



THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

A high-quality education system that prepares all students for college, career, and life.

May 18, 2017

Dear Superintendent Reykdal:

At our meeting on May 10-11, 2017, the Board spent considerable time in discussion regarding the state's ESSA Accountability Plan and Deputy Superintendent Michaela Miller's presentation on potential changes to the state's Achievement Index. As you were not able to attend, the Board felt it was important to convey some of its needs in writing to ensure that the July State Board of Education meeting and the planned September submission go smoothly. Our ultimate goal is a collaborative, coordinated response to ESSA.

As you know, the State Board of Education has a pivotal role in determining the content and public presentation of the Achievement Index under state law. While little detail has been provided to the Board to date, we understand that in its ESSA State Plan submission to the U.S. Department of Education, OSPI is considering describing the Achievement Index in ways that differ significantly from the present Index.

For these reasons, the State Board of Education offers the following views on potential changes to the Achievement Index that are being considered by your office. Due to the significant changes to the Achievement Index that are under consideration, as well as other changes from the draft State Plan that was proposed in November 2016, there must be ample opportunity for public comment and input on any changes from the draft State Plan previously proposed.

- The State Board needs sufficient time and opportunity to consider proposed changes to the Achievement Index and to decide whether or not they should be included. These materials should be provided well in advance of its July 12-13 meeting in Spokane.
- For any new Achievement Index measures or weighting changes, the State Plan should leave sufficient flexibility for the State of Washington to make changes and adjustments in those measures after an initial pilot test period of at least one year.
- For the number of Achievement Index tiers, currently six, we see value in continuity. We hear consistently from school districts that year-to-year continuity is important in their use of Index data. We believe that strong public policy reasons and evidence are needed to justify changing the number of tiers from the presently used six.
- For the public presentation of Achievement Index data for individual schools, exactly how the data are presented matters greatly. Transparency of the information is important, as is the ability to use the data, including disaggregated and summative scores used in a school's Achievement Index rating.

We understand that OSPI is considering making substantial changes in how the Achievement Index is used to identify and provide support to schools identified as most needing that support. We ask that OPSI provide more clarity about any proposed changes.

Kevin Laverty, Vice Chair • Ben Rarick, Executive Director

*Janis Avery • Mona Bailey • MJ Bolt • Jeff Estes • Connie Fletcher • Baxter Hershman • Patty Wood
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We look forward to continuing to work with you and the OSPI staff on these important issues. I'm confident that we can develop a unified state and federal accountability and school support system that helps provide the public education that the students of Washington State need and deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Lavery". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and a long, sweeping tail.

Kevin Lavery, Acting Chair
State Board of Education

Cc: Members of the State Board of Education