

According to its contract, Seattle attempts to complete the majority of its hiring and placement before the end of the school year.

The district often does not notify excessed teachers about a loss of assignment until after the first phase of hiring, giving excessed teachers less time to obtain a mutually acceptable new placement before the end of the school year.

During the spring of 2009, excessed teachers had only one week to apply for new positions through site-based hiring, and schools had only a two-week window to interview candidates.

Hiring and resignation process

Seattle posts its vacancies online, accessible to all teachers and new hires. New hires and staff may apply online through the district’s user-friendly system.

Neither Seattle’s teachers’ contract nor state law stipulates a deadline for teachers to notify principals of a retirement or resignation.



Recommendations for Seattle Public Schools

- 1. Make the transfer season a discrete period early in the spring, one that includes excessed teachers (teachers who lose their assignment due to staffing changes).** Seattle should continue to strive for the goal of placing the vast majority of teachers in new positions before the end of the school year by enacting some important changes. It should begin its spring transfer and hiring season in March, when principals would ideally receive their budgets for the following school year. By the end of March, excessed teachers should be notified of any changes in their positions, thereby allowing them ample time to interview for a new assignment, along with other teachers.
- 2. Adjust hiring policies to maximize the recruitment of talented new hires.** As discussed in Goal 2, Seattle should begin offering new hires the opportunity to apply for specific vacancies in the spring, as soon as internal candidates have had the opportunity to apply for positions. At the very least, Seattle should consider hiring teachers for a generic pool of hires, including those filling critical shortage areas, so as to retain this pool of talent until vacancies become available.
- 3. Establish an early notification bonus for resigning and retiring teachers who notify the district by April 30.** To encourage teachers to notify the district at the earliest possible date of their impending resignation, Seattle should offer a bonus for teachers who give notice by April 30. To keep teachers from withholding their resignations because they want to keep their health insurance over the summer, resignations should be effective June 30 so that coverage would continue through the summer months.

Recommendations for Washington State

- 1. Pass the education budget in March rather than in April and consider a two-year budget.** The more time schools have to plan for impending changes in staff positions, the better prepared they will be to staff schools with the best teachers.
- 2. Impose a deadline for retiring and resigning teachers to notify their school districts by June 30.** For teachers who fail to notify the district by June 30, the state should permit the district to fine teachers and require teachers to “resign with prejudice.”



Goal 4. The district distributes its human capital talent in an equitable manner across all schools, regardless of schools' populations.

INDICATORS

- i. Schools track the academic capital of their teachers, recognizing its importance as measured by the selectivity of teachers' undergraduate institutions, high SAT and ACT scores and teachers' success on licensure exams.
- ii. Schools have comparably low proportions of new teachers on their staff.
- iii. Schools have comparably high teacher retention rates.

Equitable distribution of teacher talent

Seattle has done a good job making sure that high-poverty schools get their fair share of teachers with strong academic backgrounds, with less success of retaining experienced teachers in high-poverty schools.

The degree to which high-quality and experienced teachers are distributed equitably among low- and high-poverty schools is of both local and national concern. Seattle is taking steps to encourage teachers to work in low-performing schools by offering financial incentives to teach in certain designated schools. Schools undergoing intervention in Seattle receive additional resources and assistance to help close their achievement gaps. Strategies include building ways for teachers to routinely plan together and learn from one another, with the target being increased student learning and extending the school day to provide students with additional learning time. In recognition of the importance of building a stable and cohesive team at struggling schools, principals at intervention schools do not have to accept teachers who are sent to the school through the HR department.

Though measuring teacher quality is a murky endeavor, the Illinois Education Research Council (IERC) identified a set of teacher attributes that signal a high-performing school. The IERC found that schools with the following factors produced higher academic gains among their students:

1. lower ratios of first- and second-year teachers to more experienced teachers;
2. higher selectivity of teachers' undergraduate institutions;
3. higher average SAT or ACT scores;
4. lower teachers' failure rates on licensure exams; and
5. lower teacher turnover rates.¹⁴

Based on the data available from Seattle, NCTQ was able to examine three of these five teacher quality indicators: the ratio of inexperienced to experienced teachers, three-year teacher retention rates and the selectivity of teachers' undergraduate institutions. We were not able to look at average SAT or ACT scores or the failure rates on licensure exams but would urge Seattle to develop capacity to do so.

1. Ratio of experienced to inexperienced teachers

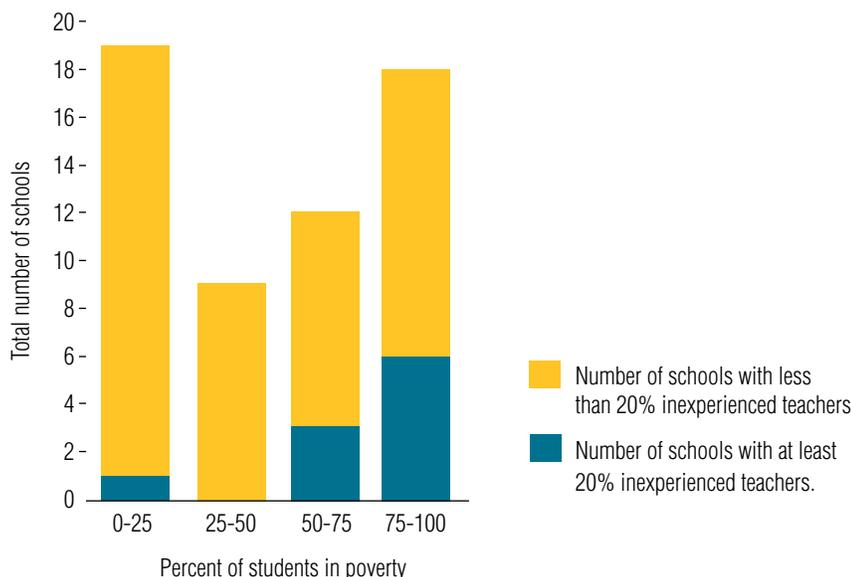
Not surprisingly, a large body of research shows that teachers in their first year are considerably less effective than other teachers, and that second-year teachers, while having markedly improved from their first year, are still not as effective as they will be.

14 White, B.R., Presley, J.B., & DeAngelis, K.J. (2008). *Leveling up: Narrowing the teacher academic capital gap in Illinois* (IERC 2008-1). Edwardsville, IL: Illinois Education Research Council.



NCTQ calculated the percentage of staff at each elementary school with fewer than two years of experience, finding that schools with higher poverty rates are more likely to have more inexperienced teachers. As Figure 16 shows, 33 percent of the highest-poverty schools employ large numbers of first- or second-year teachers compared to only 5 percent of the lowest-poverty schools.

Figure 16. Are poorer elementary schools more likely to employ inexperienced teachers?



Source: Seattle Public Schools

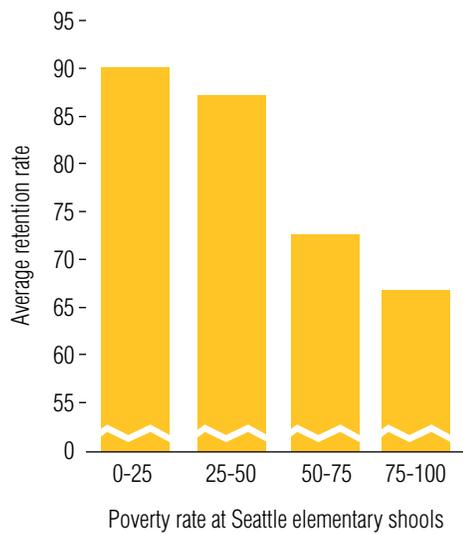
In schools serving high percentages of poor children, it is much more likely that students will be assigned a new teacher. Nine of Seattle’s 30 high-poverty schools employ high percentages of new teachers. By way of comparison, only 1 of Seattle’s 28 relatively affluent schools has a high percentage of new teachers.

2. Three-year teacher retention rates

It makes sense that a school that employs more inexperienced teachers would also report higher attrition rates. Districts can combat that problem by assigning experienced teachers to high-poverty schools, something that is likely only to be successful if incentives are provided coupled with assurances about the quality of school leadership.

NCTQ looked at the three-year teacher retention rate for all schools in the district. NCTQ requested data from the Washington State public records office on teacher assignment from the 2005-2006 through the 2008-2009 school years at every Seattle public school. A variety of factors can affect teacher turnover at a given school, but the data suggest that **teacher turnover rates in Seattle schools increase along with a school’s poverty level**. For example, the three-year retention rate for elementary schools in the poorest quartile averaged 67 percent, compared to 90 percent for the wealthiest quartile. The same pattern is true for Seattle’s middle schools, whose average teacher retention rate decreased as poverty increased, though not as dramatically as for elementary schools (82 percent for the wealthiest quartile, compared to 71 percent for the poorest).

Figure 17. Are poorer schools more likely to experience teacher turnover?



Source: Seattle Public Schools.

The higher a school's ranking by poverty quartile, the lower its retention rate of teachers.

In addition to these clear trends, Seattle should take note of individual schools with particularly low three-year retention rates such as Northgate, Minor, Hawthorne, Leschi and Maple. Also, although there is considerable overlap between the 17 schools that the district has targeted for intervention under the Flight project and those with low retention rates and high rates of inexperienced teachers, not all of the outliers are captured in the district's initiative.

Selectivity of Undergraduate Institution

Because teachers who were themselves good students tend to be more effective teachers,¹⁵ NCTQ reviewed the undergraduate institutions of teachers at six schools representing the two ends of the student-poverty spectrum: three low-poverty and three high-poverty schools. We also obtained data on the undergraduate institutions of new hires for the 2008-2009 school year. In both of these test samples a remarkably high number of teachers were from "more selective" or "most selective" institutions, approximately 60 percent.¹⁶ More impressively, **these teachers were not hired in greater proportion at the low-poverty schools than at their high-poverty counterparts.**

As only 27 percent of all education schools in the United States are even housed in "more selective" and "most selective" institutions, Seattle appears to have an exceptional commitment to overall academic selectivity in its hires.

Research indicates that schools with higher proportions of poor students on average have a harder time retaining teachers. They also are more likely than wealthier schools to suffer from a lack of "academic capital" in their staff, such as that indicated by the proportion of teachers who attended more selective colleges and universities.

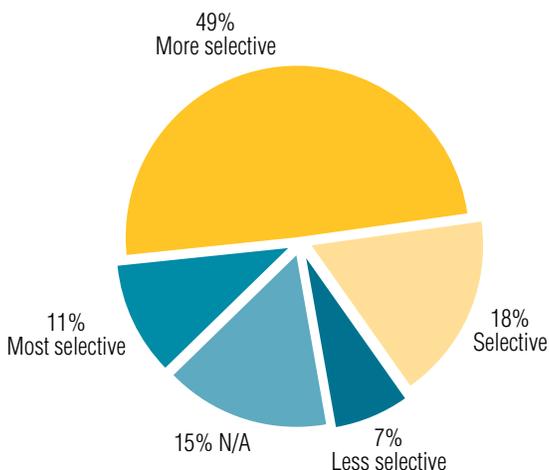
The Seattle Public Schools face significant challenges educating students from low-income backgrounds, but there are reasons to be optimistic: Poverty is concentrated in relatively few schools. The district has a well-educated workforce and access to resources both within and outside the district. With additional attention to the data on the equitable distribution of teachers, Seattle can move faster toward its goal of providing a high-quality education for *all* students, particularly those living below the poverty line.

15 Summers, A., & Wolfe, B. (1997). Do schools make a difference? *The American Economic Review*, 67 (4), 639-652. Ehrenberg, R., & Brewer, D. (1994). Do school and teacher characteristics matter? Evidence from high school and beyond. *Economics of Education Review*, 14, 1-23.

16 Selectivity data determined by *U.S. News & World Report* in the magazine's annual rankings of colleges and universities.



Figure 18. What is the selectivity of undergraduate institutions for new hires?



Source: Seattle Public Schools¹⁷

Well over half of Seattle's new teacher hires come from more or most selective institutions.

Strengths & weaknesses of the equitable distribution of teachers in Seattle

Strengths	Weaknesses
Teacher turnover	
None discerned	Poorer schools have more inexperienced teachers than wealthier schools. Poorer schools have higher teacher turnover than wealthier schools.
Academic capital of teachers	
The academic capital of teachers appears high regardless of whether teachers work at a high or low income school.	More attributes need measuring, such as failure rate on licensing exams.
Data collection	
None discerned	Seattle does not track the distribution of teachers.

Recommendation for Seattle Public Schools

- 1. Track the academic caliber of teachers, particularly of new hires; teacher retention and the proportion of new teachers on staff at each school.** Understanding the disparities across the district is the first step in remedying them.

¹⁷ SPS provided conflicting data for this figure. Data in Figure 17 looks at 71 new hires for the 2008-2009 school year. However, we are unsure how many new hires the district made that year. The figure provided specifically in response to our request was 71; other district documents say there were 309 new hires for that year.

Work Day and Year

Goal 5. The schedule and duties assigned to a teacher support the teacher's ability to be effective.

INDICATORS

- i. The district's calendar creates time for teachers to work without students before the start of the student school year, during the student school year and after the conclusion of the student school year to ensure common planning, team collaboration and professional growth.
- ii. The district provides adequate planning/preparation time to teachers during the work day and there is collaborative planning scheduled on a weekly basis.
- iii. Teachers work an eight-hour day on site.

Length of the teacher work day

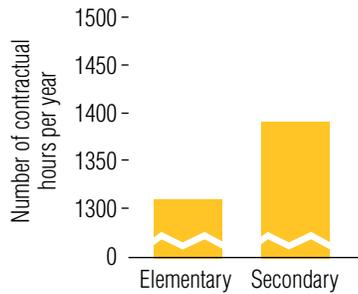
The work day for elementary teachers is too short.

Though an eight-hour work day is standard in most professions, teachers have long enjoyed a traditionally shorter contractual work day under the assumption that teachers do some portion of their work at home. More districts are now requiring a full eight hours on site so that essential time needed for faculty planning and collaboration is not up for debate.

Seattle is unusual in that its elementary and secondary teachers have two different work days (see Figure 19). While Seattle's secondary teachers must be on site 7 hours, 30 minutes each day, elementary teachers are only required to be on site 7 hours each day, the shortest work day of any teachers at any level in the Puget Sound area (see Figure 20). Elementary teachers work well below the Puget Sound school district average of 7 hours, 38 minutes, as well as the 100 district TR³ (www.nctq.org/tr3) average of 7 hours, 25 minutes.



Figure 19. What is the difference in contractual hours for elementary teachers compared to secondary teachers in Seattle?



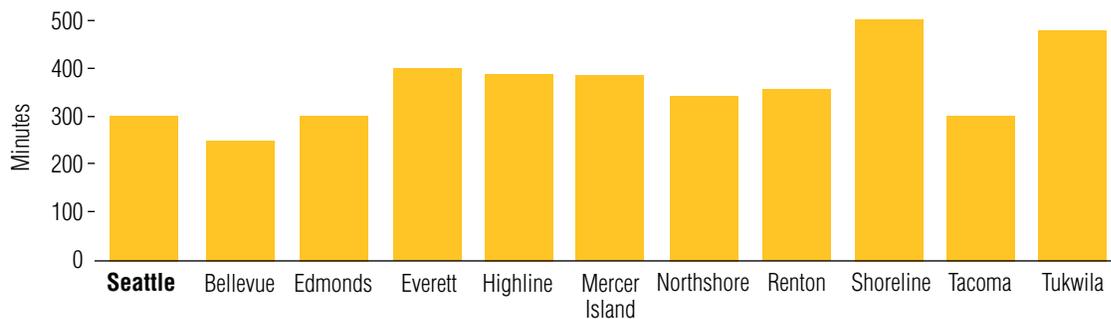
Source: SEA and SPS collective bargaining agreement.

In 1975 Seattle elementary teachers were compensated for lost planning time by the district agreeing to shorten the teacher work day, with the result that 34 years later, elementary teachers are still working 30 minutes less each day than secondary teachers, essentially 2 weeks less time on the job. In spite of the different work expectations, no salary adjustments have been made.

The Seattle Education Association provided an explanation for the shorter work day for elementary teachers. In 1975 the district had a double levy failure and was forced to cut some art, music and physical education from the elementary schools, which in turn led to a cut in classroom teachers' planning time. To compensate teachers for their loss in planning time, the district set the elementary work day to be 30 minutes less each day, cutting their planning time accordingly. In the logic of negotiations, where giving up something is met by getting something, the result can be counterproductive. In this case, what teachers gave up in the end—planning time—was exactly what many of them wanted preserved.

The significance of this time deficit should not be underplayed. Adding up the time lost, Seattle elementary teachers work two fewer weeks than Seattle's secondary teachers as well as their peers in surrounding districts. While many teachers may choose to work additional hours regardless of what the contract says, many do not, making it harder on school leadership to create a collaborative working environment.

Figure 20. How much time are teachers on site without students?



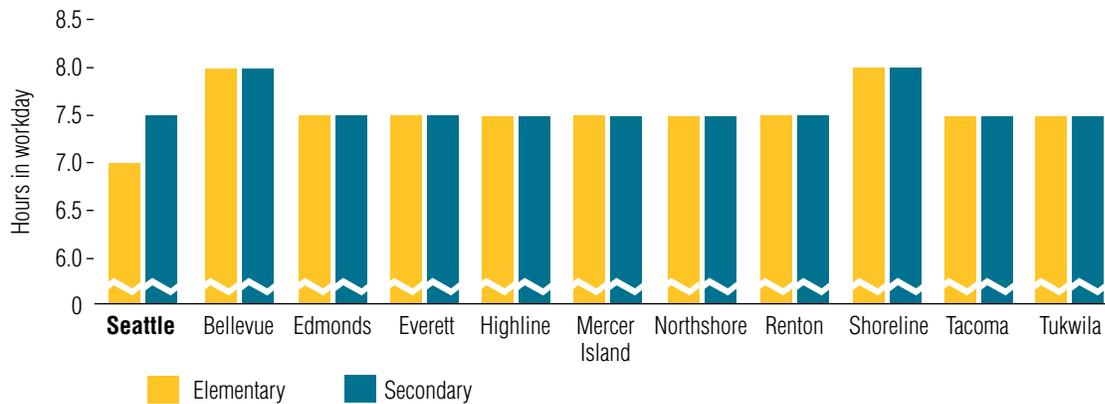
Source: Collective bargaining agreements from Seattle and surrounding school districts.

Seattle teachers are required to be on site beyond the student school day much less than in nearly all of the surrounding school districts.



The approach taken by Asian schools to teacher work time serves as quite a contrast to the model observed by most American schools, and in particular Seattle. In *The Learning Gap: Why Our Schools Are Failing and What We Can Learn from Japanese and Chinese Education*, Harold Stevenson and James Stigler highlighted differences in how American and Asian teachers spend their day, observing that teachers in Japan are with students only 60 percent of the day. The remaining time is mostly spent planning lessons, collaborating with other teachers and meeting with students one on one. American teachers, in contrast, generally have less than one hour away from students each day, equivalent to an average of 13 percent, or in the case of Seattle's elementary teachers, 6 percent.

Figure 21. What is the length of the contractual teacher work day?



Note: Lake Washington's contract does not specify the length of the work day; it is determined by the principal or immediate site supervisor. 2008-2011 Lake Washington teachers contract, p. 12, Article 12.1.

Source: Calendars and collective bargaining agreements from Seattle and surrounding school districts.

Although only two districts require a full 8-hour work day for teachers, Seattle elementary teachers are the only in the area to work less than a 7-hour, 30-minute day.

Elementary teachers have too little planning time.

Included in the work day for Seattle teachers is a preparation period, equal in length to one full class period for secondary teachers, about the same as what we typically see in the 100 TR³ districts. As previously discussed, Seattle elementary teachers lost preparation time as a result of a funding problem in 1975, leaving elementary teachers with only 30 minutes of daily preparation, significantly below the TR³ average of 44 minutes. Seattle also ranks at the bottom of elementary planning time compared with other districts in the Puget Sound area, as shown in Figure 22.

Figure 22. How much planning time do elementary teachers receive a day?

District	Planning time provided during the student day, weekly
Lake Washington	250 minutes
Tacoma	230 minutes
Highline	225 minutes
Northshore	225 minutes
Renton	225 minutes
Everett	180 minutes
Shoreline	165 minutes
Bellevue	160 minutes
Mercer Island	150 minutes
Tukwila	150 minutes
Seattle	150 minutes
Edmonds	Not stated in CBA

Source: Calendars and collective bargaining agreements from Seattle and surrounding school districts.

Seattle elementary teachers tie for last place in the amount of planning time teachers are given during the student day. Some districts receive additional planning time beyond what is shown here, for example, through early dismissals of students each week, as is the case in Highline and Mercer Island. Seattle does not.

Collaborative planning time. Although Seattle does not provide teachers with additional preparation time for collaborative purposes, the contract makes it clear that a teacher's own planning time should also be used for joint planning: "*The primary purpose of planning periods in elementary, middle and high schools is for the individual teacher to prepare, plan and conference; however, this time shall also be used for period conferences, departmental meetings and other cooperative group planning.*" The explicit language is important. Other school districts, such as Baltimore, have had problems with how these planning periods can be used due to the lack of such language.

In addition to the planning period, the contract permits schools to have after-school faculty meetings once a week, although such meetings are restricted by the contract to one hour.

The school year

In 2009-2010, Seattle students will receive three fewer days of instruction than state law requires.

In the 2009-2010 school year, Seattle teachers officially work 184 days. This work year includes seven days without students, a number comparable to both other districts in Puget Sound (which average just under seven days without students), as well as districts throughout the country.¹⁸ Nationally, 75 percent of the 100 TR³ districts have 6 or more teacher work days and 40 percent of districts provide teachers with at least 10 work days beyond the student school year.

¹⁸ In addition to designated work days, students are released early five days during the year for teacher professional development.

¹⁹ RCW 28A.150.220 (3), Washington Legislature 2009 House Bill 2261 and Seattle Public Schools 2009-2010 school calendar. Seattle was granted three waiver days, which is what legally allows the district to provide fewer instructional days than the statutory minimum. These three days are used for professional development.

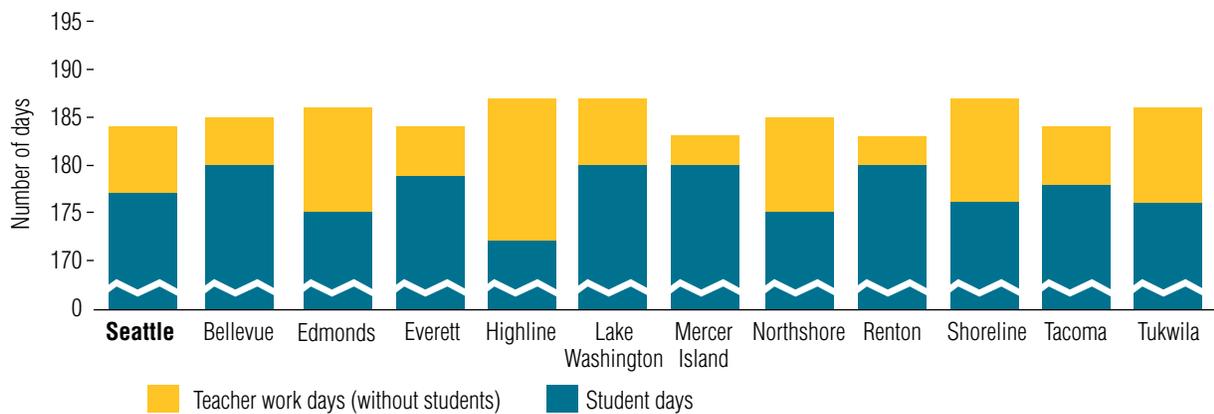


Seattle's calendar fails to provide students with Washington's legally required number of instructional days (180). State law was recently amended to explicitly encourage districts to exceed this minimum;¹⁹ however, the state school board granted Seattle (and 75 other school districts in the state) a waiver to convert three days of instruction into professional development time, which means the district is only providing 177 days of instruction this year.²⁰

In fact, as the next section will discuss, Seattle teachers are taking on average an additional 3 days away from the classroom to participate in professional development activities, further reducing a teacher's contact time, exclusive of any leave, with his or her students down from 177 days to only 174 days.

The number of instructional days in Seattle is not only less than required by law, it is also less than many of the districts in the Puget Sound as well as across the country, which both average 179 student instructional days. While two or three days may seem insignificant, even a few lost school days can have a negative impact on student performance.²¹

Figure 23. How many days do teachers work in the Puget Sound region?



Source: Calendars and collective bargaining agreements from Seattle and surrounding school districts from the 2009-2010 school year.

Seattle is not alone in its failure to provide 180 days of student instruction, as required by Washington State law.

20 Seattle's elementary students attend school for 177 days with a school day length of 390 minutes. Bellevue and Mercer students attend school for 180 days and have a school day of 420 minutes.

21 Marcotte, D.E., & Hemelt, S.W. (2007). *Unscheduled school closings and student performance*. Bonn, Germany: Institute for the Study of Labor.



Strengths & weaknesses of teacher scheduling in Seattle

Strengths	Weaknesses
Length of the work day	
None discerned	<p>The elementary teacher school day is still a full 30 minutes shorter than that of Seattle secondary teachers, the consequence of a budget problem 34 years ago. The finances were resolved long ago, salaries have improved, but the hours have not been corrected. Compounded over the work year, this results in a difference of over two weeks.</p> <p>The secondary teacher on-site work day is better at 7 hours, 30 minutes, but should be raised to 8 hours.</p>
Daily planning time	
None discerned	<p>Elementary teachers are given less planning time than the majority of districts in the Puget Sound area.</p> <p>District policies do not explicitly provide for any collaborative time; they only acknowledge that individual planning time may be used for cooperative purposes including department or grade-level meetings.</p>
Length of the teacher school year	
Teachers have seven work days without students in attendance.	Seattle's calendar includes too few student instructional days. Seattle's 177 instructional days is below what is required by state law.

Recommendations for the teacher work day and year

- 1. Lengthen the teacher work day.** Ideally the teacher work day should be eight hours, as is standard in most professions; however, an increase in the elementary teacher work day to 7 hours and 30 minutes (the length of the secondary teacher work day) would at least put teacher time on par with other school districts in the Puget Sound area and resolve the problem of identical wages but different time expectations.
- 2. Provide elementary teachers with more planning time.** Because the discrepancy in planning time is undoubtedly due to their shorter work day, Seattle should use the additional 30 minutes per day to increase the amount of planning time elementary teachers receive. This would give teachers in Seattle a similar amount of planning time to what teachers in surrounding districts receive.
- 3. Designate weekly meetings for team/grade level collaborative planning.** The contract currently recognizes the need for collaborative time, but does not indicate an expectation of how often this should occur. The contract requires teachers to be on site an additional five hours per week beyond the student day. The district could designate two of these hours for collaborative planning. Schools should attempt to arrange teacher schedules so that teachers of the same grade or subject level have common planning periods.
- 4. Meet the state's legal requirement of 180 student instructional days.** The State legislature encourages districts to exceed the 180-day minimum, but Seattle instead reduced the number of days. The district should strive to provide students with as much instructional time as possible, beginning by increasing the number of student days from 177 to 180.



Goal 6. Policies encourage teacher attendance and minimize the deleterious impact of teacher absences.

INDICATORS

- i. Sick leave is commensurate with months worked (e.g., 10-month contract provides 10 days of leave).
- ii. Teachers are required to notify the principal or principal's designee of each absence.
- iii. The district produces monthly teacher absentee reports for internal review by principals and administrators that show which schools report high rates of absenteeism and the names of teachers who are chronically absent.
- iv. The district requires medical documentation for habitual use of sick leave and can require additional documentation from a doctor other than the teacher's own should sick leave abuse be suspected.
- v. Absentee rates are a factor in individual teacher performance evaluation, and a school's overall teacher absenteeism rate is a factor in principal performance evaluation.

Seattle's sick and personal leave policies

Seattle teachers use nearly all of the sick leave allotted, elementary teachers more so than secondary teachers.

Specific schools are notable for their high absentee rates.

Teachers take most of their personal leave on Mondays and Fridays.

In the 2007-2008 school year, Seattle teachers on average used 11 of their 12 days of sick and personal leave days. However, this simple calculation may be somewhat misleading. The absentee data provided to NCTQ included those teachers out on extended leave (due to pregnancy or chronic illness), so the averages are likely skewed. SPS was unable to provide absentee data that would have allowed us to disaggregate absences down to the level of the individual teacher. Consequently we are not able to determine the typical number of days taken by teachers who for the most part show up to school every day.

However, it would be fair to state that Seattle teachers take a higher number of sick leave days on average (absent 6 percent of the year) than what other professions report their employees take (absent 3 percent of the year).²²

As show in Figure 23, among individual schools in the district, there is significant variation in the number of sick leave days taken by teachers, ranging from 4 days per teacher at Nova High to 20 days at Sacajawea Elementary.

We can observe big differences in leave rates depending on the grades served in a school, as illustrated in Figure 24. Attendance rates for teachers at Seattle's high schools are significantly better than all other levels. While schools such as Nova High School and Rainier Beach High School have some of the best attendance rates in the district, even the high schools with the highest sick leave rates take up to 40 percent less leave than their colleagues working at the middle or elementary level.

As show in Figure 25, the absentee rate appears to be unrelated to school characteristics. Schools with higher rates of students eligible for free and reduced lunch report about the same average absentee rate as more affluent schools.

Seattle teachers currently receive the following days for leave:

10 sick days

2 personal days

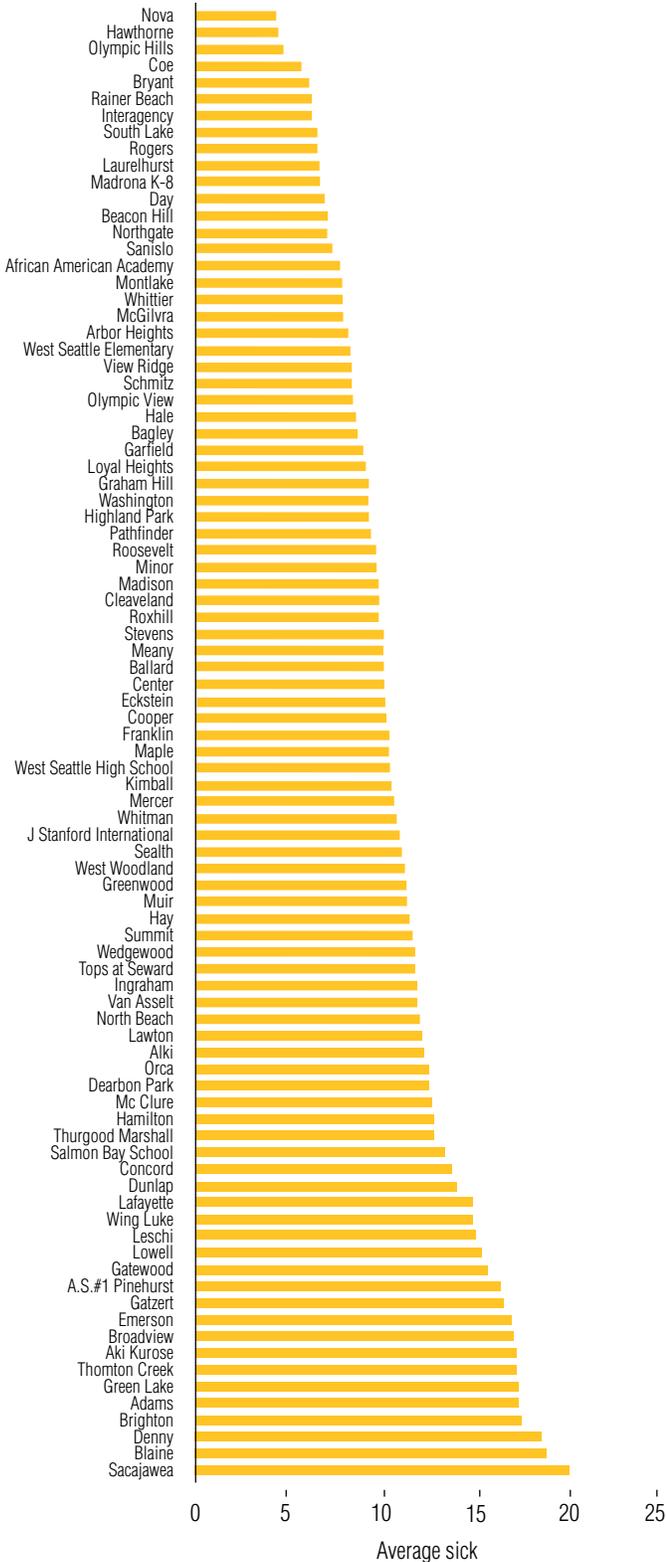
3 bereavement days

Unlimited professional development days,
used as needed.

²² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Labor force statistics from the current population surveys 2003 - 2008*, Table 47.



Figure 24. How many sick leave days do teachers at Seattle’s schools take?



Source: Seattle Public Schools, 2007–2008, Seattle Public Schools Data Profile: District Summary December 2008.²³

23 Schools excluded from the comparison due to incomplete data sets include Boc at Hay, Homeschool, Indian Heritage, Marshall Alternative, MCHS at Northgate, MCHS at Ida Wells, New School.



The relatively high rate of absences of teachers working in elementary schools could suggest that teachers in some schools tend to get sicker than their colleagues teaching older children. However, there are a number of elementary schools with low rates of absenteeism, which argues against that theory. It could also be that there are measurable pockets of unhealthy children in the city who bring illnesses to school that tend to make adults sick. That analysis is beyond the scope of this study.

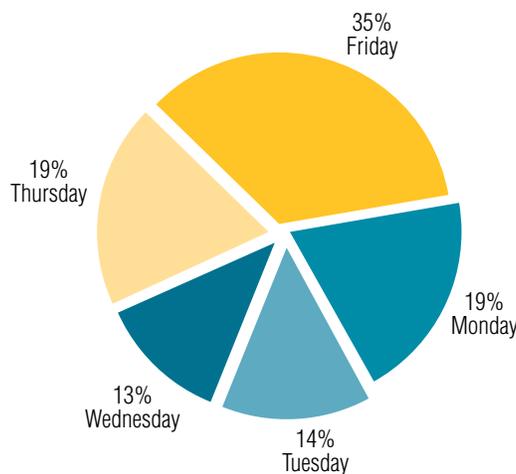
Another plausible theory is that the high absentee rates could be a reflection of the culture of the school and how much absenteeism is tolerated. There is some support for such a theory. One study found that there is likely to be a drop in the attendance rate of a teacher who had a previously good attendance record but who transfers to a school with high rates of teacher absence. The phenomenon works in the reverse as well: a teacher who transfers to a school with lower rates of teacher absences will improve her attendance.²⁵

One strategy that has been found to reduce teacher absenteeism is to require teachers to notify their school principal or designee, rather than the central office or a service, if s/he has to be absent. The current teachers' contract does not state if Seattle teachers are required to notify their principal. There is a new provision in the 2009-2010 contract that stipulates a supervisor may (1) request a conference if s/he is concerned about a teacher's sick leave use and (2) require documentation for future absences. Although Seattle requires medical documentation in the event of long leaves for sickness, it does not reserve the right to request a third-party medical opinion, an important option for a district.

On the matter of the two days of personal leave allotted each year to teachers, the contract encourages teachers not to take personal leave on Fridays or days bracketing school holidays, yet analysis of 2007-2008 attendance data shows that teacher absences for personal reasons are twice as high on Fridays compared to other days of the week.

Many of the 100 districts in NCTQ's TR³ database, such as Boston, Chicago and Denver, do not merely discourage but restrict the use of personal days during the first and last weeks of school, days before and after holidays or school breaks, and days on which more than 5 or 10 percent of teachers are absent.

Figure 27. When do teachers take the most personal leave?



Source: Seattle Public Schools, 2007–2008, Seattle Public Schools Data Profile: District Summary December 2008.

More than half of all sick leave taken by Seattle teachers is on Mondays and Fridays.

“When teachers are close to retiring, some start taking the sick leave they have accumulated because they can only take a quarter of it as cash when they leave.

My daughter’s teacher, who was retiring at the end of the year, took an extra week of vacation at Christmas and then again at spring break. Finally, at a parent meeting on the problem where over 20 parents attended, the principal shamed the parents.

The principal said: ‘Here is this teacher, who has given 20-plus years of service when he was going above and beyond his call of duty,’ she said. ‘That’s his right to take the days.’”

—Seattle parent and teacher

25 Bradley, S., Green, C., & Leeves, G. (2007). Worker absence and shirking: Evidence from matched teacher-student data. *Labor Economics*, 13 (3), 319-334.

Absences due to professional development

Seattle teachers working in low-income schools are more likely to be absent for professional development than their peers working in more affluent schools.

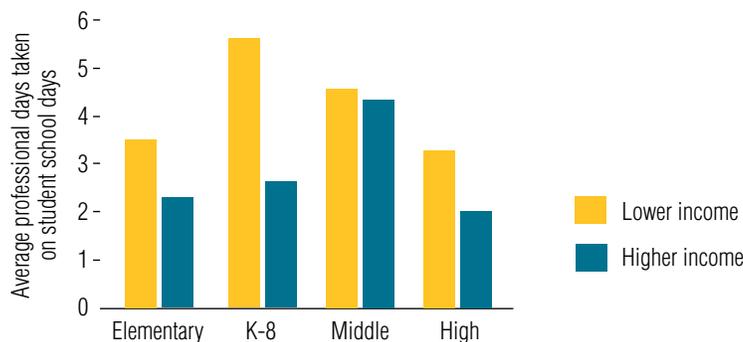
Seattle teachers are absent for professional development approximately 3.2 days a year. These are days that teachers take for professional development over and above the generous six full days and five half days already scheduled by the district in a work year when students are not present.

As Figure 28 illustrates, Seattle teachers working in schools serving low-income students are more likely to take days for professional development than teachers in more affluent schools.

The 2009-2010 contract specifies that the district must offer teachers three choices of when to take required professional development courses: during the summer, after school and during the school day. The attempt to accommodate teachers' schedules is admirable, but only when it doesn't cut into valuable class time.

Seattle has no limit on the amount of class time teachers can miss for professional development. Some districts in NCTQ's TR³ districts restrict the number of days teachers can take off for professional development, generally limiting the number of days between two to five. Other districts such as Polk, Dade and Seminole Counties, all in Florida, go so far as to *prohibit* teachers from taking any professional leave on days that students are present.

Figure 28. How do Seattle teachers' leave patterns compare based on grade level?



Source: Seattle Public Schools, 2007–2008, Seattle Public Schools Data Profile: District Summary December 2008.

The widest disparities in leave occur at the elementary level, with some schools averaging fewer than 5 days of sick leave but others averaging as many as 20 days per teacher.

Attendance incentives

Current incentives appear to be costing the district and state money with little evidence of return.

While use of incentives is a good way to change behavior, it's often not easy to find incentives that work in a particular situation without also generating unintended consequences. What little research exists has yet to show a correlation between sick leave "buy back" programs and improved teacher attendance. Despite this, 13 states, including Washington, and over 60 percent of districts in the TR³ database reimburse teachers for unused leave in order to persuade them not to use the leave.



In Seattle, to qualify for a reimbursement of unused leave before retirement, teachers must have accumulated at least 60 days. Only unused sick days accumulated in the previous year (i.e., a maximum of 12 days) are reimbursed, at a rate of 25 percent of the teacher's daily rate of pay. For example, if a teacher's average daily rate of pay is \$284 (annual salary of \$52,000), she would receive \$71 pre-tax per day of unused leave for a maximum payment of \$852.

At retirement, teachers can be reimbursed for a maximum of 180 unused leave at 25 percent of their current daily rate. Hypothetically a teacher could be reimbursed up to approximately \$15,000 if s/he had never taken any sick leave.

In 2007-2008, Seattle compensated 172 teachers (out of 3,038) nearly \$336,000 for unused sick leave for an average reimbursement of \$1,952 (before taxes) per teacher.

Summary

Seattle teachers are away from the classroom too often.

Combining all sick, personal, and professional leaves, Seattle teachers are away from the classroom an average of nearly 16 days a school year, nearly 1 day every 2 weeks, or 9 percent of the school year.

There are two important caveats to the interpretation of this 16-day figure. When teachers are away for professional development, presumably they are learning something that will benefit instruction. The question is should it come at the expense of the 177 days of instruction that students are allotted each year? We think not. Time away from the classroom for professional development may always be something that a district must allow, but its practice should not be as widespread as the numbers here reflect.

Also, as previously noted, this rate includes the absentee rates of those teachers who are on extended leave due to pregnancy and chronic illness. Most Seattle teachers do not take 16 days away from their classroom. A small group of teachers skew the data in that direction. However, regardless of how many teachers are involved, the absence of teachers requires schools to use substitutes. From the perspective of students and the districts, that's **56,000 instructional days largely lost over a single year.**²⁶

26 Miller, R.T., Murnane, R.J., & Willet, J.B. (2008). Do teacher absences impact student achievement? Longitudinal evidence from one urban school district. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 30 (2): in press.



Strengths and weaknesses of Seattle leave and attendance policies

Strengths

Weaknesses

Leave usage

There is no significant variation in sick and personal leave between schools serving low-income populations and those serving wealthier students.

Nearly 70 percent of schools have teacher absence rates exceeding the national average, suggesting that sick leave days are widely seen as owed to teachers whether they are sick or not.

Teachers at lower-income schools are away from their classrooms more often for professional development than teachers in higher-income schools.

Leave policies

Leave allotment of 12 days is in line with the TR³ 100 average.

Medical documentation is required for long use of sick leave, and principals can request documentation when abuse is suspected.

Teachers' new two "no-questions-asked" personal days offer them flexibility to conduct needed business in line with professional norms.

Principals are unable to prevent staff shortages on Fridays or before holidays because too many personal days are taken then—despite the contract encouraging teachers not to use such days if possible.

The district cannot seek a second opinion to verify medical conditions.



Recommendations for Seattle Public Schools

- 1. Closely monitor teacher attendance.** Seattle has the capability to disseminate attendance data to all schools through its SubFinder system and should use this system to communicate attendance problems to principals.
 - a. The district should facilitate principals' ability to monitor teacher attendance by providing each principal monthly status reports on where her school stands in relation to district totals and averages, highlights of teachers at her school with above average absentee rates, etc.
 - b. The district should grant principals authority to request doctors' notes for use of leave surrounding non-school days or patterns of excessive leave. Seattle may want to consider a contract provision in place in such districts as New York City and Montgomery County, Maryland, that allows principals to request a second opinion from a doctor hired by the school district in the case of teachers whose habitual use of sick leave is excused by a doctor's note.
- 2. Schedule professional development during the summer, after school, and on teacher workdays.** Seattle teachers are away from scheduled class time too often for professional development. A longer workday, as recommended in Goal 4, with additional planning time when students are not at school, would help teachers to participate in professional development outside of the school day.
- 3. Make teacher attendance a component of teacher evaluations.** This would only be necessary for cases of abuse of leave such as excessive absences on Mondays or Fridays or where proper documentation was not required. There needs to be some way to hold teachers accountable for abuse of leave.

Recommendations for Washington State

- 1. Eliminate accumulation of sick leave.** Though Washington is not unusual in offering this benefit as part of its unused leave buy-back program, such policies were implemented in a time when salaries were not keeping pace. Accumulating unused leave (regardless of whether teachers can later be compensated) may unintentionally encourage teachers to take leave for reasons other than illness, partly because the cash payout isn't a large enough incentive to dissuade teachers from choosing an extended "paid vacation." Teachers absent due to long-term illness would still qualify for days from the sick leave bank and could also apply for a long-term leave of absence that would be classified separately from sick leave.

Developing Effective Teachers and Exiting Ineffective Teachers

Goal 7. The district provides all new teachers with an induction program, with particular consideration given to teachers in schools serving low-income students.

INDICATORS

- i. New teachers receive regular and consistent support from experienced teachers or mentors. Mentor-teacher assignments are decided before the school year begins.
- ii. Mentors are selected on the basis of their own effectiveness, subject-matter and school expertise, and their ability to work well with other adults.
- iii. Training is provided to mentors; mentees provide feedback on mentor performance.

Most new teachers find themselves overwhelmed and under-supported at the outset of their teaching careers. Even teachers from the most rigorous preparation programs tend to need support. Unfortunately, a “survival of the fittest” mentality prevails in many schools; figuring out how to successfully negotiate unfamiliar curricula, discipline and management issues and labyrinthine school and district procedures—it’s all considered a rite of passage which teachers should somehow tolerate. New teachers often receive the most difficult schedules, more than two subjects to prepare for, or the most challenging students. Talented new teachers can become disillusioned by the lack of support they receive. Those with the most options outside of teaching, such as science teachers, are among the most likely to leave.

Research doesn’t yet pinpoint the characteristics of the best induction programs nor predict the magnitude of the difference induction is likely to make for new teachers or their students. Still, it is reasonable to assume that teachers at the beginning of their careers can get better faster with intensive help. Induction programs can also be seen as helping teachers achieve tenure, which should be a meaningful milestone indicating they are proficient in their work.

Types of support for new teachers

Not all new teachers receive a mentor, and the support provided is insufficient.

Seattle’s induction program for new teachers is focused around the peer mentor program called STAR, for *Staff Training Assistance and Review*. The program was jointly established and is managed by a panel made up of four SEA appointees and three SPS appointees who assign mentors. The mentors, known as “consulting teachers,” are to coach, assist and assess new teachers’ classroom performance.



During the 2007–2008 school year, Seattle’s 11 full-time STAR mentors each had a caseload of approximately 9 teachers. The new contract limits a mentor’s caseload to no more than 15 new teachers, but also caps the number of mentors at 8. In terms of mentor-to-teacher ratio, Seattle appears to be exemplary.

Seattle’s mentor-school ratio may be more problematic. In 2007–2008, the 11 mentors were assigned across the district: 5 were assigned to 54 elementary schools, 1 to 10 K–8 schools, 1 to 10 middle schools, and 4 to 12 high schools.²⁷ It is likely that some mentors have to cover between 10 and 14 schools. A high mentor-school ratio tends to limit the amount of interaction between the mentor-teacher pair and reduces the mentor’s ability to gain school-specific knowledge, a critical component of mentorship. The new contract’s cap of eight mentors will further extend the mentor’s school caseload during years that new teachers are spread throughout most of the districts’ schools. The district could easily solve this problem by hiring more part-time than full-time mentors.

In the 2007–2008 school year, there were 145 first-year teachers; however, only 94 were assigned a mentor. It is not clear why so many teachers did not receive a mentor, particularly since the mentor-teacher ratio is relatively low.

Neither the district contract nor relevant state laws require new teachers to have an assigned mentor at the start of school. The SEA reports that a three-day summer orientation is held for new teachers, but it is not clear if the orientation includes a chance for new teachers to meet with their mentors. That meeting should occur as early as possible.

Mentor selection

The mentor selection process appears rigorous.

Consulting teachers are selected based on teaching ability, classroom management skills, their ability to work cooperatively, communication skills and leadership. Candidates for the positions must submit at least three to five references; one must be from a union-building representative, one from a principal and one from another teacher. The new 2009–2010 contract allows consulting teachers to hold the position for a minimum of one year and no more than four years. Teachers must return to the classroom for at least another three years before reapplying.

According to the 2004–2009 teachers’ contract, mentors are paid \$5,875 a year in addition to their current teaching salary, more than what most TR³ districts pay, but mentor job duties are quite variable among districts.²⁸

²⁷ <http://www.seattleschools.org/area/speced/schoolassignments.pdf>

²⁸ The 2009–2010 contract does not include the amount of the mentors’ stipend.



Strengths and weaknesses of Seattle's new teacher induction

Strengths	Weaknesses
Scope and depth of support	
Good mentor-to-new-teacher ratio.	There appear to be no other kind of induction support for new teachers, such as weekly collaborative planning time for grade level or subject area teams. Not every new teacher is assigned a mentor. Mentors may be servicing too many schools.
Mentor selection	
Seattle has a careful selection process for mentors. Mentors must return to the classroom after four years.	None discerned
Timing of support	
Program is concentrated in first year when support is really needed.	Mentor support for new teachers is apparently not initiated before the school year begins. New teachers at low-performing schools targeted for intervention do not appear to receive any additional support even though their assignments are typically more challenging than those of other first-year teachers.
Program evaluation	
None discerned	It does not appear that the district has a system in place for evaluating the success of the induction program.



Recommendations for Seattle Public Schools

- 1. Ensure all new teachers are assigned a mentor.** Though the ratio of mentors to mentees is good, last year not all new teachers were assigned a mentor. The district's current hiring freeze for all but teachers in critical needs subjects should help ensure all new teachers this year receive a mentor. Seattle should maintain the current mentor force and provide intensive support early on for first-year teachers in the most challenging schools. In addition, it should provide a mentor to each second-year teacher in any of the schools targeted for intensive support (Flight or Southeast Educational Initiative schools) who did not receive a mentor last year.
- 2. Assign new teachers mentors before the student school year begins.** The early weeks of school are crucial for a teacher to establish classroom procedures, assess students' abilities, set goals, and juggle both daily and long-term planning. Without support during the early weeks, a new teacher is left alone to execute many responsibilities vital to student learning.
- 3. Annually assess the STAR program. Survey new teachers on the value of the program.** Assess retention rates and student achievement results of teachers getting the program. Be mindful that the program's greatest challenge is likely to be adding value in the lowest-performing schools.
- 4. Consider additions and alterations to the current induction model.**

Strategies that can be considered:

- a. Seminars with peer teachers who teach the same grade or subject.** Such sessions should be held frequently and led by an experienced teacher, giving teachers the opportunity to share resources, strategies, etc.
- b. Reduced teaching load.** A lesser load allows teachers time to get their sea legs and master the basics of classroom management faster and can also be arranged to give new teachers more time to observe accomplished teachers.
- c. Assign all new teachers a full-time mentor for the first two months of school.** Retired teachers could work as full-time coaches for new teachers for the first two months of school. Providing such intensive support in a teacher's early months in the classroom may be preferable to spreading out the assistance over the course of a year, as Seattle and most districts currently do.
- d. Release time to observe accomplished teachers.** Make sure opportunities for first-year teachers to observe accomplished teachers are plentiful in every school.
- e. Build a video library of high-performing Seattle teachers.** As other school districts and Teach For America have done, the district may want to film its own high-performing teachers. Those videos could augment the video library the district's website currently links to. Incorporating video observations in professional development and mentoring activities can increase their impact, perhaps especially if the observations are of teachers in Seattle.
- f. Place new teachers with highly effective peers.** This is perhaps the best and most affordable induction model. Newer teachers are highly sensitive to teacher quality, and the more effective a teacher's peers, the more likely a teacher will produce higher student learning gains.²⁹

29 Jackson, C., & Bruegemann, E. (2009, July). *Teaching students and teaching each other: The importance of peer learning for teachers*. National Bureau of Economic Research.



Goal 8. **Instructional effectiveness is the preponderant criterion used to evaluate a teacher with evaluation results clearly differentiating high- and low-performing teachers. Teachers' performance is assessed regularly, through multiple observations.**

INDICATORS

- i. The evaluation instrument considers objective evidence of student learning, including not only standardized test scores when available, but also classroom-based artifacts such as student work, quizzes, tests, and progress in the curriculum as well as other measurements of student learning.
- ii. The district connects student data to teacher performance.
- iii. All teachers are observed annually. While formal evaluations need not occur every year, in the case of seasoned veterans, all teachers are informally observed (without prior notice) regularly throughout the school year.
- iv. Formal evaluations include classroom observations that focus on and document instructional effectiveness. Teachers' observed behaviors are assigned degrees of proficiency based on standards and defined by scoring guidelines.
- v. Teachers are formally evaluated by trained observer(s). Observers may include the principal, outside observers, department heads or experienced teachers.

Frequency of teacher evaluations

In terms of frequency and timing of evaluations, Seattle is exemplary.

In Seattle, all teachers, including those with tenure, are observed and evaluated once a year. Teachers in their first and second year are observed multiple times, ensuring that there are various opportunities for feedback. These requirements, if practiced, are much stronger than what is typically found in school districts. All teachers can benefit from feedback, no matter how much experience they have or their performance level.

Years of experience	Observation requirements	Other notes
1st year	Monthly observations in first three months.	Evaluated in January; principal must decide then whether to renew teacher's contract.
2nd year	Observed 2 times a year. First time must be for 30 minutes in first 3 months of school.	Evaluated once a year.
3 plus years	Observed once a year in a 30- minute announced observation. For teachers with at least four years of experience, the observation need not be continuous or of the teacher in the classroom.	Must be observed second time if performance is in question; state law requires a minimum of 60 minutes in observation time prior to dismissal.

Making evaluations meaningful

Student achievement is important but not the preponderant criterion of teacher evaluation in Seattle.

Any evaluation should look first and foremost at the teacher's impact on student achievement. Although Seattle's evaluation requirements emphasize the importance of student achievement and considers direct evidence of student learning (such as examination of student work against a standard or standardized test scores), it is not the preponderant criterion on which a teacher is evaluated.



It appears that Seattle has in the past employed a “value added” data system to estimate how much a student’s learning growth in a tested subject is attributable to his teacher, but the district does not factor any such measure into teacher evaluations, nor is it clear if this system is still in place.

What are the factors of an evaluation?

There are two components to teacher evaluations in Seattle: 1) classroom observation(s) and 2) an assessment of how well a teacher meets performance goals established in the professional development plan, written by the teacher and principal. Only tenured teachers create a professional development plan.

What does the principal look for in the classroom observation? (for ALL teachers)

1. Instructional skill
2. Classroom management
3. Professional preparation and scholarship
4. Effort toward improvement when needed
5. Handling student discipline and attendance problems
6. Interest in teaching pupils
7. Knowledge of subject matter
8. Professional responsibility

Teachers must have satisfactory performance in at least seven of the eight competencies observed in the classroom observation.

What does the Professional Development Plan encompass? (only for tenured teachers)

Principal and teacher jointly establish performance goals based on student achievement.

At least once a year, principals evaluate the teacher’s progress in meeting these goals.

Teachers must make a “good faith effort” to achieve the goals established in the plan; however, there will be no consequences if an employee does not achieve the stated goals as long as their observed classroom performance remains satisfactory.

Note that the evaluation does not include a direct reference to student learning, nor does it require any objective measures of student learning be considered.

Evaluation ratings

Seattle’s binary rating system does not accurately capture differences in teacher performance. Teachers who merely try but are not necessarily successful can receive a positive evaluation.

Many districts have moved to a teaching rubric which lists criteria that a teacher must meet for each performance indicator. For example, Texas’ Professional Development and Appraisal System (see page 58) rates teachers in eight domains. Each domain includes components of effective teaching. Teachers are rated *unsatisfactory*, *below expectations*, *satisfactory* or *exceeds expectations* according to how well their performance matches the appropriate descriptor. The rubric reduces the potential for subjective, inconsistent ratings.

Seattle’s current ratings system needs significant improvement. Teachers are assigned one of two ratings: satisfactory or unsatisfactory. There is no further distinction. Binary ratings systems do not accurately capture more fine-grain distinctions in a teacher’s performance, resulting in fewer teachers rated unsatisfactory.

Binary systems fail to adequately recognize excellence. A top-notch teacher is placed in the same category as an average or even mediocre teacher. Evaluation ratings should distinguish between at least four or five levels of performance.

The construction of the evaluation rating

A teacher is rated either satisfactory or unsatisfactory on each of the eight competencies. Each rating is accompanied by a narrative summary of each of the competencies of the teacher's strengths and weaknesses.

Tenured teachers (those with at least two years of experience) are also evaluated on a separate component, the degree to which they have met the goals established in a professional development plan, prepared by the teacher and approved by the principal. However, it is possible to be rated satisfactory while not achieving the goals set out in this plan as long as the teacher demonstrated a "good faith effort."

It is not clear why the district considers merely *trying* to be an acceptable substitute for a teacher actually meeting his or her goals. For this very reason, objective data that no one can dispute needs to be introduced into the evaluation rubric.

Sample rubric from Texas' Professional Development and Appraisal System

Domain I: Active, successful student participation in the learning process

Exceeds expectations	Proficient	Below expectations	Unsatisfactory
Almost all of the	Most of the	Some of the	Less than half of the
1. Students are actively engaged in learning.			
2. Students are successful in learning.			
3. Student behaviors indicate learning is at a high cognitive level (e.g., critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, etc.)	3. Student behaviors indicate learning is at a high cognitive level (e.g., critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, etc.)	3. Student behaviors indicate learning is at a high cognitive level (e.g., critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, etc.)	3. Student behaviors indicate learning is at a high cognitive level (e.g., critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, etc.)
4. Students are self-directed/self-initiated as appropriate to the lesson objective.	4. Students are self-directed/self-initiated as appropriate to the lesson objective.	4. Students are self-directed/self-initiated as appropriate to the lesson objective.	4. Students are self-directed/self-initiated as appropriate to the lesson objective.
5. Students are connecting learning to work and life applications, both within the discipline and with other disciplines.	5. Students are connecting learning to work and life applications, both within the discipline and with other disciplines.	5. Students are connecting learning to work and life applications, both within the discipline and with other disciplines.	5. Students are connecting learning to work and life applications, both within the discipline and with other disciplines.



Strengths & weaknesses of Seattle’s evaluation system

Strengths	Weaknesses
Role of student achievement in teacher evaluations	
<p>The language in the contract makes reference to student achievement as a factor in teacher evaluation.</p> <p>Teachers and principals meet to develop goals linked to student achievement.</p>	<p>The district’s value-added data system that connects teachers with individual student performance does not factor into teacher evaluations.</p> <p>The evaluation instrument lacks standard objective evidence of a teacher’s performance on which all teachers are evaluated.</p> <p>Student learning is not one of the eight competencies, and therefore it is difficult to hold teachers accountable for this.</p> <p>For teachers with at least four years of experience, it is possible to be rated satisfactory simply for <i>trying</i>.</p> <p>The observation form lacks a measure of objective data.</p>
Evaluation ratings	
<p>None discerned</p>	<p>With only two evaluation ratings (satisfactory and unsatisfactory), it is difficult to differentiate between levels of performance or distinguish high-performing teachers.</p>
Frequency of evaluations	
<p>All teachers are observed and evaluated annually.</p> <p>Observations of teachers with at least four years of experience are not scheduled, nor do they need to be in one sitting. This approach may provide a more accurate picture of teacher performance.</p>	<p>The observation of the tenured teacher is not required to be inside the classroom.</p> <p>There is no requirement for principals to conduct informal unannounced observations.</p> <p>Teachers are generally observed by only one evaluator, the principal.</p>



Recommendations for Seattle Public Schools

- 1. Instructional effectiveness should be the preponderant criterion in all teacher evaluations.** While the evaluation instrument does look at teacher effectiveness, teachers are not held to any objective standard measuring student achievement results. An instrument that gives as much weight to factors that do not directly link to student performance does not hold teachers accountable for their most important function: achieving student growth.
- 2. No more effort grades.** The evaluation instrument should be structured so as to preclude a teacher from receiving a satisfactory rating if found ineffective in the classroom, even if s/he is deemed to have tried.
- 3. Use an evaluation system with multiple ratings for all teachers.** Ratings should differentiate among teachers at several levels—other districts use four or five—of effectiveness.
- 4. All teachers should be observed frequently, in unscheduled visits.** In order to ensure that evaluators view a typical lesson, not all observations should be scheduled. Evaluators need to view what normally occurs in a teacher's classroom, not lessons and activities that have been specially prepared for the observation. Not all feedback needs to be formal—a few quick notes that the observer can later discuss with a teacher can be quite helpful. Especially at the secondary level, observers may need to follow several linked lessons to see how a teacher is faring. Having subject-matter specialists observe teachers for the content of their lessons is particularly important.
- 5. Validate a principal's ratings with the use of outside observers.** Protocols that incorporate multiple trained observers' views permit the district to assess the robustness of individual principals' ratings by comparing them to those of other observers. Particularly important is to have observers who are subject-matter experts. Corroboration of findings may reduce concerns over the arbitrary nature of evaluations, as teachers rightly perceive the single-observer evaluation to be arbitrary and prone to bias or favoritism. These can be done randomly to the degree a district can afford. Even if only one teacher in the building is checked by the third-party evaluator, principals will take this task more seriously.
- 6. Hold principals responsible for evaluation ratings.** Each year the superintendent should look at the evaluation ratings of a school and judge them against the students' performance. Principals should annually report those teachers they consider to be in the top 15 percent and those teachers in the bottom 15 percent, without consequences being imposed. As the district gains confidence in the fairness and accuracy of these evaluation ratings, and principals grow accustomed to the expectation that they should not be rating all teachers in the building as equally competent, the district can ultimately adopt strategies to reward the best, and support (and if necessary, dismiss) the weakest.

Many educators struggle to identify possible sources of objective student data. Some examples include:

- Standardized test scores.
- Periodic diagnostic assessments.
- Benchmark assessments that show student growth.
- Artifacts of student work connected to specific learning standards that are randomly selected for review by the principal or senior faculty, scored using rubrics and descriptors.
- Examples of typical assignments, assessed for their quality and rigor.
- Periodic checks on progress with the curriculum coupled with evidence of student mastery of the curriculum from quizzes, tests and exams.

The best examples are specific to the grade level and subject area.

Recommendations for Washington State

- 1. State law should require that all districts include** *evidence of student learning as the preponderant criterion in teacher evaluations.*



Goal 9. Tenure decisions should be meaningful.

INDICATORS

- i. Evidence of effectiveness is the preponderant criterion in tenure decisions.
- ii. Teachers are eligible for tenure after a minimum of four years when sufficient data become available to make a meaningful decision.
- iii. There is a formal process, such as a hearing before a tenure review panel, which makes the final decision.
- iv. Teachers receive a significant pay increase after earning tenure.

Throughout school districts in the United States, the decision to give teachers tenure (often referred to as “continuing” or “permanent” status) is made automatically, with little thought, deliberation or consideration of actual evidence. Seattle is no exception to this lax approach to tenure decisions.

Making good tenure decisions should be a key function of the district in pursuit of its human capital goals. Taking lifetime earnings, benefits and pension into account, tenure represents roughly a \$2 million investment by the district and state in a teacher’s service; few multimillion expenditures of public money are handled so casually.

Making tenure meaningful

**Evidence of teacher effectiveness is not adequately considered when Seattle makes its tenure decisions.
Teachers are not rewarded for earning tenure.**

As required by Washington State statute, Seattle teachers earn tenure after only two years in the classroom. As Figure 29 shows, the majority of states wait three years, still too brief a period. Seven states require four years of teaching before tenure can be conferred.

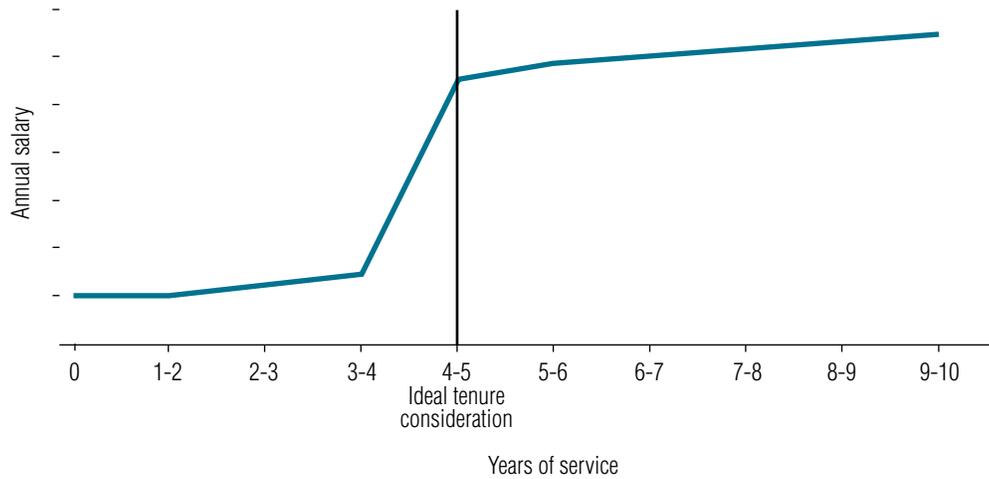
Though student achievement is ostensibly a factor in the district’s teacher evaluations, a key element is not considered, that is, any objective evidence of student learning. This is equally true when tenure decisions are made. Any teacher with a satisfactory rating—and we learned in Goal 9 that more than 99 percent do—is granted tenure.

Also in Washington, principals are not permitted to recommend that tenure decisions be delayed, extending a teacher’s provisional contract for a year, as is permitted in some districts and states.³⁰

³⁰ Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maryland, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas all permit principals to delay tenure decisions.



Figure 30. What does an alternative pay structure look like?



Until tenure is granted, salary increases in the first few years of a teacher's career should be relatively small. After teachers receive a significant pay raise with tenure, annual increases continue. Furthermore, there are no lanes on this schedule that reward teachers for advanced degrees. Any additional compensation should be tied to teacher effectiveness, but should not alter the base pay teachers receive.

Strengths & weaknesses average of Seattle's tenure policies

Strengths

None discerned

Weaknesses

Tenure is virtually automatic should a teacher be rated satisfactory.

Even second-year teachers can grieve their performance evaluation that qualifies them for tenure.

Tenure is granted after only two years.

Recommendations for Seattle Public Schools

1. District officials should take an active role in deciding tenure. The decision to award tenure is a lifetime commitment to a teacher and should be treated with due importance. There should be a formal hearing to decide whether or not to award tenure to a teacher. The school principal would make a recommendation at the tenure hearing but would not make the final decision. Teachers would also present evidence of their effectiveness. The tenure hearing does not replace the importance of annual evaluations in retaining or dismissing teachers.

Principals should not have the right to delay the tenure review (essentially depriving teachers of a change in status that should lead to a major bump in salary) but can recommend to a teacher that s/he elect to delay.

2. Give teachers a significant pay increase for earning tenure. When the above recommendations are in place, the tenure distinction will be more meaningful. At this time, the district should reward teachers with the largest pay increase of their career.



Recommendations for Washington State

- 1. Increase the provisional contract period for new teachers to four years.** Tenure in Washington State comes at too early a point in a teacher's career to have collected sufficient and adequate data that reflect teacher performance. Ideally, districts would accumulate at least three years' worth of such data. This robust data set would prevent effective teachers from being unfairly denied tenure based on too little data, while also preventing the district from granting tenure to ineffective teachers. Delaying tenure for four years also permits a formal hearing process to be administered more meaningfully; fewer teachers would be eligible, as the weakest teachers would have already been weeded out through the evaluation process.

Goal 10. Teachers who demonstrate instructional deficiencies receive assistance; teachers who do not improve are dismissed.

INDICATORS

- i. A principal places a teacher on an improvement plan after negatively evaluating a teacher's performance.
- ii. There are formally stated consequences for unsatisfactory evaluations and a clear mechanism to assist struggling tenured teachers.
- iii. Observations occur early enough in the year to provide sufficient time for poor-performing teachers to improve and for administrators to make a decision about a teacher's continued employment by the end of the same school year.
- iv. Teachers are only allowed to appeal a decision for dismissal once, and such an appeal should not be made in a court of law but before a panel of educators.
- v. Teachers are not allowed to grieve a personnel action.

Washington State law, not the local teacher contract, establishes the actions that districts can take to address severe classroom performance concerns, up to and including how and when remediation and dismissal of a teacher can occur.

Support for struggling teachers

Seattle is not identifying poor-performing teachers.

The Seattle Public Schools and the Seattle Education Association have negotiated an intervention program for how to help struggling experienced teachers, essentially intended to intervene before an employee is placed on formal probation. It appears to be rarely used. In the 2007-2008 school year, only 26 teachers out of a workforce of nearly 3,300 teachers (0.8 percent) received support through peer intervention, and 24 of those teachers were in their second year.

The main challenge in Seattle lies not in providing appropriate remedial support, as the district has set up what appears to be a strong program in this regard, but rather the identification of poor-performing teachers in the first place. Only 16 experienced teachers out of a workforce of 3,286 (0.5 percent) received an unsatisfactory rating in 2007-2008 and consequently placed in the state-mandated improvement plan. Of the 16 teachers placed on the improvement plan, 11 improved and 5 left the district (2 were terminated and 3 resigned). There is a clear disconnect between teacher performance ratings and student achievement.

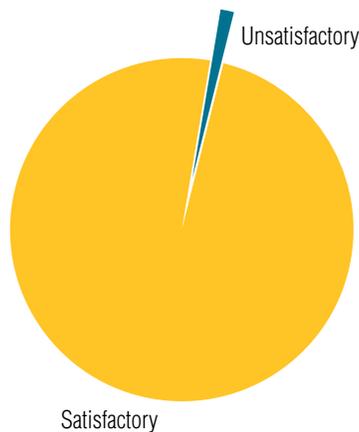
Seattle Public Schools has found a workaround approach to make it easier to dismiss underperforming new teachers (in their first year), without having to go through the formal remediation period that state law requires for all underperforming provisional teachers. First-year teachers are given a *temporary* contract, distinguished from the *provisional* contract that second-year teachers have. Principals must decide whether or not to dismiss the first-year teacher or renew his or her contract by January.

The workaround is not without its flaws. Principals interviewed by NCTQ expressed that, by January, they often had insufficient material on which to decide a first-year teacher's continued employment—and often gave those teachers the benefit of the doubt.

“In January you have to say whether you want to convert one-year contracts to continuing. Last year half of my regular classroom teachers were new. How was I supposed to get a sense of all those people in the first three months of school?”

—Seattle principal

Figure 31. How are Seattle teachers rated?



Source: Seattle Public Schools.

In 2007-2008, a tiny proportion—0.5 percent—of the district's 3,300-teacher workforce was rated “unsatisfactory.”

What happens to teachers found unsatisfactory?

Tenured teachers and those on a provisional contract with an unsatisfactory evaluation are placed on a 60-day improvement plan, referred to as probation. As defined by state law, the principal must meet with the employee at least twice a month and make written evaluations of the teacher's performance.³¹ Also, as set out in the teacher contract, teachers have the right to request union representation in all meetings or interviews which may lead to disciplinary action.³² (Teachers cannot make such a request for annual evaluation meetings, but can for any meetings that occur while on probation.)

Also defined by state law, teachers can be placed on probation anytime after October 15, but not before. The 2004-2009 teachers' contract also put an end date on placing teachers on probation (January 20) and a date by which principals had to decide whether or not to dismiss a teacher (May 1). Both the January deadline for placing teachers on probation and the May deadline for deciding whether to renew the contract were eliminated in the 2009-2010 teachers' contract. While the new structure gives principals more time to fairly assess a teacher's performance before deciding whether probation is necessary, it means probation may extend into a new school year.

Exiting ineffective teachers

The due process rights afforded to teachers can be unfairly disruptive to student learning, as requisite remediation for underperforming teachers can extend from one year into the next.

In spite of the benefits from removing the January 20 deadline for placing a teacher on an improvement plan, a new problem has been created. The 60-day probationary period (meaning 60 actual school days, not 60 calendar days) must sometimes extend into the following year, should the principal not evaluate the teacher and place her on probation until late in the school year. The 2004-2009 teachers' contract required that principals decide by May 1 whether to dismiss a teacher on an improvement plan. This date has also been eliminated from the 2009-2010 contract. Students should not have to start a new school year with a teacher whose performance is in question.

31 State law permits the principal to designate another employee, though it does not specify who, to work with the teacher on probation during this period. Presumably this responsibility could be taken over by a STAR mentor teacher; see Goal 7.

32 SPS AND SEA 2009-2010 teachers' contract, Article III, Section C.2



Washington State law is quite clear about what must happen to teachers who are judged as not having improved at the end of a 60-day probation. They are to be removed from their assignment and placed in an alternative assignment until the remainder of the school year, with the continuation of full compensation and benefits. If such reassignment is not possible, the employee is placed on paid leave for the balance of the year.

The process of teacher dismissal, however, often does not end at the end of the 60-classroom-day probationary period, which is more like 90 days. Washington law allows a teacher to appeal a district's decision to terminate a teacher four times:

1. The teacher can appeal the principal's decision to the local school board.
2. The teacher can then appeal the school board's decision to the superior court.
3. The teacher can then appeal the superior court's decision to the court of appeals.
4. The teacher can then appeal the court of appeals' decision to the state supreme court.

"It's pretty stressful to have a teacher on an improvement plan. There are observations every 10 days with a progress report after, and you have to have an SEA rep at each meeting. A second evaluator often evaluates the teacher as well to forestall a prejudice on the part of principal."

—Seattle principal

These appeals are consistent with what most states currently allow. While they may be appropriate for someone who is being dismissed on criminal grounds or in danger of losing a teaching license (for which Washington State actually has a separate process), they clearly represent an excessive application of due process rights that should be afforded a teacher found to be an ineffective instructor.



Strengths & weaknesses of Seattle intervention policies

Strengths	Weaknesses
Support for struggling teachers	
Seattle provides supports for struggling teachers that are tailored to severity of the teacher's needs.	The district and union jointly manage the peer intervention program.
Structure of probation	
None discerned	Principals must be heavily involved in the 60-day probationary period even though some of the responsibilities would be better suited for a mentor teacher.
Timeline for probation and dismissal	
Teachers may enter remediation at any time after Oct. 15, meaning that the remediation and dismissal process can occur within a single school year.	<p>60 classroom days of probation is too long; this translates into roughly 3 months out of the school calendar of potentially lost class time for students.</p> <p>With the removal of the May 1st deadline in the new contract, probation may extend into a new school year, creating unnecessary uncertainty and disruption for a new class of students.</p> <p>Due process rights for a teacher dismissed for being ineffective are excessive.</p>

Recommendations for Seattle Public Schools

- 1. Give consulting teachers a greater role in providing support for teachers on probation.** While it is the principal's responsibility to evaluate teachers, assistance during the 60-day remediation can be from mentor teachers, as state law allows, who have subject-area expertise and can, therefore, be of invaluable assistance to the struggling teacher.
- 2. Any teacher whose remediation plan that spills over from one school year into the next should be assigned as a co-teacher the following school year.** The principal teacher should be a strong teacher, who can coach the struggling teacher. If the struggling teacher does not improve and has to be removed, the disruption to student learning will be minimal.

Recommendations for Washington State

- 1. Shorten the probationary period to 60 calendar days (not classroom days).** The 60-classroom-day period as is stated in current law is too long and works against students' interests.
- 2. Distinguish the process for dismissing ineffective teachers from dismissal or license revocation for dereliction of duties, or felony and/or morality violations in state statute.** Washington groups all grounds for dismissal under the vague heading "probable cause."
- 3. Allow teachers one opportunity to appeal a decision dismissal. Appeals should be made before a panel of educators, not in a court of law.** It is in the best interest of both the teacher and the district that a conclusion be reached in a reasonable amount of time. Prolonged appeals tax limited resources and may dissuade districts from attempting to terminate ineffective teachers.



Seattle's intervention program

The district and union recently made changes to the Intervention Staff Support Program to help experienced teachers who have performance difficulties. Two mentors from the STAR program are to serve as consulting teachers for the 2009-2010 school year. The program, jointly managed by the district and the union, is intended as an intermediary intervention for struggling teachers before the more severe consequence of placing the employee on "probation." The 2009-2010 contract prohibits principals from placing teachers in the program; teachers themselves must volunteer. Furthermore, teachers requesting assistance may not have any documentation of the support in their personnel file.

What the program entails:

- Consulting teachers observe struggling teacher and determine performance goals for teacher. Building principal, consulting teacher and participating teacher all must later agree on these goals.
- Consulting teachers continue to observe struggling teachers, with pre- and post-observation conferences.
- Subject-area consultants can be brought in.
- Consulting teachers are expected to regularly communicate with building principals about the progress of the struggling teacher.

Appendix

The Impact of Teachers' Advanced Degrees on Student Learning

Metin Ozdemir, Ph.D., & Wendy Stevenson, Ph.D. UMBC

An extensive review of the studies published in peer-reviewed journals, books, and reports was conducted. For the purpose of literature search, we relied on multiple data bases including ERIC, EBSCOHOST, PsychInfo, and PsychLit. In addition, we carefully reviewed the reference sections of each article and chapter to locate additional sources. We also used online search engines such as Google and Yahoo search to locate updated publication lists and resumes of researchers who frequently publish in this field.

For the current meta-analysis, 17 studies (102 unique estimates) were selected as they have provided statistical estimates which allowed us to calculate effect sizes and re-compute the p-values for the meta-analysis.

All studies included in the meta-analysis were focusing on testing the effect of teachers' advanced degree (a degree beyond bachelor's degree) on student achievement measured as grade, gains in grade over one or two years, scores on standardized tests, and gains in standardized tests over one or two years. Teachers' advanced degree included M.A. degree, M.A. + some additional coursework, and Ph.D. Student achievement variables included achievement in math, reading, and science areas

Out of 102 statistical tests that were examined, 64.7 % (n = 66) of the estimates indicated that teachers advanced degrees did not have any significant impact on student achievement. On the other hand, 25.5% (n = 26) indicated a negative effect, and 9.8% (n = 10) suggested a positive effect of teachers' advanced degree on student achievement.

It is important to note that all 10 of the estimates suggesting positive effect ($p < .05$) of teachers' advanced degree on student learning were with analyses conducted on 6th and 12th grade students' math achievement. On the other hand, 23 negative effects ($p < .05$) were reported by studies focusing on achievement in Kindergarten or 5th grade achievement in math and reading, and the other three were on 10th and 12th grade achievement. Studies which reported significance level at $p < .10$ were not considered as reporting significant effect.

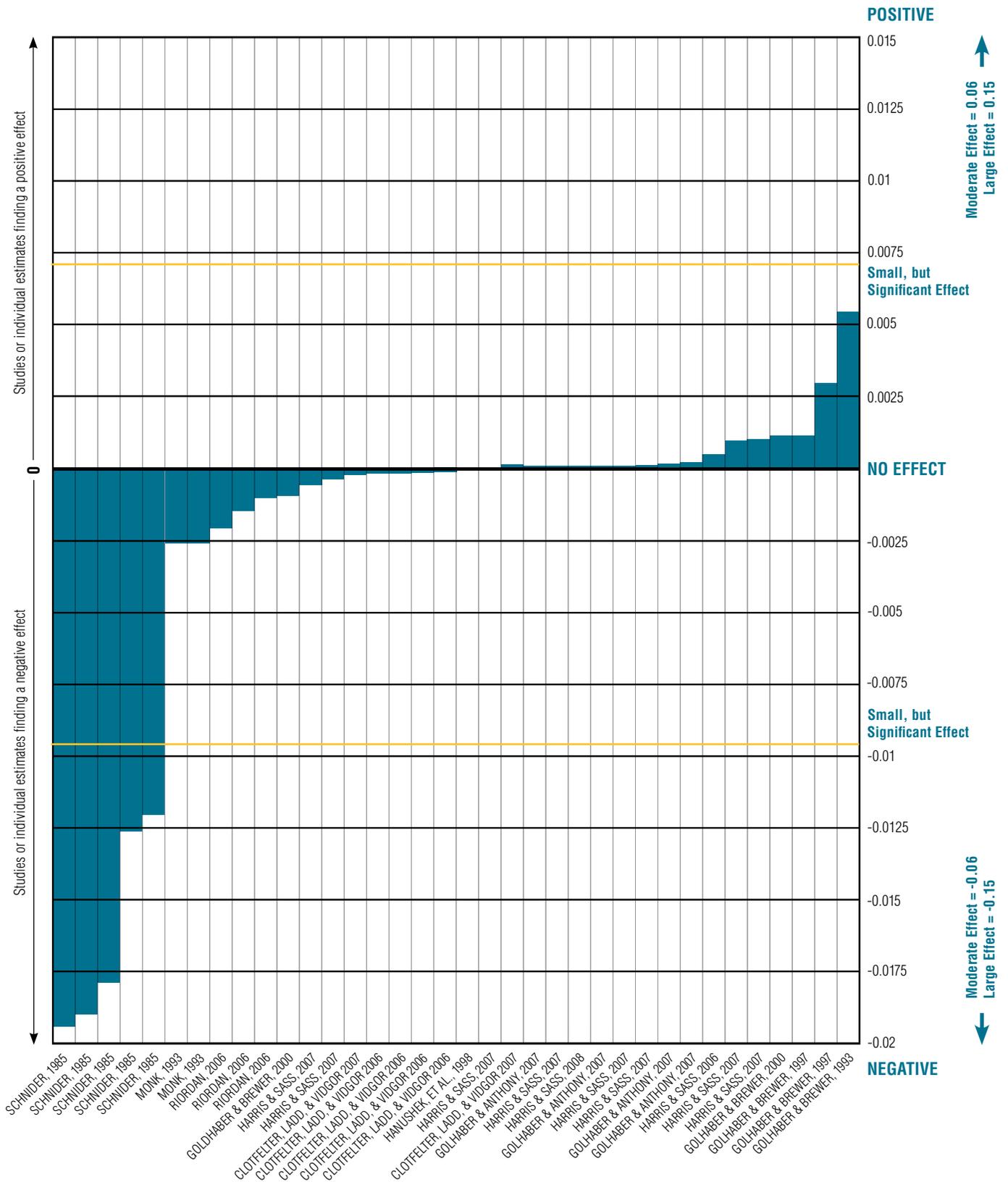
The studies examined in this meta-analysis had varied sample sizes. The minimum sample size was 199 whereas the maximum was over 1.7 million. Further analysis showed that there was no association between sample size and the direction of findings.

The average effect size estimate of all the 102 statistical tests was very low (.0012), which suggests that the impact of having advanced degree on student achievement is low. The highest effect size was .019, suggesting small effect.

One major concern regarding the studies reviewed in the current meta-analysis was that most studies to date did not identify the type of advanced degree they examined. In the current study, we identified only two studies (e.g., Goldhaber & Brewer, 1997; 2000) which examined the effect of subject-specific advanced degree on student learning. Specifically, Goldhaber & Brewer (1997) examined the effect of M.A. in math on grade 10 math test scores. They reported a positive effect of teachers' M.A. degree in math on math test scores. Similarly, Goldhaber & Brewer (2000) reported positive effect of M.A. in math on math test scores of 12th grade students. Of note, both studies reported low effect sizes.

It is possible that categorizing different types of graduate degrees under a single category of "advanced degree" resulted in biased estimates of the impact of teachers' graduate training on student achievement. Future studies should examine the impact of subject-specific degrees on student achievement in the respective disciplines so that the findings would improve our understanding of the value of teachers' advanced degree in improving student learning. Given this major limitation of the literature, the findings of current meta-analysis should be interpreted with caution.

The impact of teachers' advanced degrees on student learning





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Executive Summary

Staffing each classroom with an effective teacher is the most important function of a school district. Doing so requires strategic personnel policies and smart practices.

The National Council on Teacher Quality, at the request of Alliance for Education in Seattle, undertook an analysis of the Seattle Public Schools' existing teacher policies, reviewing the teachers' contract and other relevant documents; collecting personnel data; talking with local stakeholders to learn how the rules play out in practice and comparing Seattle to other districts, both local and national.

We examined four areas of teacher governance in which better policies—both state and local—could improve teacher quality. These areas are:

- I. **COMPENSATION:** The structure of Seattle's salary schedule, which teachers benefit from the current schedule and which teachers are at a disadvantage.
- II. **TRANSFER AND ASSIGNMENT:** The process for hiring and assigning teachers in Seattle, and particularly how the district handles the thorny process of teacher transfers.
- III. **WORK DAY:** An examination of the teacher work day and year, including leave policies and their impact on student instructional time.
- IV. **DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND EXITING INEFFECTIVE TEACHERS:** The quality of support provided to Seattle's new teachers, the rigor and quality of feedback of its evaluation system, the meaning of tenure and, lastly, what it takes to dismiss a substandard teacher.

Here are our principal findings and recommendations.

I. COMPENSATION

Seattle has achieved real success in making teacher salaries, especially starting salaries, competitive with other districts in the Puget Sound area. Still, we find a number of structural deficiencies in the current salary schedule.

Excessive emphasis on coursework. Most notably Seattle's pay structure is built on a popular but erroneous premise that the more coursework a teacher takes, the more effective he or she is likely to become. Districts that heavily incentivize teachers to take more courses—and Seattle is in the extreme among the 100 districts we track closely—are making poor choices with their limited resources.

Seattle is spending a considerable portion of its annual teacher payroll (22 percent) on incentives persuading teachers to take more courses. Teachers are required to take a far greater number of courses (or their equivalent in professional development hours) than what other districts require, in effect the equivalent of a second undergraduate degree and a master's degree combined. *Seattle needs to redesign its salary schedule, eliminating these coursework incentives and reallocating pay to target the district's challenges and priorities.*

Little experimentation with differential pay. The district could make much better use of funds available for teacher salaries by targeting three important but unaddressed areas of need for the district: 1) more money to effective teachers willing to work in the most challenging schools or who are willing to teach lower status courses (e.g., 9th grade standard English versus 12th grade honors English); 2) more money to teachers with skills that are in short supply, particularly mathematics, science and special education; and 3) more money to teachers who are highly effective. With the exception of providing more funding to high-needs schools, Seattle is behind the curve on these pay reforms. *Seattle needs to redouble its efforts to initiate differential pay, as attempted by the current superintendent in the latest contract negotiation.*

Inequitable pay raises. We were dismayed to find a pay structure that worked so clearly against the interests of younger, newer teachers. Unlike most districts which provide relatively equal raises for each additional year of service to teachers, regardless of their experience, Seattle reserves the more sizeable raises for its veteran teachers (approximately \$2,000 a year), while teachers with five or fewer years of experience are eligible for only about a third as much (approximately \$800). *Seattle needs to provide equitable pay increases—with one exception: the year a teacher earns tenure should bring a sizeable pay increase.*

II. TRANSFER AND ASSIGNMENT

Equitable distribution of teachers. Seattle enjoys clear advantages in the quality of teachers it attracts. The district is attracting a high percentage of teachers who have attended more selective colleges. Fifty-eight percent of its new hires last year attended “more selective” or “most selective” colleges as ranked by U.S. News & World Report. Appropriately, these teachers work in both Seattle’s affluent and poor schools.

The “academic capital” that individual teachers bring into schools will help to improve school performance, yet Seattle collects little data about teachers’ own academic backgrounds nor does it know enough about turnover and retention at individual schools. *Seattle needs to collect important data on teachers, such as the number of times it takes a teacher to pass licensing tests and scores on aptitude tests, to ensure that teachers are equitably distributed among schools.*

Hiring timelines. When hiring new teachers, Seattle could better compete with surrounding districts by more aggressive action from the HR department and changing its timelines for hiring. *First, in January and February, Seattle needs to offer generic contracts to particularly talented individuals and those skilled in shortage subject areas. Second, Seattle should begin its spring transfer and hiring season in March, when principals would ideally receive their budgets for the following school year.*

Notification deadlines. Many districts have problems persuading resigning and retiring teachers to give notice early enough to allow the district time to hire a good replacement. *Seattle should give an early notification bonus for resigning and retiring teachers who tell the district by April 30. All resignations should be effective June 30 no matter when notice is given so that insurance coverage continues through the summer months.*

Site-based hiring. Seattle needs to do more to ensure that schools only have to accept teachers into their buildings that they want. There are a number of technical problems that stand in the way of this principle playing out smoothly, primarily: 1) displaced teachers are often assigned by HR without school consent and 2) teachers with super seniority (those with a physical disability and those leaving schools which have been targeted for intervention because of poor performance) can fill a vacancy, regardless of a principal’s view on the matter. *Seattle needs to eliminate all “forced placements,” whether by the HR office or the result of super seniority privileges. Principals should approve of all hires. If a displaced teacher is unable to find a new assignment, s/he should receive temporary work as a substitute with no more than a year on the payroll. If, during that year, the teacher still does not find a new assignment, s/he should be exited from the district.*

District-wide layoffs. With the high number of layoffs taking place in schools across the country this year, much attention has gone to the policy of using seniority as the determining factor in layoffs. A layoff policy that works in order of reverse seniority necessitates the highest number of jobs eliminated and can wreak havoc on schools, forced perhaps to give up teachers regardless of performance and often dismantling an effective team or program. *Seattle's next contract should allow performance to be a consideration when teachers are laid off.*

III. WORK DAY

Work day. While Seattle's secondary teachers put in a contractual work day (7 hours, 30 minutes) that is comparable to the national average, its elementary teachers have the shortest work day in the region at 7 hours, comparing unfavorably to an average of 7 hours, 38 minutes in the surrounding districts, and also well under the national average of 7 hours, 25 minutes, reported by the 100 TR³ districts (www.nctq.org/tr3). A 30-minute difference in a school day is equivalent to cutting 2½ weeks out of the school year. *Seattle should increase the contractual work day not just for elementary teachers but also secondary teachers up to 8 hours.*

Work year. All of Seattle's students are shortchanged on instructional days, receiving three fewer days this school year than the 180 days required by state law. (SPS obtained a waiver to convert three instructional days into professional development days.) *Seattle should adhere to the state requirement of 180 instructional days.*

Leave. Seattle teachers are away from the classroom too often, approximately 9 percent of the school year or 16 days in the school year. Teachers use, on average, almost all of their 10 days of sick leave, their 2 personal days per year, as well as 3 days for professional development purposes. *Teacher attendance should be a factor on the teacher evaluation. Seattle should put in place more forceful language, both prohibiting the taking of personal leave on Mondays and Fridays and limiting professional development activities during instructional time.*

Unlike many districts, there is no correlation in Seattle between high rates of absences and working in high-poverty schools. However, there is clearly a correlation between high rates of absences and student grade level, with elementary schools reporting twice the absence rate as high schools. Certain schools in Seattle stand out for their high absence rates, which we theorize reflects school leadership's degree of tolerance for absences. *Seattle needs to do a better job producing absence reports that provide monthly status reports on where individual schools stands in relation to district totals and averages and highlighting those teachers with above-average absence rates. Principals need to be allowed to request a second opinion from a doctor hired by the school district in the case of teachers whose habitual use of sick leave is excused by a doctor's note.*

IV. DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND EXITING INEFFECTIVE TEACHERS

Support for new teachers. Not all new teachers in Seattle receive a mentor. In the 2007-2008 school year, there were 145 first-year teachers; however, only 94 were assigned a mentor. While the mentor-to-teacher ratio is good—only 9 mentees per consulting teacher—mentors appear to work at a large number of schools, potentially limiting interaction between teachers and mentors. *Seattle should ensure that all first-year teachers are assigned a mentor.*

Teacher evaluations. Seattle is not identifying its poor-performing teachers. In the most recent school year, only 16 teachers out of a workforce of nearly 3,300 received an unsatisfactory evaluation, 0.5 percent of the workforce. While the frequency and timing of Seattle's evaluation system is exemplary, the current evaluation suffers from a number of structural flaws as shown in the following table:

Problems with the current evaluation system	Solutions
Student achievement is not adequately considered nor are any objective measures of student learning considered.	<i>Student achievement should be the preponderant criterion of a teacher's evaluation and include objective measures.</i>
There are only two ratings a teacher can receive (satisfactory or unsatisfactory).	<i>Evaluation ratings should distinguish between at least four levels of performance.</i>
The district deems a teacher who has merely tried to meet his/her goals to have met a satisfactory standard of performance, even if s/he has not been successful.	<i>Teachers should not receive a satisfactory evaluation rating if found ineffective in the classroom, even if s/he is deemed to have tried.</i>
There are few opportunities to evaluate a teacher in unannounced visits.	<i>Principals and other school leadership should observe all teachers regularly in brief, unscheduled visits.</i>
Principals are not held accountable for the quality of their ratings.	<i>Principals should be held responsible for evaluation ratings by such means of random third-party verifications.</i>

Support for struggling teachers. Struggling teachers in Seattle are offered a number of supports including a peer intervention program, and if performance is enough of a problem, then teachers are placed in an improvement plan. Principals are required to be heavily involved in teacher improvement plans, though much of this responsibility could easily be assigned to consulting teachers with subject-area expertise. Principals may be more inclined to more accurately rate teacher performance if the burden of remediation does not fall so heavily on their shoulders. *Consulting teachers should play an important role in teacher improvement plans.*

Exiting ineffective teachers. A teacher's right to due process can be unfairly disruptive to student learning. Teachers are entitled to a 60-classroom-day remediation plan (essentially three months), which is allowed to extend from one year into the next if teachers do not receive an unsatisfactory rating until the spring. This means that students can start a new school year with a teacher whose job is on the line. *Instead, any teacher whose remediation plan that spills over from one school year into the next should be assigned as a co-teacher the following school year so as to minimize the disruption to students if the principal decides to dismiss the teacher.*

Making tenure meaningful. Evidence of teacher effectiveness is not adequately considered when Seattle makes its tenure decisions. As virtually all teachers receive a satisfactory evaluation rating, virtually all teachers earn tenure, regardless of their actual performance. The decision to award tenure is a \$2 million investment by the state and district that is treated like a minor purchase. *District officials should take an active role in deciding tenure so that the distinction is more meaningful. Teachers should be given a large pay raise for earning tenure.*

What WASHINGTON STATE needs to do

I. COMPENSATION

Washington State's intervention on pay issues is a substantial obstacle to needed pay reforms. The state's efforts at equalizing pay across districts are ineffective. The state should not dictate how its districts pay its teachers, particularly since the state structure is based on a flawed logic that deems teachers with the most coursework as the most effective. *The state should eliminate the salary schedule and TRI structure—and should support district efforts at creating new compensation systems that reward effectiveness or that provide bonuses to attract teachers to hard-to-staff subjects and schools.*

II. TRANSFER AND ASSIGNMENT

Each year, districts are forced to reassign staff due to changes in enrollment or changes in the budget. Though much of this fluctuation is inevitable, some of the disruption to schools could be minimized if districts received their projected budgets earlier. The more time schools have to plan for impending changes in staff positions, the better prepared they will be to staff schools. Along the same lines, too many teachers notify schools of their resignation late, forcing schools to scramble to fill vacancies. *Pass the education budget in March rather than in April and consider a two-year budget. Impose a state deadline for teachers to notify districts of their resignation or retirement by June 30th, so as to provide principals with sufficient time to fill vacancies.*

III. WORK DAY

Allowing teachers to accumulate and be compensated for unused leave may unintentionally encourage teachers to take leave for reasons other than illness, partly because the cash payout isn't a large enough incentive to dissuade teachers from making inappropriate use of the leave. *Eliminate the accumulation of sick leave and any retirement payouts.*

IV. DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND EXITING INEFFECTIVE TEACHERS

Evaluations. Washington State already has a strong state evaluation policy by requiring annual evaluations of all teachers, but it should go a step further and require that all districts include *evidence of student learning as the preponderant criterion in teacher evaluations.*

Teacher dismissal. It takes far too long to dismiss a teacher found ineffective in the classroom. Not only is the 60-day probationary period too long (it should be calendar days, not classroom days, as is the current policy), but teachers can appeal a termination decision far too many times. *Shorten the probationary period to 60 calendar days. Only allow teachers to appeal a termination decision once. Appeals should be made before a panel of educators, not in a court of law.*

Tenure. Tenure in Washington State comes at too early a point in a teacher's career to have collected sufficient and adequate data that reflect teacher performance. *Increase the provisional period for new teachers to four years.*

Figure 22. How much planning time do elementary teachers receive a day?

District	Planning time provided during the student day, weekly
Lake Washington	250 minutes
Tacoma	230 minutes
Highline	225 minutes
Northshore	225 minutes
Renton	225 minutes
Everett	180 minutes
Shoreline	165 minutes
Bellevue	160 minutes
Mercer Island	150 minutes
Tukwila	150 minutes
Seattle	150 minutes
Edmonds	Not stated in CBA

Source: Calendars and collective bargaining agreements from Seattle and surrounding school districts.

Seattle elementary teachers tie for last place in the amount of planning time teachers are given during the student day. Some districts receive additional planning time beyond what is shown here, for example, through early dismissals of students each week, as is the case in Highline and Mercer Island. Seattle does not.

Collaborative planning time. Although Seattle does not provide teachers with additional preparation time for collaborative purposes, the contract makes it clear that a teacher's own planning time should also be used for joint planning: "*The primary purpose of planning periods in elementary, middle and high schools is for the individual teacher to prepare, plan and conference; however, this time shall also be used for period conferences, departmental meetings and other cooperative group planning.*" The explicit language is important. Other school districts, such as Baltimore, have had problems with how these planning periods can be used due to the lack of such language.

In addition to the planning period, the contract permits schools to have after-school faculty meetings once a week, although such meetings are restricted by the contract to one hour.

The school year

In 2009-2010, Seattle students will receive three fewer days of instruction than state law requires.

In the 2009-2010 school year, Seattle teachers officially work 184 days. This work year includes seven days without students, a number comparable to both other districts in Puget Sound (which average just under seven days without students), as well as districts throughout the country.¹⁸ Nationally, 75 percent of the 100 TR³ districts have 6 or more teacher work days and 40 percent of districts provide teachers with at least 10 work days beyond the student school year.

¹⁸ In addition to designated work days, students are released early five days during the year for teacher professional development.

¹⁹ RCW 28A.150.220 (3), Washington Legislature 2009 House Bill 2261 and Seattle Public Schools 2009-2010 school calendar. Seattle was granted three waiver days, which is what legally allows the district to provide fewer instructional days than the statutory minimum. These three days are used for professional development.

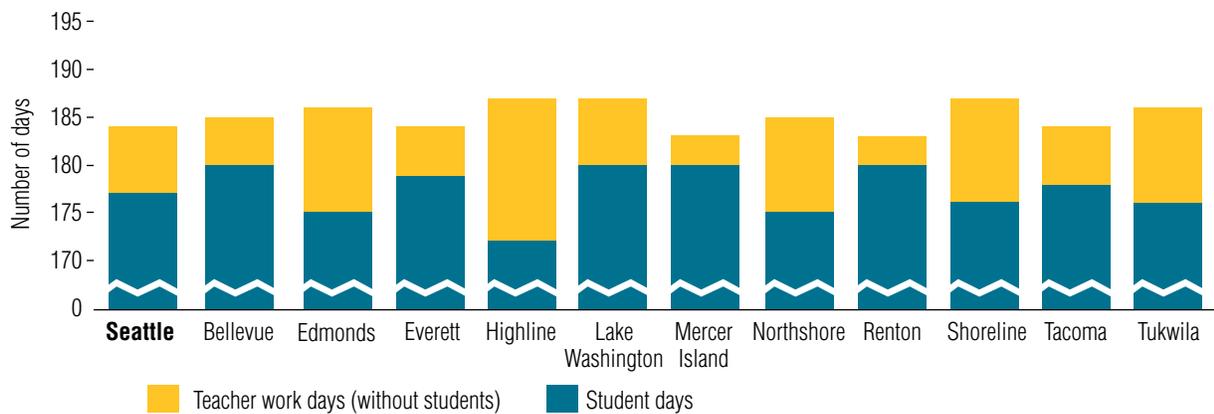


Seattle's calendar fails to provide students with Washington's legally required number of instructional days (180). State law was recently amended to explicitly encourage districts to exceed this minimum;¹⁹ however, the state school board granted Seattle (and 75 other school districts in the state) a waiver to convert three days of instruction into professional development time, which means the district is only providing 177 days of instruction this year.²⁰

In fact, as the next section will discuss, Seattle teachers are taking on average an additional 3 days away from the classroom to participate in professional development activities, further reducing a teacher's contact time, exclusive of any leave, with his or her students down from 177 days to only 174 days.

The number of instructional days in Seattle is not only less than required by law, it is also less than many of the districts in the Puget Sound as well as across the country, which both average 179 student instructional days. While two or three days may seem insignificant, even a few lost school days can have a negative impact on student performance.²¹

Figure 23. How many days do teachers work in the Puget Sound region?



Source: Calendars and collective bargaining agreements from Seattle and surrounding school districts from the 2009-2010 school year.

Seattle is not alone in its failure to provide 180 days of student instruction, as required by Washington State law.

20 Seattle's elementary students attend school for 177 days with a school day length of 390 minutes. Bellevue and Mercer students attend school for 180 days and have a school day of 420 minutes.

21 Marcotte, D.E., & Hemelt, S.W. (2007). *Unscheduled school closings and student performance*. Bonn, Germany: Institute for the Study of Labor.



Strengths & weaknesses of teacher scheduling in Seattle

Strengths	Weaknesses
Length of the work day	
None discerned	<p>The elementary teacher school day is still a full 30 minutes shorter than that of Seattle secondary teachers, the consequence of a budget problem 34 years ago. The finances were resolved long ago, salaries have improved, but the hours have not been corrected. Compounded over the work year, this results in a difference of over two weeks.</p> <p>The secondary teacher on-site work day is better at 7 hours, 30 minutes, but should be raised to 8 hours.</p>
Daily planning time	
None discerned	<p>Elementary teachers are given less planning time than the majority of districts in the Puget Sound area.</p> <p>District policies do not explicitly provide for any collaborative time; they only acknowledge that individual planning time may be used for cooperative purposes including department or grade-level meetings.</p>
Length of the teacher school year	
Teachers have seven work days without students in attendance.	Seattle's calendar includes too few student instructional days. Seattle's 177 instructional days is below what is required by state law.

Recommendations for the teacher work day and year

- 1. Lengthen the teacher work day.** Ideally the teacher work day should be eight hours, as is standard in most professions; however, an increase in the elementary teacher work day to 7 hours and 30 minutes (the length of the secondary teacher work day) would at least put teacher time on par with other school districts in the Puget Sound area and resolve the problem of identical wages but different time expectations.
- 2. Provide elementary teachers with more planning time.** Because the discrepancy in planning time is undoubtedly due to their shorter work day, Seattle should use the additional 30 minutes per day to increase the amount of planning time elementary teachers receive. This would give teachers in Seattle a similar amount of planning time to what teachers in surrounding districts receive.
- 3. Designate weekly meetings for team/grade level collaborative planning.** The contract currently recognizes the need for collaborative time, but does not indicate an expectation of how often this should occur. The contract requires teachers to be on site an additional five hours per week beyond the student day. The district could designate two of these hours for collaborative planning. Schools should attempt to arrange teacher schedules so that teachers of the same grade or subject level have common planning periods.
- 4. Meet the state's legal requirement of 180 student instructional days.** The State legislature encourages districts to exceed the 180-day minimum, but Seattle instead reduced the number of days. The district should strive to provide students with as much instructional time as possible, beginning by increasing the number of student days from 177 to 180.

The Professional Educator Standards Board Members

Stephen Rushing is Chair of the PESB and is a Principal in the Bethel School District.

Bruce Becker is a Technology Integration Specialist in the Lake Washington School District.

Lori Blanchard is Chair of the Montesano School Board.

June Canty is a Professor and Director of Education Programs at Washington State University, Vancouver.

Randy Dorn is the Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Colleen Fairchild is a Third Grade Teacher in the North Kitsap School District.

Molly Hamaker-Teals is a Math Teacher/Math Coach in the Kennewick School District.

Myra Johnson is a School Counselor in the Clover Park School District.

Roshni Jokhi is a Special Education Teacher in the Sedro-Woolley School District.

Shannon Lawson is a K-8 Teacher on special assignment as Program Director of HomeWorks! in the Cheney School District.

Gil Mendoza is Superintendent of the Sumner School District.

Nancy Smith is a Highly Capable and Mentor Program Coordinator in the Lake Stevens School District.

Barbara Taylor is an Integrated Science and Biology Teacher in the Othello School District.



Washington's "Race to the Top" Proposal

Overview document

October 2009





■ **What is Race to the Top and How Does it Work ?**

- RTTT is a U.S. Dept. of Education competition that will provide \$4.35 billion in funding for selected states to advance K-12 school reform programs
- Applicants must prove a commitment to key department objectives and submit evidence of progress in specific areas

■ **How is Washington State Getting Involved?**

- Race To The Top complements the state's existing reform efforts
- Governor Gregoire has committed to submitting a Round 1 proposal and has asked Superintendent Dorn and State Board of Education Chair Ryan to supervise the process
- A work team has been assembled and given specific responsibilities

■ **What is the Timetable?**

- Round 1 proposals are tentatively due in January 2010; 5-8 finalists will compete in a second round, probably next spring
- Over the next 3 months, the work teams will identify and address key gaps in grant requirements and complete the application for review and submission

Race to the Top provides discretionary funds to states that meet specific criteria for education reform



Proposals must include the following:

- Description of progress to date on specified criteria and on any optional initiatives
- Proof that reform efforts:
 - Address the needs of the state’s full range of students
 - Include effective strategies for change and improving student outcomes
 - Are equitable for all students and districts and can scale state-wide
 - Are research-based
 - Are sustainable without RTTT funding
- “Assurances” that the state is committed to:
 - National standards and assessments
 - Using data systems to support instruction
 - Teacher effectiveness
 - Turning around struggling schools
- Financial data comparing FY 2009 funding relative to FY 2008 and showing that education funding has increased as a portion of the state budget
- Description of support for application by key stakeholders (districts, unions, foundations)
- Budget detailing how grant funds and other resources will be used to improve student outcomes, prioritizing high-need districts
- Detailed implementation plan for each reform criterion including activities, goals and rationale, timing, responsibilities and targets



Each of the four “assurances” has specific criteria

Category	State conditions criteria	Reform plan goal
A. Standards and assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Developing and adopting common standards and assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Supporting a transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments
B. Data Systems to Support Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Accessing and using State data (e.g. parents, students, teachers, principals, researchers, policymakers)▪ Using data to improve instruction
C. Great Teachers and Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Providing alternative pathways for aspiring teachers and principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Differentiating teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance (for PD, compensation/promotion, tenure and removal)▪ Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals▪ Reporting the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs▪ Providing effective support to teachers and principals
D. Turning Around Struggling Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Intervening in the lowest-performing schools and districts▪ Increasing the supply of high-quality charter schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Turning around struggling schools

States may strengthen their proposals by illustrating progress against additional priorities



Proposed Priority	Description	Type of priority
▪ Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)	▪ Develop a plan to (i) offer a rigorous course of study in STEM, (ii) work with industry experts, universities, etc, to prepare teachers for integrating STEM content, and (iii) prepare more students to pursue advanced study and careers in STEM	Competitive
▪ Expansion and Adaptation of Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems	▪ Expand longitudinal systems to include data from special ed, ELL and early childhood programs, human resources, postsecondary and other areas	Invitational
▪ P-20 Coordination and Vertical Alignment	▪ Coordinate early childhood, K-12 schools, postsecondary and workforce organizations to create a more seamless P-20 path for students	Invitational
▪ School-Level Conditions for Reform and Innovation	▪ Provide schools flexibilities and autonomies where appropriate including staff, selecting school schedules, budgets, etc.	Invitational



Race to the Top project structure

- Sets vision and proposal direction
- Approves and signs final proposal
- Ensures stakeholders feedback is solicited

Steering Committee

- Governor Christine Gregoire
- Randy Dorn, Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Mary Jean Ryan, Chair, State Board of Education

- Sets clear direction and expectations for working team
- Reviews progress
- Recommends a final proposal to the steering committee
- Removes application development roadblocks
- Collects feedback from stakeholders and ensures viewpoints are considered

Coordinating Committee

- Judy Hartmann, Education Policy Advisor, Office of Governor, Project lead
- Alan Burke, Deputy Superintendent for K-12 Education Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Edie Harding, Executive Director, State Board of Education
- Jeffrey Vincent, State Board of Education
- Jennifer Wallace, Professional Educator Standards Board

Project support

- Proposal writer --Kathleen Plato
- Logistics – Vittrice Abel
- Data request coordinator –Kathleen Plato
- Public relations and communications - Kate Lykins Brown
- Consulting team

- Drives day-to-day project activity
- Organizes project and milestones
- Synthesizes and develop recommendations
- Prepares for meetings with coordinating and steering committees
- Conducts analyses
- Assists in proposal preparation

Working team

Standards and assessment	Great teachers and leaders	Data systems	Turnaround Schools	STEM
Co-lead – Alan Burke Co-lead - Jessica Vavrus	Co-lead – Jennifer Wallace Co-lead – Judy Hartmann	Lead – Bob Butts	Co-lead – Edie Harding Co-lead- Janell Newman	Lead – Bob Butts
				Conditions for reform Lead – Judy Hartmann



Working Teams

1. Standards and assessment

Leads: Jessica Vavrus

Support: Joe Willhoft, Mary Holmberg, Judi Moseby, Anne Banks, Kathe Taylor

2. Great teachers and leaders

Leads: Jennifer Wallace, Judy Hartmann

Support: Kathleen Plato, David Kinnunen, Sam Chandler, Mary Jo Johnson, Michaela Miller

3. Data Systems to support instruction

Lead: Bob Butts

Support: Peter Tamayo, Robin Munson, Enrico Yap, Dennis Small, K12 Data Governance Committee

4. Turning around struggling schools

Lead: Edie Harding
Janell Newman

Support: Existing SBE SPA Committee

5. Overall Diagnostic (committees)

Dropout

Co-Leads: Dan Newell, Alan Burke

Support: Helen Malagon, Rudi Bertschi, Robert Harkins, John-Paul Chaisson-Cardenas, Denny Hurtado, Mona Johnson, Annie Blackledge, Reginald Reed, Cheryl Young, Sarah Rich, Mary Seaton, Leslie Pyper, Dixie Grunenfelder, Arcella Hall

Achievement Gap

Lead: Erin Jones

Support: Robert Harkins, John-Paul Chaisson-Cardenas, Rudi Bertschi, Dan Barkley, Tonya Middling

Core 24

Lead: Kathe Taylor

Support: Arcella Hall and others from the SBE Core 24 Task Force

6. Additional priorities

Stem

Lead: Bob Butts

Support: Dennis Milliken, Greta Bornemann, Mary McClellan, Gilda Wheller, Kathe Taylor, Shannon Edwards

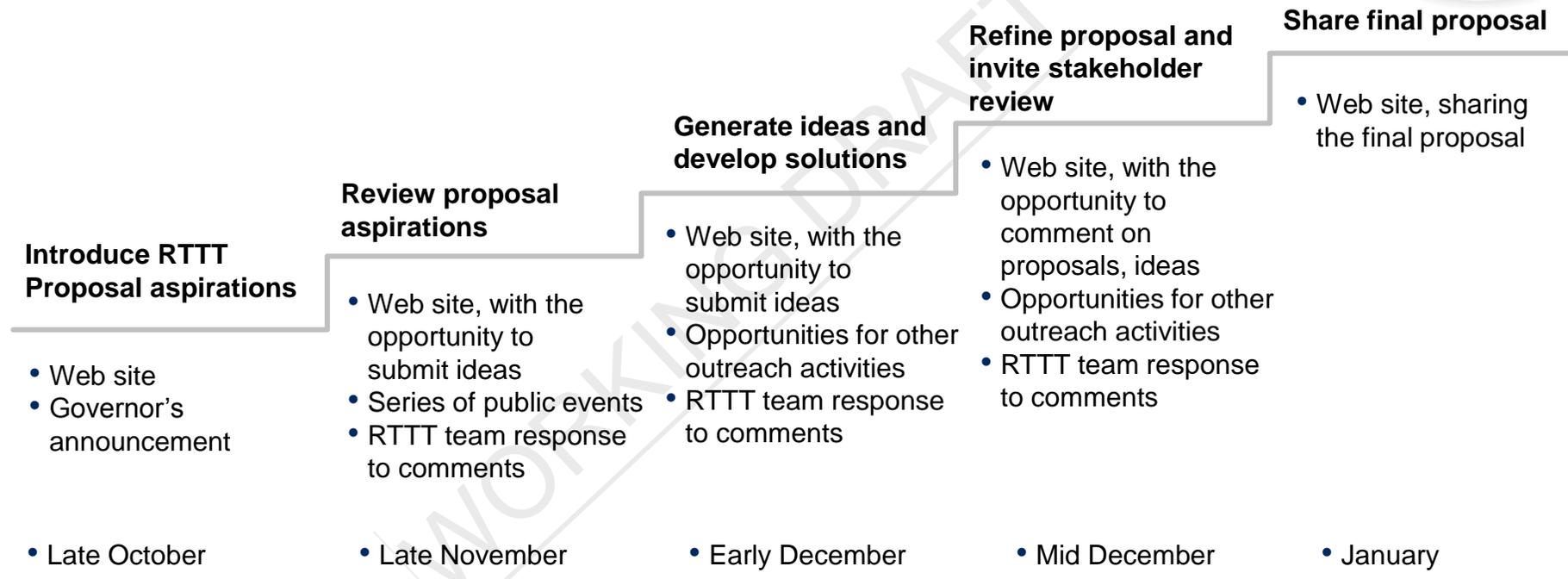


Five activities will guide the proposal process

	Description	Timing		
		October	November	December
Diagnostic	A detailed diagnostic on the WA state system's current situation detailing strengths and improvement opportunities	Starts in October		
Aspiration-setting	A shared vision of success by key stakeholders within WA, including leaders of local education agencies and elected officials and their staffs	Starts in October		
Strategic initiative development	A detailed description of strategic initiatives, including key activities, rationale, responsibilities, and expected impact on student achievement		Starts in November	
Implementation planning	A clear path to successful implementation and sustainability including key milestones over 3-5 years, performance metrics, projected trajectories and their justification		Starts in November	
Proposal compilation	A compilation and integration of all aspects of the key strategic planning for each of the four assurances into a tight and effective proposal		Starts in November	Ends in December



How and when Washington will engage stakeholders in RTTT



- Communications will come from the Governor's office, OSPI and the State Board of Education
- Exact dates will be determined and announced on the RTTT Web site

**VANCOUVER SCHOOL DISTRICT PRESENTATION ON
INTELLIGENT DATA SYSTEMS**

BACKGROUND

In an effort to showcase relevant and interesting work in local school districts, we contacted the Vancouver School district about its work on data systems for student achievement. In light of our discussions on accountability and student achievement, it seemed valuable for the SBE members to learn how one district works from the classroom to the board room, utilizing data to improve teaching and guide policy focused on student achievement. The Vancouver School Board examined the following question: What evidence do we have from a whole system perspective that our decisions are making a positive difference in student achievement?

The Vancouver School district maintains that successful school systems can narrow the achievement gap by adopting a data-based, continuous improvement model. Such a model charts and guides individual student growth over time, requiring and using data systems that provide real-time information to students, teachers, parents, administrators, and board members. The representation of data should be tailored to the needs and purpose of each audience. Most importantly, the data must be actionable; a key ingredient to performance management. Members of the Vancouver School District staff will share with the Board how they are currently using their data and their plans for its continued future implementation.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

There may be some policy elements that the SBE wishes to incorporate into its upcoming work on performance report cards.

EXPECTED ACTION

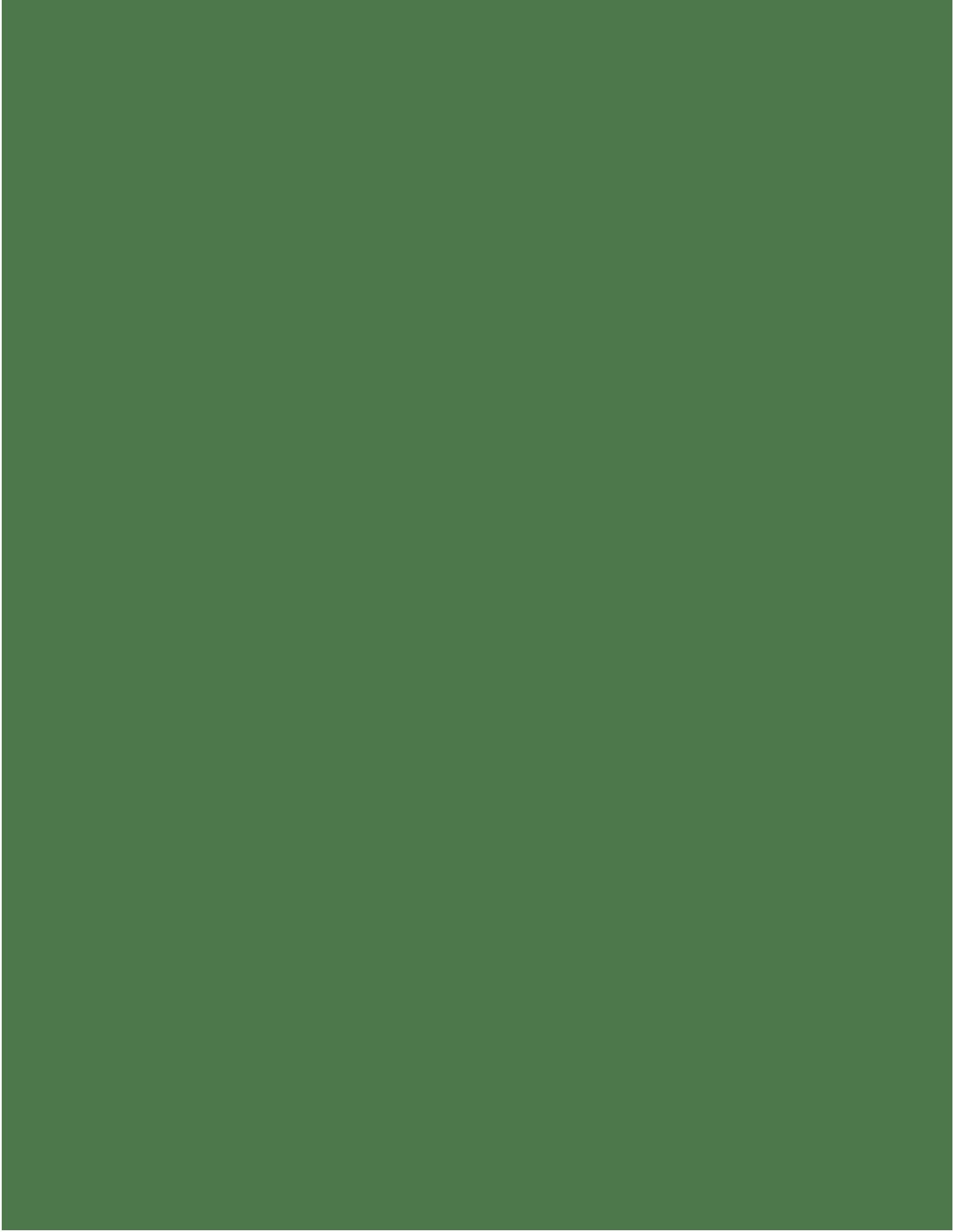
None

*A Report for School Boards in Planning
for and Using Data Systemically*

WHAT SCHOOL BOARDS NEED TO KNOW:

Data Conversations





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School board members serve their local communities as stewards of public trust charged with making decisions that ensure all students have access to high quality learning experiences in efficient and well managed environments.

To govern effectively, it is essential that school board members have access to the kinds of data that will result in informed decisions. For more than a decade, the National School Boards Association has helped school boards think about their role within the context of an eight-part framework called the Key Work of School Boards. Although each component of this model can be supported by data, the particular type of data and its usefulness will vary as boards move their discussions through this framework.

The topic of data can be complex and confusing to individuals who are not accustomed to defining, collecting, storing, manipulating, analyzing, interpreting, sharing, or displaying it as a routine part of their jobs. This document is designed to provide board members with a common vocabulary around data, an explanation of the various types of data, a series of critical questions that should be asked at various points in data conversations, and resources to assist in those conversations. This document focuses

on the local education agency (LEA) and its use of data in policy considerations at the local, state, and federal levels. School board members need a comfort level about data that allows them to ask the district staff meaningful questions based on the information presented to the school board

DATA RICH AND INFORMATION POOR

Historically data has been utilized within K-12 education to inform decisions at many different levels, from the classroom teacher's decision about what grade to assign or which instructional intervention to use to an administrator's projections about student enrollment or school boundaries and bus routes. Unfortunately, districts have frequently been left with a multitude of data points, yet very little information on which to base decisions. This is a result of systems that were difficult to access, the failure to collect the right piece of data, or the timeliness with which the data could be reviewed.

Data is neutral. It is neither positive nor negative, yet how it is perceived and used within a district's decision-making structure establishes a culture that views its use as either a punitive club or a tool that contributes to positive, continuous improvement efforts. Often questions are asked and data provided that do not align directly with the initial question because there is a lack of understanding about what a particular piece of data represents. Necessary longitudinal data systems and the establishment of appropriate policies at the local, state and federal level need to be understood in greater depth by all education stakeholders: school board members, superintendents, teachers, parents and community



members. This is critical to advance the use of data for strategic decisions. A *longitudinal data system* can be defined as a data system capable of tracking student information over time and efficiently and accurately managing, analyzing, and using education data and information.

We are at a crucial point in education in the United States of America. We have an opportunity to provide students with an unprecedented educational experience. A paradigm shift is underway for the next plateau – a use of *Intelligent Data* to inform learning, teaching, and operational decisions. When looking closer at intelligence, it can be defined as what people do in terms of abstract reasoning and deduction. When applying to this data, and specifically intelligent data, skilled data analysis must be aligned to using this data in an intelligent manner for data-driven decisions. Data intelligence is relational to the intelligent use of data.

This paradigm shift includes moving away from simply reporting data to the state department of education, to using data in thoughtful ways to inform all decisions at the school district level: administrative, human resource, financial and instructional. Having strategic and thoughtful data-driven dialogue that produces effective decisions should be a priority with a school board. When a school board identifies where it can make effective use of data as a part of its systemic process, the decisions linked to that data can be evaluated resulting in increased accountability.

Improving student achievement should serve as a key motivator for all district decisions. Modern data systems, with tools that let teachers, administrators and board members see results in a timely fashion, encourage greater use of these data. As the demand for data has grown, so too has the need for better leadership training around its use in the classroom and the boardroom. In addition, community members who want to evaluate schools in different neighborhoods, or parents who want to track how their child is doing in school, need the knowledge base and skill set to correctly use the data that is made available in print and online. While technology tools for data analysis and presentation are increasingly common, many districts have yet to experience the transformational impact that data-driven decision-making can have on a learning community.

As a school board member, asking questions is your responsibility. Some of the questions school boards need to be critically asking, discussing and thinking about include:

- *How do we measure our success?*
- *Is the data collected aligned to produce results in a format that can be used to reflect on the success of the organization?*
- *How are we using data to inform decisions in a way that impacts our definition of success?*
- *In what way do the data system and processes promote action?*
- *Have we allowed time on the calendar for data driven discussions that are productive and focused?*
- *What processes are in place that will ensure continuity for year-to-year review of progress, even if there are staff changes?*

As this report dives into each of these topics in greater detail, school board members will be better prepared to understand what barriers may be in the way of these conversations as well as how to further the strategic goals and objectives of the school district – ultimately increasing student achievement for each individual student.



Local education agencies (LEAs) and state departments of education (SEAs) have historically not been consistent about the use of data.

Some state departments of education collected data longitudinally for some time and others are just beginning. This data may or may not have made the way back to LEAs in a timely fashion to impact decisions being made in the classroom. While data played an important role in terms of reporting and high-level accountability, these data have not been useful in a transformative way for LEAs or even SEAs in programmatic improvement.

Widely, LEAs have not used or collected data longitudinally. There are numerous reasons. Some of these include:

- the fact that the data provided to LEAs from the SEAs is not very informative for strategic decisions at an LEA level
- the data is sent too late in order to make instructional decisions
- a lack of data quality exists and timely information is missing
- the frequency with which the data is collected is not sufficient
- disparate data systems with no deployed capability of data interoperability, exchange or reporting standards
- a lack of capacity to build comprehensive longitudinal data systems

Since the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, a greater emphasis has been placed upon the effective use of data. With the accountability required of LEAs and SEAs, educational organizations have paid closer attention to data being collected as well as the quality of this data. Performance and financial information have been tied to the data and accuracy of reporting has never been higher.

WHERE ARE WE TODAY?

Since 2002, the federal government has provided funding for state longitudinal data systems as part of the Educational Technical Assistance Act. This competitive grant administered by the Institute of Educational Sciences (IES), is intended to help states create “systems that are intended to enhance the ability of states to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, and use education data, including individual student records. The data systems developed with funds from these grants should help states, districts, schools, and teachers make data-driven decisions to improve student learning, as well as facilitate research to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps.” This grant program, referred to as the State Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) Grant Program, has been a starting point for many SEAs. To date 41 states and the District of Columbia have received one of the State Longitudinal Data Systems Grants. The focus for most of the states has been to build greater capacity within the existing SLDS, or begin building a SLDS.

The Data Quality Campaign and Managing Partners have identified ten essential elements for a longitudinal data system. These ten essential elements serve as a basic foundation for state departments of education to build a longitudinal data system. The key piece to understand is how these elements relate to a district longitudinal data system.



As states receive the SLDS grants, a disconnect often exists between the SEA and LEA data systems. An emphasis should be placed on vertical reporting and the connections between the various data systems. Vertical reporting involves getting quality data from the LEA up to the state's data system and also from the state's data system down to the LEA. Districts and states must engage in conversation with one another around ways to identify, collect and report data. Specifically this includes:

- data transaction
- data transformation
- data analysis
- decision outcomes for student performance and achievement.

As a school board member, it is important to establish that your district's staff is engaged in an ongoing dialogue with the state education agency to ensure the needs of the LEAs are represented in data collection, management and analysis.

These data transactions between the LEA and SEA are vital for several reasons. The data that the school district collects must be represented accurately, with the same meaning and in the same format for the state to understand and utilize.

Data transformation involves a revolution in how data is collected, managed, used and discussed. Unless LEAs and SEAs work together to, strategically discuss these issues, both groups will become frustrated. A common and mutually agreed upon way data is talked about by the state and the district will provide a radical shift and an improvement in schools.

Decision outcomes for student performance and achievement require timely reporting of data bi-directionally – from the LEA to the SEA and from the SEA to the LEA. It is necessary for this data flow to be timely. For example, data from state assessments often is referred to as “autopsy data.” The results from the assessment are returned after students have moved on to another grade level. This data is not the best data to use in the classroom for individual students, but can be used in other ways. For example, looking at state results in fourth grade mathematics over time may indicate that for the measurement standard, students perform at a low level. Using this piece of data can inform the LEA leaders and ask questions such as: is the fourth grade not sufficiently addressing measurement across the

elementary grade levels or does the LEA need to offer professional development for the elementary grades in content and instructional strategies for teaching measurement?

Determining how to use this data and what the decision outcomes for this data are going to be, will provide a consistent dialogue between the LEA and SEA and set appropriate expectations around the data. In addition, school board members will know the suitable questions that can be asked based upon the data.

From the school board perspective, there are several questions that can be addressed to SEA and state policy makers around connecting state and local longitudinal data systems:

- What information do you need in order to have a meaningful dialogue with the SEA and policymakers?
- What type of questions would the school district likely be able to answer from the existing longitudinal data?
- What should the LEA consider as the state is building the LDS?
- How can we ensure the LEA is considered when designing the state LDS to take into account seamless data transactions?

MOVING TO MEANINGFUL DATA

Longitudinal Data Systems and Trend Analytics

A misconception often exists between longitudinal data systems and trend analytics. Longitudinal data systems are typically those that are described as collecting student level data. This data most often includes basic enrollment, demographic, program participation and assessment performance. In addition, funding for each program is typically represented. Longitudinal data systems do not often support continuous growth in learning amongst students. The data elements that could be used for student achievement, such as formative assessments, are lacking.

Student performance data has typically been reported by grade level. While this information can be helpful in improving curriculum and lessons by grade level, this information is not as meaningful in improving learning for each individual student. For example, if a student in third grade takes a mathematics assessment, the data is reported under

third grade. When that student takes the fourth grade math assessment, the data is reported under fourth grade results. This information is not detailed enough to track student-level progress through the grade levels. A teacher requires reports that provide student progress against the learning standards, the student's misconceptions and where instruction can be provided to further that individual student. Without this timely and actionable data, teachers simply cannot personalize education for every student which would ultimately increase student achievement. In addition, effective collaboration and best practice sharing around this data and instructional strategies with peers is required.

What appears to be trend data can be misleading. Trend analytics can be defined as what has happened in the past in terms of student performance, attendance, or even business processes, and analyzing the data in order to make assumptions and predictions of what will happen in the future in order to help each individual student. Policy makers, teachers, community members and school boards are losing confidence in public education. These data truly fail to show the progress of the students over time because the data systems report snapshots of the current population rather than track a cohort of students, or the same group of students over time. Many reports are collected and building a longitudinal data system that can truly represent cohorts of students over time serves as critical to the improvement of school districts. School board members should consider if they are looking at snapshots of populations, or comparing a cohort of students and viewing their progress over time.

Many reports can be derived from a longitudinal data system. A system needs to be in place to find what is meaningful in the next steps towards improving student achievement or business processes. How do these data systems raise flags to the surface such that those specific pieces of data are displayed? An attendance report can be important in traditional longitudinal data, but transforming that report by marrying the demographics of those individuals and their attendance might prove more valuable in providing support for those specific students.

Consider dropouts in a school district. Certain data is collected about these students. In the analysis of the data collected, a trend has been identified that certain characteristics of a specific cohort of dropouts exist. Based on this data, how might we apply this information to provide assistance to those students? How can the school district provide this information

in a timely, proactive fashion? These types of trend analytics provide clearer answers to address the individual student and not just the same grade level statistics from year to year. There is tremendous potential to impact the educational experience through facilitating dialogue around effective reports.

School districts have limited resources and time, so as a school board member, having these conversations with district staff, state and federal policy makers can add those lenses to data, which would then prove the data invaluable. School districts must purposely and in a focused way accomplish this. Quality longitudinal data systems can support districts in achieving this.

WESTERN HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

Western Heights Public School District in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma has been utilizing longitudinal data as an integral part of school improvement for over a decade. This school district of 3,200 students is very culturally diverse and possesses a high mobility rate. The district administration desired to use longitudinal data, based on cohorts, to identify necessary areas for improvement and target each individual student for continued growth in student achievement.

Western Heights Public School District decided to implement the Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) to solve the problems of interoperability between all of the various software applications. The SIF Specification is an open standard designed to define data and how to move that data consistently within a school district and between a school district and the state department of education. The district staff knew that the data needed to be accurate and get to the right place at the right time. All of the data from the account login, two assessment systems, student information system, food services, grade book, library, data warehouse, instructional management system and transportations systems are now available to everyone in almost real-time through a dashboard.

Once placing such an importance on longitudinal data, Western Heights Public School District in an 18 month time frame:

- increased student achievement over 30%
- generated \$1.3M in 18 months in additional federal and state funding
- improved accuracy, consistency, and timeliness of student data

“All aspects of the system need consideration including technical, professional development, curriculum, assessment, data reporting and many others. We want to change from what we have done to what we want to be able to do.”

2008 Data and Learning Summit Final Report

This paradigm shift of using *Intelligent Data* to inform learning and teaching requires considerations for the entire system. As a school board member, you want to ensure resources are aligned to provide tools that support a culture of inquiry, and shift from a monologue to a dialogue about the role of data in decision making. School boards can model the kinds of questions they ask and then act on the findings by appropriately resourcing the functional areas.

In order for this to occur, it will be necessary to allocate resources, from a financial and time perspective, to manage the shift in culture. In order to facilitate this change, think about:

- What communication mechanisms are in place?
- What questions should the school board ask that will better enable the administrator to build a culture of collaboration and inquiry?
- What resources may need to be shifted to obtain the long term gain?
- What barriers exist that need to be addressed?
- What possible professional development does the school board need to better understand to enable a culture of inquiry?

As the remainder of this document addresses additional components to be considered when building a culture of collaboration, building a longitudinal data system and informing policy at a local, state and national level, reflect on the current situation in the LEA that you serve.



DATA NEEDS FOR VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS

Numerous stakeholders within the education ecosystem exist. In making decisions regarding a longitudinal data system in the school district, the stakeholders that need to be considered include:

- Teachers
- Administrators
- Students
- Parents
- Community members
- Higher Education Staff
- Local, State and Federal Policymakers
- Information Technology/Information System Managers
- Chief Information Officers/Chief Technology Officers

Each of the stakeholders will want to ask different questions and need different types of data and information. Teachers will want information about their students that can impact their decisions in the classroom in teaching and learning. The focus for *Administrators* will change based on which stakeholder group has raised a question, and will vary depending on where their positions are based – the building or the district. For example, a district administrator might want to focus on data based across all fourth grade students to make needed changes in the curriculum. A building administrator will want to know about teacher performance and to determine professional development strategies.

Students and Parents will care about data pertaining to their assessments, progress toward learning standards and meeting graduation requirements. Parents will also be interested in attendance and disciplinary actions while the community is interested in the overall performance of its schools because of the impact on everything from the quality of the future workforce, to the value of real estate. *Higher Education* is interested in student success factors, identifying necessary remediation, monitoring the performance of graduates from their institutions and developing predictive models to target potential students for success in their environment.

Finally, State and Federal Policymakers focus on what data is necessary to impact decisions at programmatic funding levels. For example, what programs are most successful or which programs can be replicated to

impact student achievement? Because answers to such questions drive funding decisions to expand or eliminate programs, it is essential that individuals have the best possible data in a format that helps clarify their thinking.

At a district level, the focus is on the student key performance indicators (KPIs) that impact student achievement. Key performance indicators include metrics that measure and report out results. For example, if we are measuring student achievement, KPI might be the course completion rate, instructional time or increasing scores on assessments. Defining the KPIs first ensures expectations are expressed and that this data can be included in the data set to report out for those measures.

As school board members, it is important to understand each point of view as the school district begins to build or improve upon the current longitudinal data system and processes that exist within the LEA.

Policy Questions

- *What other stakeholders need to be considered in the school district served?*
- *What is the best way to include each of these stakeholders in a conversation around data?*
- *What mechanisms need to be put into place to ensure communication is present and consistent across all stakeholders?*
- *What potential questions need to be asked of the data system to provide answers to each of these stakeholders?*
- *What messages need to be communicated about possible resources to each of these stakeholders?*

UNDERSTANDING THE TYPES OF DATA NEEDED

“Since NCLB, schools have learned they must use data to improve student learning for all students. As schools use data, they quickly learn they must use more than student achievement data to understand what they can do differently to get better results.”

Victoria Bernhardt, Executive Director
Education for the Future Initiative

According to Victoria Bernhardt, there are four types of data that school districts collect – student learning, demographic, perceptual and school process data. These different data types focus on different areas of data to improve not only instruction, but the overall educational organization. Each of these types of data is important for school districts to be aware of in order to make systemic policy decisions. In addition, according to Knapp, et. al, teacher characteristics, behavior and professional learning need to be taken into consideration.

The Family Education Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) provides federal legislation for the protection of identifiable data and information about students and families. Appropriate state legislation should be in place to ensure that the needs of schools are met as well as meeting the federal law. Guidance is provided by the United States Department of Education around the interpretation and implementation of FERPA.

In further examination of the types of data necessary to support students and student achievement, Reeves (2005) suggests that there are three tiers of information to be accounted for:

1. Typical accountability data
2. Measurable indicators to reflect professional practices
3. School narrative



The typical accountability data includes test scores, attendance, discipline, etc. At the surface, these types of data provide basic snapshot and demographic information. Also included in this information should be overall assessment data – formative, summative, benchmark and diagnostic. This data should also be able to answer individual questions about the student and their progress towards achievement at the individual level. For example, what science courses has a student taken and what was the science assessment score?

Like student learning, creating measurable indicators to reflect professional practice can be difficult. Pinpointing the appropriate data to capture information about curriculum, teaching and leadership proves important when creating a culture of inquiry and in analyzing practices at the school district.

Finally, school narrative data presents a qualitative context for quantitative data – the story behind the numbers. Data and information can be portrayed any way to support the cause or point that a LEA is trying to make and/or support. However, the more important question remains as to what is the data truly representing? ***The true story behind the numbers is critical to systematic improvement and analysis. Once the story is represented, a school district can move from analysis to action.***

Policy Questions

- *What needs to be in place in order to determine what this data should include?*
- *What information does our LEA need in order to better provide support for students and in reaching greater levels of achievement?*
- *What do the district leaders need to communicate to the state department of education and other state policy makers about the types of data that need to be collected?*
- *What barriers exist in preventing this data from being collected?*
- *How is the state interpreting FERPA and how does that impact the data that is needed for a longitudinal data system?*
- *How does the LEA define professional practice and what data needs to be collected to reflect this?*

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE IN CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Organizational structure is one of the most important components. Change management without structure to sustain that change will cause failure and unnecessary stresses to the organizational structure. Without the underlying foundation in place, the support and follow-through will not occur. According to the Colorado Learning Foundation Guidebook for Best Practices in Closing the Achievement Gap (2008), the following must be adhered to:

- Culture of high expectations and accountability for all students
- Targeted assessments and intensive use of data to guide instruction
- Individualized support for struggling students
- Active engagement of teachers in school leadership and decision-making
- Substantial time for collaborative planning and options for professional development
- Commitment to core academics and standards but not at the expense of other important learning in the arts and humanities
- Stable and consistent leadership
- Small learning communities of educators
- Flexibility to use resources to support student needs and reinforce school culture
- Economically integrated student bodies

In the role of a school board member, ensuring that the administration has the support to implement organizational change is crucial. Without this leadership, shifting to the use of intelligent data will not occur. Barriers that exist may be difficult to remove, but the results will be worthwhile.

Once policies have been established to provide a venue for each of these guidelines to occur, ongoing structure and support will be needed. Intentional conversations and structures are essential to continue growth and ensure the changes become engrained into the culture of the school district.

Policy Questions

- *As a school board, what needs to be considered to enable the best practices?*
- *How is this information best communicated to state leaders in order to build support for resources? For example,*
 - *What needs to be communicated to support time for collaborative planning?*
 - *What resources are needed to support and develop targeted assessment?*
 - *What policies need to be in place to ensure that the LEA has the flexibility to use resources to support student needs?*

TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGES

“If schools are to make data-driven decisions about effective organizations so that educators can do their best work, information must be available and readily accessible.”

Eric Hirsch, Director of Special Projects
New Teacher Center at the University of California
at Santa Cruz

Technology plays a critical component in implementing a longitudinal data system. Without the appropriate infrastructure and software applications, data collected may not be able to be accessed or may not be collected.

According to the 2008 Data and Learning Summit report, some of the challenges in the use of technology include a lack of interoperability, the proper use of technologies and applications, a lack of data warehouses at the SEA level, insufficient infrastructure, insufficient access to the data, limited storage space and the consolidation of legacy systems.

An important consideration for the technology remains not only the overall structure and implementation, but the transaction component as well. This includes moving the data from application to application and to the state in a seamless, timely fashion. Connecting all of these disparate systems, without requiring manual exchange, proves critical for the ease, use, transparency and representation of the data. With interoperability, this data from the disparate systems can be accessed and used for streamlined reporting to all stakeholders.

As a school board member, recognizing these challenges exist and creating an environment where thoughtful discussions can occur is important. Without serious consideration of each of the technology challenges, costly mistakes can be made. The current status and specific needs of the district should be carefully reviewed before making decisions to move forward with new solutions. These decisions and strategies must then be built-in and supported over time. Purchasing and implementing the technology once will not support the needs and growth of the district forever.

Policy Questions

- Other than resources, what barriers exist in using technology to support the culture of inquiry?
- What long-range planning needs to occur from a resource perspective to implement a longitudinal data system?
- What resources need to be set aside for technology to access the data?
- How can the school board communicate to the SEA the need for interoperability between the longitudinal data systems for collection and reporting of data?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO EFFECT CHANGE

Without question, professional development is one of the most important pieces that require an investment. Devoid of professional development, change will not occur. Change management must be structured, intentional and planned.

School board members must recognize that indispensable changes to existing structures might be needed. This may take the form of re-evaluating existing resources, school calendars, or even school schedules. Thoughtfully reflect on the needs of each of the stakeholders. Make determinations as to what will support the administration in reaching the goals and key performance indicators that are set by the school board.

In addition, the support structures call for designing professional development to be maintained. Professional development for dialogues around data use, types of data and technology needed, does not simply happen over a short period of time. It should be sustained and continuous for genuine data-driven decision making.

The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) is the federal agency responsible for collecting and

analyzing data related to most aspects of education in the United States. In order to assist school districts, the National Forum on Education Statistics, a subset of NCES, created a curriculum for improving education data. The curriculum focuses on developing a culture for improving the quality of data and the planning needed in order for this to occur.

Policy Questions

- Based on the various stakeholders, how do you provide the structures for activities needed for staff and other stakeholders to engage in the organizational change?
- What does the school board need to do to enable administrators to assess the culture in terms of data?
- How can we enable data to be used as a collaborative tool to serve students better?
- What conversations are needed with state and federal policy makers around the importance of professional development to analyze and use data to improve learning and teaching?

MAKING DATA MEANINGFUL

“Transparency concerns assessing, communicating, and acting on data pertaining to the what, how and outcomes of change efforts.”

Eric Hirsch, Director of Special Projects
New Teacher Center at the University of California
at Santa Cruz

The phrase – *Make Data Meaningful* – provides a simplistic approach to a complex issue. Making data meaningful depends upon the stakeholders. Federal policymakers want very different data than a classroom teacher. At the most granular level, data systems need to provide information to classroom teachers to improve learning and teaching to the most macro level of federal policymakers desiring to make policy decisions regarding educational programs. ***“To improve student achievement results, use data to focus on a few simple, specific goals” (Schmoker, 2003).*** This statement sums up the use of data – set focused goals.

Presenting the data to the various stakeholders requires that this is also accomplished in a useful way. Portraying data in an unreadable format or in psychometric terms to teachers, does not aide them in using this data nor having conversations around this data. Tools ought to offer various formats and views to yield data that is easy to understand.

POLICIES FOR ACCESSING DATA

In making data meaningful, first determining which elements of it can and should be accessed by which staff is an important part of the data governance conversation. Because data touches positions across the district, and individuals with varying levels of expertise in data interpretation, it must be readily available, easy to understand, and easy to analyze to guide conclusions. As all of these data touch people and processes, how the data will be governed is a key factor.

- Who is going to have access to this data?
- What policies and systems will be put in place for data collection and maintenance?

Data itself can be readily interpreted for decision making for desired outcomes whether for the administration, professional learning, student and all other stakeholders.

- What is to be done with this data?
- How will this data be applied?
- What constitutes transparent data within the district?

Not all LEAs will have an individual to administer and monitor all of the data on the backend of these processes, so on the front end of these discussions that reality should be acknowledged and alternatives explored. The data crosses all organizational lines vertically and horizontally and making sound policy decisions up front saves frustration.

SUSTAINABILITY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Turnover rate for key LEA leadership is not a new issue. A desire exists to promote sustainability and move toward the embedded nature of the culture of the LEA and individual schools. Continuous improvement and sustainability remains at the heart of any initiative – especially when it involves using data to improve learning and teaching within a LEA.

According to Newman (2007), creating a culture for a shared understanding of, and collective commitment to, central goals as well as developing a continuous loop of asking how to improve, having reflective dialogue and allowing for critical discussion, provide the opportunity for entrenching continuous improvement in the school district.

Redding identifies two first-steps that must be taken in building sustainable continuous improvement:

- 1) decision-making structures to monitor progress and alter practices to achieve the best results, and
- 2) data processes that provide frequent and reliable measures of student learning and operational information. Once these two foundational steps exist, implementing programs and processes to advance identified areas in need of improvement can occur.

Without intentionally planning for sustainability, all work might be wasted when the leader of the school district leaves. Putting structures in place to ensure data-driven decision making becomes embedded in the culture can prevent this from occurring.

Policy Questions

- *What key values and processes need to be in place within the LEA to ensure that a culture of inquiry is the core of improvement?*
- *How can we incorporate data driven dialogue into core business practices and processes?*
- *What structures need to be in place to intentionally build sustainable continuous improvement?*

HORRY COUNTY SCHOOLS

Located in coastal South Carolina, Horry County Schools covers a large geographical area. The school district administration aspired to focus more on data-driven decision making. The goal behind this was to optimize student learning, which would mean the need to:

- Facilitate individualized instruction
- Facilitate continuous improvement through program evaluation and curriculum alignment
- Evaluate the allocation of resources
- Provide trend analysis and forecasting capability
- Provide easy access to data

This would entail not only making changes technologically, but also in reporting, professional development and a shift in culture.

Over the past five years, Horry County Schools has combined data silos into an integrated data warehouse; streamlined data sharing using SIF; provided dynamic reporting from the data warehouse; provided a single sign-on portal for teachers, parents, students and administrators; provided data analysis

for program evaluation; provided analysis of key performance indicators and seamlessly sent reports vertically up to the state department of education.

As a result of all of these changes, the district administration has seen:

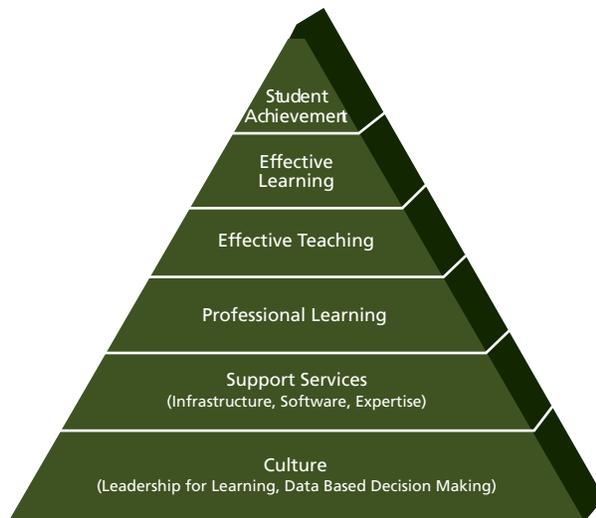
- Immediacy of data to stakeholders– necessary information is available immediately to allow administrators to make timely decisions for instruction and provide a wider range of services for students and staff
- Time savings – duplicate entry and export/import procedures have been identified and eliminated
- Data quality increases – reduction of errors and inconsistencies between applications is a reality
- Cost savings – accurate data is available more rapidly, allowing Horry County Schools to reallocate resources, so that time once spent doing mundane tasks is now utilized for analysis, understanding and use of that data to support instructional and administrative decisions



As a school board member, the first step in determining the data intelligence roadmap is beginning the conversation.

These conversations should occur at the district level with the administration and at the city, state and federal level with policy makers. An understanding as to the criticality of data and the systems necessary remains a challenge in most school districts.

Student achievement is the pinnacle of all processes, projects, initiatives and focus of every LEA. Implementing data systems, and the needed support, is one of those. An ecosystem must be present, balancing all of the LEA needs and systems involved. The diagram below summarizes the foundational pieces required to reach this pinnacle.



Used by permission of Wayne RESA

In creating a data intelligence roadmap, we discussed several things that should be considered:

1. Data Needs for Various Stakeholders

Spend time up front involving representatives from each of the stakeholder groups in conversations around data and support services needed.

2. Understanding the Types of Data Needed

Each stakeholder group desires and uses different data types. The data system must include these. In addition, understanding what questions cannot be answered by the data is important.

3. Organizational Change in Closing the Achievement Gap

Putting the system in place to manage change often is overlooked. This must be addressed intentionally.

4. Technology Challenges

A dialogue around all aspects of technology should occur. Without addressing and understanding the components of what is currently in place, what needs to occur and how to get there, the successful implementation of data-driven decision making will be hindered.

5. Professional Development to Effect Change

Providing opportunities for all stakeholders should be purposeful. Each subset of the stakeholders groups should be afforded opportunities to understand the data needed and their unique role in the process. Structures should be in place to support these efforts.

6. Making Data Meaningful

As with understanding the types of data needed, consider each stakeholder. Also, determine ways to present the data so that it can be discussed and used.

7. Sustainability for Continuous Improvement

Create and supply structures that will promote and encourage sustainability.

Relative to the pyramid, an alignment between the seven specific areas and foci on student achievement must be present. Each of these steps proves vital in systematically and systemically changing the conversations in a LEA. Each one is dependent upon the other in a symbiotic relationship. For example, without professional development, the conversation around types of data and the appropriate use of data will not occur. Without the technology, a data system cannot exist.

ORANGE CITY SCHOOLS

Challenges

Orange City Schools in Pepper Pike, Ohio were looking for an effective way to identify at-risk students so that appropriate interventions could be provided. Anecdotally the administrators and teachers knew which students were not thriving academically but a data solution was needed to accurately and precisely determine where the students stood. The school board historically had been supportive of the district leadership and an understanding of specifically what data and how to capture that data would be vital in a successful solution.

Solutions

Orange City Schools evaluated a number of commercially available data solutions. With the Board's approval, a solution was chosen that seemed to be the best fit for the school district's needs. After what was thought to be a thorough and complete preparation, implementation of the solution did not go as planned. There were many factors involved in what ultimately became a failed attempt to implement the solution.

The largest problem for Orange City Schools became apparent when the district tried to scrub data so that it could be used by the commercial solution. For many Ohio schools student data is reported to the State via regional data centers known as Instructional Technology Centers (ITC). The format required for reporting the data to the State Department of Education via the ITC caused what was eventually recognized as an insurmountable problem. The district was unable to import the data into the commercial product. After a year of struggling, Orange City Schools ultimately abandoned the project. All of the parties involved were at least partially accountable for the failure, and the company that had been chosen for the solution tried to make amends by offering other products in lieu of the solution purchased.

As a result of the continued desire to find a solution, administrators took a step back, analyzed the existing longitudinal data and determined what data would be needed to answer the questions of what data would be needed to identify at risk students so appropriate interventions could be provided. Orange City Schools decided a way could be found by manipulating the data in-house by pulling the data out of the State Department of Education's longitudinal data system.

While this solution did not give Orange City Schools the "dashboard" view desired, it did present the data in a usable format. This allowed the district to pinpoint students who were struggling to pass their state tests and accurately identified which areas of the tests were presenting difficulties. Orange City Schools knew this was just the first step.

The Ohio Department of Education also developed the Success Portal web site. This web site provides tools that can help in understanding Ohio's state-wide assessments for the Ohio Achievement Tests (OAT) and for the Ohio Graduation Tests (OGT). This is a no-cost solution for the school district and it plays a large part in identifying students at risk.

Lessons Learned

As a result of lost time, energy, and investment, the school district learned that data formats can be a fickle thing. While data may work fine in one application, it may not work as flawlessly in another application no matter how straight forward exporting and importing data might seem.



While there was not success with the first attempt, administrators learned a great deal about utilizing data; even when educators have access to data they often do not know what to do with it. As a part of the search for a solution, the school district was able to educate teachers, principals, administrators and school board members in how to analyze the data presented to them, ask appropriate questions and to make well informed instructional and operational decisions.

In the case of the Orange City Schools, taking a step back from what was thought to be a solution and examining what data was needed, proved a beneficial step in providing students the assistance that was necessary. Initially sticking with a basic solution provided the school district with the initial data and information that was needed.

About Orange City Schools

Orange City Schools is located just outside of Cleveland, Ohio. 2,300 students make up the district population. Three schools house the students: one for pre-K, one for grades 6-8 and one for grades 9-12. The student demographics include:

- Black, non-Hispanic 23.7%
- Asian or Pacific Islander 4.3%
- Hispanic .9%
- Multi-Racial 4.8%
- White, non-Hispanic 66%
- Economically Disadvantaged 13.8%
- Limited English Proficiency 1.4%
- Students with Disabilities 15.5%

Orange City Schools' mission is to authentically engage students in a positive, supportive, nurturing and safe environment in order to develop critical-thinking and civic-minded citizens who will contribute to the local community and our global society. Based on this mission, the Orange Schools community was framed by a commitment to excellence in student learning. From classrooms to playing fields, from academics to co-curricular activities, from instruction to support, decisions were made based on what worked best to engage students in their learning.



VANCOUVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Intelligent data systems support personalized learning and help a progressive school system prepare all students for college, career and life

Challenges

High performing governance teams provide leadership focused on improving student achievement through planning, policy setting, advocating for children, and monitoring of performance so that every student succeeds. In Vancouver Public Schools, knowing each and every child by name and need is the district's "true north." The mission is about preparing young people with the knowledge, skills, and habits to be college, career and life ready. Staff is committed to personalized learning and proficiency-driven outcomes for each student. Vancouver Public Schools recognize that the conversations of school boards make a difference. Those conversations should focus primarily on learning and results.

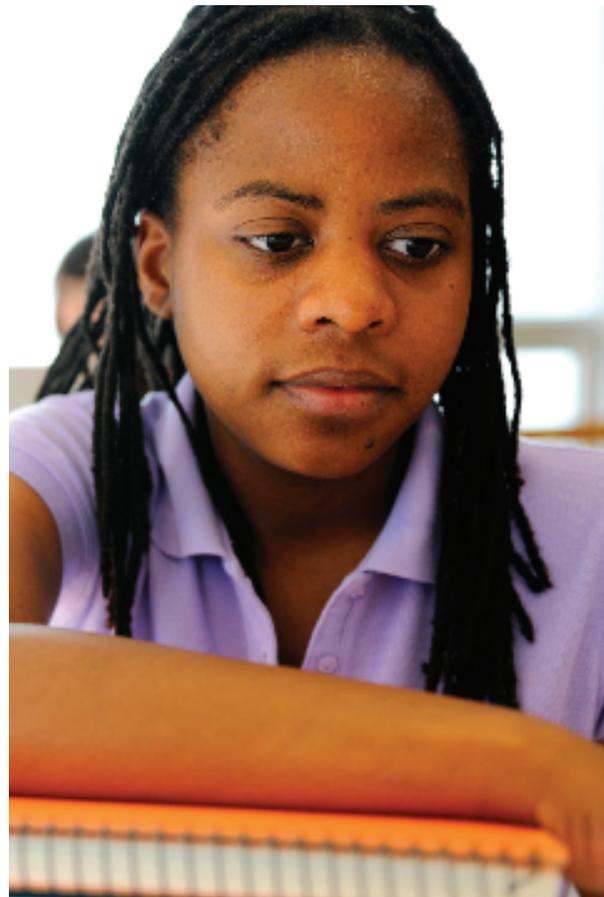
Skillful uses of data at the board level can help shape policy, support, resource and accountability decisions, and subsequent performance results. Beyond those fundamentals however, data-driven decision-making requires using multiple sources of information to improve instructional practice and to examine relationships among investments, improvement strategies and outcomes. In a learning organization, the governance team adds value by asking this question: What evidence do we have from a whole system perspective that our decisions are making a positive difference in student achievement?

Successful school systems that narrow the achievement gap adopt a continuous improvement model. Such a model charts and guides individual student growth over time, requiring and using data systems that provide real-time information to students, teachers, parents, administrators, and board members. The representation of data should be tailored to the needs and purpose of each audience. Most importantly, the data must be actionable; the collected information must assist with performance management. Data must cause the user to wonder, to pose questions, to explore relationships, and to determine some course of action to improve results. Robust data systems report data trends over time, but the more enlightened models are based on individual student growth. Reporting trend data is about system accountability. Reporting student achievement growth longitudinally is about learning. In Vancouver Public Schools, there is the belief that the use of both approaches strikes the right balance.

Solutions

In January 2008, the board of directors for Vancouver Public Schools adopted Design II, the next generation strategic plan, which will guide the district for five to 10 years. In addition to 18 goals, the plan identifies Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – those metrics by which the school district will measure and report their results. Sixty-two KPIs fall within seven broad criteria: student learning; student and stakeholder satisfaction; budgetary and financial; employees; organizational effectiveness; leadership, character and social responsibility; and national benchmarking.

Identified KPIs provide the basis for ensuring the alignment of action plans, measurable goals and results across our system, from professional learning communities, school improvement plans, district goal area task forces, and business unit work plans to the highest level of policy, established by the board of directors. This alignment will enable Vancouver Public Schools to achieve the ultimate vision – that each student leaves the school system ready for college, career and life experiences.



To achieve this vision, the school district needs a data system that supports performance management. Accordingly, Vancouver Public Schools is developing dashboards and scorecards using business intelligence software. Dashboards provide a graphical view of summary level data, customized to the user, with the ability to explore the data intelligently and to drill down to see subgroup and individual student information. Dashboards also give automatic alerts to notify users of conditions requiring a response.

Scorecards align performance indicators with the district's strategic plan and report results on an annual basis. Two types of scorecards are currently in development: the Vancouver Public Schools District Scorecard, which compiles targets and reports results across all strategic goals for a given year; and the Vancouver Public Schools Benchmark Milestone Scorecard, which reports system-level targets for the year 2014 and progress toward those targets on an annual basis.

Design of the scorecards began in the spring of 2009 with an initial deployment anticipated for October 2009. A joint venture of the Information Technology Services and Research and Evaluation work groups, the development and design process requirements include the following:

- Identifying data specifications for each KPI
- Ensuring business practices and processes are in place to collect KPI data in electronic format from source systems and other electronic records
- Moving the data and business rules for reporting into the district's data warehouse
- Using business intelligence tools to develop actionable displays of data, customized to the user or user groups
- Validating accuracy of source data and report displays

Data dashboard and scorecard development initially will address district/school administrator and program specialist needs for actionable views of data. Existing online applications then will provide data to the classroom level. The Vancouver Public Schools Learner Profile, a tool used since 2004, collects and reports data and information about each student's performance and progress in literacy and mathematics. Pathway guidance documents assist with the assignment of specific interventions and instructional strategies based on available data.

Each student's Learner Profile is archived from year to year and made available to classroom teachers. Various reports enable class and grade level views of data. Collaborative Academic Support Teams (CAST) composed of principals, literacy specialists, counselors, psychologists, and other educators also view the data for all students in their assigned schools. CAST meetings are held three times a year to facilitate reviews of progress. Vertical Teams review Learner Profile data and information to ensure appropriate placement of students and to help them make successful transitions. Secondary Intervention Teams, including the principal, school psychologist, and data facilitator, also meet frequently to discuss the needs of every student. District administrators examine aggregated data or drill down to information about classrooms and individual students.

Continued development of our data systems will focus on the following:

- Expanding from trend views to longitudinal views that depict progress in terms of continuous improvement
- Enacting prospective analytics that use historical information to forecast future performance, and support informed interventions
- Enabling program evaluation that supports resource decision-making based on return on investment principles
- Implementing best practice professional development in the use of data to impact student learning and system performance

Lessons Learned

The Vancouver Public Schools' leadership team continues to reflect upon the continuing development of a longitudinal data system to support data-driven decisions. Many of the lessons learned along the way speak to the need to think strategically about practices that remove barriers and build capacity. Three specific areas of awareness are the identification of targets and outcomes, resource capitalization, and building capacity for data-driven decision-making.

Targets and Outcomes

All levels of the system must be engaged in a continuous improvement model. One of the first steps is to engage stakeholders in identifying those measures by which an organization will monitor and evaluate its success. Those measures, or key performance indicators, then create a common vocabulary and the basis upon which a longitudinal data system can deliver data that enables performance management at every level.

Resource Capitalization

Once priorities are established by the board of directors in the form of high leverage or high yield key performance indicators, financial and human resources can be aligned for maximum impact. This step includes establishing a partnership with a vendor that can deliver a solution tailored to the particular specifications of a K-12 environment. Development of a Request for Proposal (RFP) and Proof of Concept (POC) are crucial in the articulation of these specifications. Crucial also is the availability of a consultant or contractor who understands K-12 context and can apply best practice performance management design within that environment.

A project task force ideally includes a Project Manager and a team of technical and subject area experts. Establishing a project scope and timeline determines the size of the team as well as the particular skill sets that will be required at each step. In the case of Vancouver Public Schools, an ambitious scope and Phase I timeline led to the understanding that an additional developer was needed on the technical team to meet deployment dates, validate data sets and ensure continuing development of the data dashboard model. As the work progresses, the school district anticipates the need to consider staffing changes to provide more statistical support and training.

Technical data integration, which refers to third-party providers of data, also impacts resource decisions. Vancouver has identified those data sources which will be kept in the data warehouse, therefore making them available for the data dashboard. In many cases, ensuring the quality of data from third party systems is problematic. Vancouver's team includes staff assigned to validate and scrub data. As accuracy issues are identified, we continue to consider systemic strategies for monitoring and improving the accuracy rate. In many cases, the validation process highlights the need for changes in business practices related to collection of data.

Engagement, Capacity Building and Professional Development

Engagement strategies at all levels are critical so that all stakeholders – board members, administration, leadership, classroom teachers and support staff – understand the “big picture” of results and the impact of their work on targeted outcomes. In addition to engagement, an ongoing professional development plan that promotes best practices in data-driven decision-making will enable a continuous improvement model at the classroom, school, work

group and system level. Finally, structures and protocols to support formative and summative use of data must be in place. In addition to the CAST processes identified in an earlier section, this year, Vancouver Public Schools is implementing Professional Learning Communities (PLC) for teachers and leaders at all levels. PLCs will provide the context in which data-driven decision-making becomes routine.

About Vancouver Public Schools

Located in Southwest Washington across the Columbia River from Portland, Oregon, Vancouver Public Schools serves 22,500 students pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. The district's boundaries encompass 58 square miles. Vancouver is an urban-suburban community with increasingly diverse characteristics. Forty-seven percent of students qualify for subsidized meals, and 18 percent change schools during the year. Seventy-six languages are spoken in the district, and 17 percent of students live in households where the primary language is not English.

The district has 21 elementary schools, six middle schools, and six high schools. More than 20 programs of choice are offered including International Baccalaureate, Spanish and Chinese language immersion, and an arts and academics magnet school for students in grades 6-12. Family-Community Resource Centers in several schools highly impacted by poverty provide academic and enrichment opportunities, early childhood education and childcare programs, health and wellness programs, and family support services.

Vancouver is a founding member of the Western States Benchmarking Consortium, a collaboration of seven leading school districts that share best practices. On two occasions, Vancouver Public Schools has been honored to host site visits of the National School Boards Association's Institute for the Transfer of Technology to Education. For more information about the district, please visit www.vansd.org.

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About the National School Boards Association

The National School Boards Association is a not-for-profit organization representing State Associations of school boards and their member districts across the United States. Its mission is to work with and through all its State Association Members to foster excellence and equity in public education through school board leadership. NSBA achieves that mission by representing the school board perspective before federal government agencies and with national organizations that affect education, and by providing vital information and services to state associations of school boards and local school boards. NSBA advocates local school boards as the ultimate expression of grassroots democracy. Founded in 1940, NSBA represents its State Association members and their 95,000 local school board members, virtually all of whom are elected. These local officials govern 14,500+ local school districts serving the nation's 50 million public school students.

About TLN

NSBA's Technology Leadership Network (TLN) has provided technology information for more than 20 years to the state school boards associations and local school districts through print and electronic media, site visits, and its annual T+L Conference, and The TLN is designed for education leaders who establish policies and implement technology decisions that enhance teaching and learning, administrative operations, and community outreach efforts.

About the SIF Association

The SIF Association is a unique, non-profit collaboration composed of over 2,300 schools, districts, states, U.S. Department of Education, International Ministries of Education, software vendors and consultants who collectively define the rules and regulations for educational software data interoperability. The SIF Implementation Specification enables diverse applications to interact and share data and information efficiently, reliably, and securely regardless of the platform hosting those applications. The SIF Association has united these education technology end users and providers in an unprecedented effort to give teachers more time to do what they do best: teach. For further information, visit <http://www.sifassociation.org>.

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**Vancouver Public Schools
Balanced Scorecard - Key Performance Indicators**

1. STUDENT LEARNING RESULTS

1.1 Evidence that our students can meet and exceed state learning standards

- 1.1.1 Pre-K readiness to learn rates
- 1.1.2 Third grade reading exit standard rate
- 1.1.3 Percent of students proficient in all forms of literacy - standardized tests
- 1.1.4 On-time graduation rate and extended completion rate
- 1.1.5 Annual drop out rate
- 1.1.6 Measures of disproportional results - achievement gap

1.2 Evidence that students have clear post secondary goals and attain them

- 1.2.1 College readiness/acceptance/completion rate
- 1.2.2 Professional technical readiness/acceptance/completion rate
- 1.2.3 Post secondary transition study - world of work, education, military service, etc.

1.3 Evidence that our students can succeed in college

- 1.3.1 College remedial coursework (percent of failures, reading/English/math)
- 1.3.2 College grade point average (GPA) rankings
- 1.3.3 College acceptance rate
- 1.3.4 College completion rate

2. STUDENT AND STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION RESULTS

- 2.1.1 Percent of student and stakeholder satisfaction/dissatisfaction
- 2.1.2 Percent of student and stakeholder perceived value, persistence and relationship building

3. BUDGETARY AND FINANCIAL RESULTS

- 3.1.1 Percent of ending fund balance
- 3.1.2 Percent of resources to classroom/instructional services
- 3.1.3 Percent of expenditures across activities
- 3.1.4 Percent of K-12 market share
- 3.1.5 Percent of cost containment - unfunded mandates

4. EMPLOYEE RESULTS

4.1 Evidence of Quality of Teachers

- 4.1.1 Teacher retention rate
- 4.1.2 Percent of teachers with Master's degree
- 4.1.3 Percent of teachers with "highly qualified" designation
- 4.1.4 Percent of teachers with National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) designation
- 4.1.5 Percent of teachers participating in professional development
- 4.1.6 Frequency of innovative practices
- 4.1.7 Percent of teacher/staff satisfaction rates

4.2 Evidence of Employee Development

- 4.2.1 Frequency of cross functioning work teams
- 4.2.2 Frequency and systems of cross training
- 4.2.3 Leadership development and pathways
- 4.2.4 Frequency of course completion rates
- 4.2.5 Diversity targets
- 4.2.6 High Quality Professional Development

5. ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS RESULTS

5.1 Evidence that our students have access to a breadth of program offerings that are responsive to students' needs

- 5.1.1 Percent of students enrolled in the arts
- 5.1.2 Percent of students enrolled in career-technical education (CTE) or applied learning programs
- 5.1.3 Percent of students enrolled in Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Middle Years Programme, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)
- 5.1.4 Percent of students enrolled in schools or programs of choice
- 5.1.5 Increase in program offerings, e.g., AVID, language immersion
- 5.1.6 Percent of students enrolled in online courses
- 5.1.7 Percent of students participating in internships/apprenticeships

5.2 Evidence that partners needs and relationships are supportive of student learning

- 5.2.1 Increased number of families engaged in district/school activities
- 5.2.2 Increased number of volunteers
- 5.2.3 Increased number of partnerships
- 5.2.4 Increased patron resources in service of children and families

6. LEADERSHIP, CHARACTER, AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY RESULTS

6.1 Evidence that the organization behaves ethically and practices effective citizenship

- 6.1.1 Measures of stakeholder trust
- 6.1.2 Audit reports - fiscal stewardship
- 6.1.3 Fiscal accountability
- 6.1.4 Regulatory and legal compliance
- 6.1.5 Public policy advocacy results

6.2 Evidence that our graduates are engaged and compassionate citizens

- 6.2.1 Student discipline rates/organization action
- 6.2.2 Student graduate follow-up study
- 6.2.3 Service learning participation rates
- 6.2.4 Student attendance rates

7. NATIONAL BENCHMARKING RESULTS

7.1 Evidence that Vancouver Public Schools benchmarks with other world class systems

- 7.1.1 Standardized test results
- 7.1.2 Post secondary student success
- 7.1.3 National Merit Scholars
- 7.1.4 Nationally recognized schools/programs
- 7.1.5 National awards and recognition
- 7.1.6 Professional association, business and government recognition
- 7.1.7 Articles, publications, media coverage
- 7.1.8 Dignitary visits and tours

Criterion

Trait

Key Performance Indicator

UPDATE ON REVISIONS TO THE 180 DAY WAIVER PROCESS

BACKGROUND

The State Board of Education (SBE) is reviewing its procedures for schools and districts to request waivers from the requirements of the Basic Education Act (RCW 28A.305.140). The SBE Waivers Committee and staff have drafted a set of recommendations for consideration. Board members have expressed an interest in encouraging districts to use innovative practices as well as concrete measures of success.

State Law and Current Use of Waivers

Currently, both SBE and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) have the authority to grant school districts waivers from the Basic Education Act requirements (RCW 28A.655.180), which states:

“The State Board of Education, where appropriate, or the Superintendent of Public Instruction, where appropriate, may grant waivers to districts from the provisions of statutes or rules relating to: The length of the school year; student-to-teacher ratios; and other administrative rules that in the opinion of the State Board of Education or the opinion of the Superintendent of Public Instruction may need to be waived in order for a district to implement a **plan for restructuring its educational program** or the educational program of individual schools within the district.”

In the 1990s, the state provided three Learning Improvement Days (LID) for professional development in order for school districts to provide professional development and implement education reform. The legislature has had to gradually reduce the number of LIDs due to budget constraints. In 2009, the state decided to provide one day.

Restructuring for SBE granted waivers has evolved primarily into granting days for district or school wide professional development while reducing the number of current 180 days of instruction from students. Districts maintain that they do not have sufficient district wide or school wide days to focus on professional development and need the time. No one disagrees that the professional development for teachers is critical to improving their instruction. However, many districts have provisions in their collective bargaining agreements that define how many professional days are available for individual teacher use versus district or school-wide use.

There are, however, additional uses of the waivers. OSPI provides waivers to districts for short-term planning after floods and storms. SBE provides waivers to districts for long-term planning to increase student achievement. Waivers may be granted for up to three years for the following requirements:

- Minimum one hundred eighty-day school year.
- Total instructional hour (no current waivers).
- Student-to-teacher ratio (no current waivers).

For the 2009-10 school year, there are 67 school districts with waivers from the 180 school day requirement. The average number of days is three and the average number of years is three.

Most districts propose to meet the goals of their waivers by providing full days of professional development.

For current waivers, the most common goals are:

- Improve student achievement and state assessment scores in mathematics and science (currently the most common goal).
- Improve student achievement and state assessment scores in reading and writing (the most common goal prior to 2008).
- Align curricula with new state standards or implement newly adopted curricula.
- Close the achievement gap.
- Improve teachers' instructional skills and content knowledge.
- Increase parent involvement.

The most common strategies to accomplish the goals are:

- Professional development with in-house or contracted facilitators (currently the most common strategy).
- Analysis of student achievement data to assess need and to apply intervention strategies.
- Collaborative time to align curricula with the new standards or to implement newly adopted curricula.
- Collaborative time across disciplines, grades, buildings, and districts.
- Professional Learning Communities.
- Analyze district-wide student achievement data and apply appropriate strategies.
- Partner with other districts to provide professional development or establish professional learning communities.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

Based upon current waiver practice, the lack of state support for professional development, the intent of the original legislation for restructuring, and the Board's direction for education reform, there are a number of policy issues to sort out to determine what revisions are needed to the waiver procedures and rules.

A. What kinds of waivers should the SBE promote?

SBE has discussed returning to the original intent of the legislature to use such waiver days for restructuring. If the SBE was interested in promoting such waivers they could require the use of certain types of innovative strategies that are aligned with state and SBE priorities for reform initiatives. Below are some examples:

- **Option 1: Use of innovative strategies.** Innovative strategies could include:
 1. Use evaluations that are based in significant measure on student growth to improve teachers' and school leaders' performance.
 2. Use data from multiple measures to identify and implement comprehensive, research-based, instructional programs that are vertically aligned from one grade to the next as well as aligned with state academic standards.
 3. Promote the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of individual students.
 4. Implement strategies designed to recruit, place, and retain effective staff.

5. Conduct periodic reviews to ensure that the curriculum is being implemented with fidelity, is having the intended impact on student achievement, and is modified if ineffective.
6. Increase graduation rates through, for example, credit-recovery programs, smaller learning communities, and acceleration of basic reading and mathematics skills.
7. Establish schedules and strategies that increase instructional time for students and time for collaboration and professional development for staff.
8. Institute a system for measuring changes in instructional practices resulting from professional development.
9. Provide ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development to staff to ensure that they are equipped to provide effective teaching.
10. Develop teacher and school leader effectiveness.
11. Implement a school-wide “response-to-intervention” model.
12. Implement a new or revised instructional program.
13. Improve student transition from middle to high school through transition programs or freshman academies.
14. Develop comprehensive instructional strategies.
15. Extend learning time and community oriented schools.

On the other hand, SBE could continue to allow waivers to improve student achievement as the district identifies its strategies and requires more specific metrics to evaluate whether the waiver has made any difference. Below is an example:

- **Option 2: Use of current district initiated strategies** to improve student achievement (with specific metrics). For example, here are two excerpts from recent applications:
 - “The goals for the waiver, as set by their District School Improvement and Leadership Teams, are to improve student learning and raise statewide assessment scores yearly by three percent in reading, five percent in math, three percent in writing, and five percent in science.”
 - “ . . .increase achievement for all students each year by 10 percent; decrease the gap between underperforming subgroups and the district average performance on the WASL by 10 percent annually; decrease the dropout rate by 10 percent, annually; reduce the number of students not graduating by 10 percent, annually.”
- **Option 3: Allow up to three waiver days using current district initiated strategies until the state fully funds three professional development days (while still allowing a streamlined process).**

B. Who should make the waiver decisions?

Depending on the Board recommended waiver, the question becomes: who should make the waiver decisions? Currently after the Board’s 180 day waiver committee and staff have reviewed each waiver application, the full Board is asked to review and approve the waiver applications as a whole. The Board has only been willing to grant one year waivers. At the July Board retreat, the Board expressed an interest in reviewing each of the individual waivers based on new criteria at the Board meeting. At the September Board meeting, some members suggested delegating the authority to

approve waivers to the executive director. Below are three options for the approval process. These options assume that SBE has revised the guidelines, application, and other components listed in other recommendations listed later in this section.

- **Option 1: Delegate the authority to the SBE executive director to review and approve applications.** When necessary, the staff would present significant applications to the Board for review and approval.
- **Option 2: Have the full Board review and approve individual applications.**
- **Option 3: Allow the current Board waiver committee and staff to continue to review applications and bring forward a recommendation on a package of applications to the full Board for approval.**

C. Number of Days Waived

In SBE rules, there is currently no limit to the number of days allowed for waivers. As mentioned the average number of days waived is three, although some districts have waived as many as nine (excluding the new efficiency calendar waiver).

- **Option 1: Waive no more than three days.**
- **Option 2: Waive the number of days the district recommends based on their strategy.**

D. Application Process

The waiver guidelines, application form, and process for assessment of applications need to be revised to reflect SBE priorities, initiatives, and concerns. The following revisions can be made independently of any decisions made to previous recommendations in this section:

- Option 1: Create a rubric for assessment of applications.**
- Option 2: Extend the length of time for staff to review waiver applications from 30 days to 50 days.**
- Option 3: Revise the application to include the following items:**
 - a) Submittal of the schools' and district's improvement plans.
 - b) Description of the innovative nature of the proposed strategies.
 - c) Description of the content and process of the strategies to be used to meet the goals of the waiver.
 - d) Description of the measures and standards used to determine success and identification of expected benchmarks and results.
 - e) Details about the collective bargaining agreements, including the number of full instruction days, early release days, and the amount of other non-instruction time.

EXPECTED ACTION

Guidance to the staff and Waivers Committee concerning the proposed recommendations.

Timeline of work:

Item	Date
Waiver Committee presents status of work to Board.	November 2009 Meeting

Waiver Committee presents draft revised procedures to Board.	January 2010 Meeting
Stakeholder input. Draft application and procedure posted on the Web site and shared with stakeholders, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School districts with current waivers. • Members of past 180-Day Waiver Advisory Committee. • Other agency and legislative staff. 	January – February 2010
Board will consider adopting revised procedures. Board will hold a hearing if needed for rule change. A Board decision at this time of year will assist districts as they negotiate collective bargaining agreements for the 2010 – 11 school year.	March 2010 Regular Board Meeting