

UPDATE ON DELTA HIGH SCHOOL, A NEW STEM HIGH SCHOOL IN THE TRICITIES**SUMMARY OF POLICY ISSUE /STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION (SBE) STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

Delta High School is a new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) public high school in Washington. The Board has worked on strengthening our math and science standards to create a world class education for our students. It also has an interest in promoting stronger student achievement in math and science to prepare students for careers in these high demand fields. This new high school model relates to the Board's third goal: Improve student preparation for post-secondary education and the 21st century world of work and citizenship.

BACKGROUND

At the September 2008 Board meeting in Pasco, the Board received a briefing on the creation of the new STEM high school, which will open in the Fall of 2009 to 100 9th grade students in the Pasco, Kennewick, and Richland School Districts. At that time, the school was not yet named and had not secured a definite location. Delta High School is the new name and Columbia Basin College is providing the location for the school rent free for the first few years of operation. Local business leaders, teachers, scientists, and college professors created Delta High School. This school answers the call to raise a new generation of technical talent, as well as more scientifically literate citizens. Graduates of STEM high schools possess and use the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to pursue post-secondary education, technical training, and chosen career paths.

Delta High School has a rigorous and relevant STEM-focused curriculum that prepares each student for career, college, and life success in a changing world. State, national, and college-ready standards serve as the launch pad for this curriculum. The STEM high school design provides a tailored learning environment for students of all academic levels and interests.

Key characteristics of a STEM school include:

- College-ready and work-ready culture.
- Student as a worker, teacher as a facilitator, industry/community as mentors.
- Emphasis on personalized learning plans.
- Another pathway to success for students.

A lottery was held for 110 9th grade student places at Delta this spring. Over 200 students applied. The school is beginning with a 9th grade class and will add successive grades until it reaches a size of 400 students for 9th-12th grade in four years. Additional details on Delta High School are provided in the Board's packet. Deidre Holmberg, the planning principal, will update the Board at our meeting.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

This school builds upon and complements the strong educational foundation of the Tri-Cities. Delta High School aspires to serve as a pilot environment for the Tri-Cities, ultimately creating a bigger footprint on STEM education in the region and in the state of Washington.

EXPECTED ACTION

None