EDUCATION REFORM: FEDERAL AND STATE EFFORTS

BACKGROUND

Several key federal and state efforts are underway to improve student achievement and boost the important work in local districts. At the Board meeting, we will provide an update of current efforts and why this work is critical to the Board's goal to improve student achievement and work on accountability.

A. Federal Initiatives

The federal government has a number of major efforts[1] to stimulate education reform in states. This memo highlights three: 1) the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act with fiscal stabilization funding for states; 2) a competitive grant process "Race to the Top" (RTTT), to stimulate reform in states; and 3) draft revised guidelines for school improvement. A comparative chart is provided below to show how the three efforts interrelate in terms of expectations:

	Federal Stimulus Funding Phase 2	Race to the Top Competitive Grant	School Improvement Proposed Guidelines for Funding
Funding	$1 billion. State has received two thirds of those funds to date.[2] Washington will need to apply for a second round of stabilization funding this October and must demonstrate its progress on the four assurances.	$4.35 billion total (state allocations vary). State will allocate at least 50% to school districts.	$45 million. Up to $500,000 for each school, per year, for three years allocated to districts with Title I or Title I eligible schools
Timing	Submit request by October 2009.	Phase I applications due December 2009. Phase II applications due May 2010.	Winter 2010.

[1] Additional federal stimulus money is available for Washington under Title I $135 million, Special Education $221 million, and School Improvement $44.5 million over the next two years. Competitive federal grants will also occur in the areas of: an Innovation Fund, Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems, Education Technology, Teacher Incentive fund. In addition, there is a national effort to create a common core of standards and assessments in academic subjects. A draft of proposed math standards is under review now by the states. Washington signed the memorandum of agreement to participate in this effort. This was discussed at the May Board meeting.

[2] The funds were for both Fiscal Years FY 09 and FY 10, to replace funds the legislature cut from Initiative 728, approved by the voters in 2001, provides funds for local districts to improve student achievement through: class size, targeted assistance, extended learning, pre-kindergarten learning, and professional development.

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Priorities	1. Standards and assessments. 2. Data systems to support instruction and measure student success. 3. Effective teachers and principals, and equitable distribution of teachers. 4. Remedy for turning around struggling schools.	1. Standards and assessments. 2. Data systems to support instruction and measure student success. 3. Effective teachers and principals; and equitable distribution of teachers. 4. Remedy for turning around struggling schools. 5. STEM emphasis.	Award funds to lowest achieving Title I schools that have not made progress on gains in state's assessment in reading and math in the all student category and are less than the average gains of schools in state: Tier 1: Lowest 5% of schools now in improvement based on absolute performance and growth/gains. Tier 2: Lowest 5% of secondary schools, which are Title-eligible but not receiving services. Tier 3: Rest of Title I schools not in Tier I and II. States will give priority to districts serving both Tier 1 and 2 schools.
Requirements	Provide update on indicators and descriptors for each of the above assurance areas. States must make this data transparent and outline steps they will take to develop data by 9/30/11. Example of the kind of data to be provided for support to struggling schools: • Number and percent of schools in improvement that: made progress in reading and math	Phase I and II of Federal Stimulus Funds must be approved by time of RTTT award. No legal barriers linking student, teacher, and principal data. Signed by Governor, Superintendent, and State Board of Education Chair. Describe progress in four reform areas. Show financial data. Show stakeholder support	State eliminates laws or rules that limit state to interview in low performing schools, limit charters, or impede efforts to recruit and retain effective teachers and principals in low performing schools. Must implement one of the following reform models: 1. <u>Turnaround:</u> Replace principal and 50% of staff, adopt a new governance structure, implement new or revised

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	assessments. • Number of charter schools operating. • Number of schools that have been turned around, consolidated or closed.	Describe how funds will be used to improve student achievement, improve graduation rates, and close achievement gaps. Give high priority to high need districts. Provide evidence for each state reform conditions criterion. Implement statewide data system that includes America COMPETEs Act elements. Provide access of data to key stakeholders. Use data to improve instruction. Provide alternative pathways for aspiring teachers and applicants. Differentiate teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance. Ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals. Report in effectiveness of teacher and principal prep programs Provide effective support to teachers and principles.	instructional program. 2. Restart Model Close school and reopen under charter or education management organization. 3. School Closure Close school and enroll students in a high performing school. 4. Transforming Model • Develop teacher and school leader effectiveness. • Develop comprehensive instructional strategies. • Extend learning time and community oriented schools. • Provide operating flexibility and sustained support.
Criteria	See Requirements	Adopt common standards and sign MOA to participate in assessments consortia. Plan to implement standards, aligned assessments, curriculum,	State will make awards based on greatest need and strongest district commitment. District volunteer to participate and

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		and professional development. Intervene in lowest performing schools. Increase number of high quality charters. Plan to identify 5% of lowest performing schools and follow strategies similar to those outlined in School Improvement Guidelines. Demonstrate significant progress on four assurances. Create conditions favorable to reform. Make education funding a priority. Enlist statewide support and commitment of stakeholders, including state leaders, districts, grant makers, and foundations. Raise achievement and close gaps. Use annual targets for increasing overall and subgroup achievement. Build strong statewide capacity to implement, scale, and sustain proposed plans.	implement one of the 4 interventions. If district is serving more than nine schools, it cannot do the same intervention in more than 50% of its schools

Next Steps to Address these Federal Initiatives

Federal Stabilization Fund Phase II

The Governor's Office will submit an application with documentation by October 2009.

Race to the Top Application

The Governor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the State Board of Education Chair have formed a team to prepare and submit a request on behalf of Washington State. Our preference is for the Round II applications in the spring of 2010. They will engage all interested education stakeholders in a review of the grant application. The following actions and timelines to complete the grant are outlined below by the Washington Race to the Top Team:

Task	Date	Action Taken or to be Taken
Identify facilitator/convener and resources to support grant application.	August-September 2009	Partnership4Learning selected to provide facilitator support. Funding support sought for grant application. Selection of consulting firm to assist with application. (September 21)
Identify baseline data and reach out to all stakeholders to determine scope of Washington application.	October-December 2009	Examine RTTT requirements, others states' applications, and Washington's current status on the key issues. Identify potential priorities and legislation needed. Engage in discussions with stakeholders on priorities. Determine what the state must do to show its progress beyond HB 2261. Finalize priorities.
Complete application for Round II of Race to the Top (SBE preference).	January-May 2010	Draft and finalize application.

Proposed School Improvement Guidelines

OSPI will give comment to the federal government on the proposed guidelines in the next few weeks. OSPI and SBE staff to identify five percent of chronically underperforming schools that must be identified in the different Tiers. OSPI is determining the impact the proposed federal rules will have on its current program and what adjustments must be made to prepare for obtaining funds in

2010. OSPI and SBE will work on ways to incorporate these new School Improvement expectations for the SBE Voluntary Action and Required Action this fall, with the recognition that the federal guidelines are open for comment before finalization.

B. State Initiatives

HB 2261 (Chapter 548, Laws of 2009)

The legislature passed HB 2261 this spring to reform the funding of basic education in our state as well as to expand the definition of basic education and advance some key concepts. Public education has evolved since 1977 and there have been many studies (most recently, The Joint Basic Education Finance Task Force, the Achievement Gap Commission reports, Building Bridges report, and Washington Learns) that identify a need to:

- Educate all students to a higher level.
- Focus on individualized instruction.
- Close the achievement gap and reduce dropout rates.
- Prepare students for evolving workforce and global economy.

Some of the key areas that will be worked on under HB 2261 include:

- Expanded definition of basic education:
    - Increased instructional hours for secondary education from 1000 to 1080 hours.
    - Opportunity to complete 24 high school credits.
    - All day kindergarten (phase in highest poverty schools first).
    - Highly capable (2.3 percent of student enrollment).
    - Early learning is under consideration to be added in the future.
- Prototypical school funding formula.
- Transportation funding formula.
- Quality Education Council, which will recommend and inform the ongoing implementation of HB 2261.
- Work groups for finance, local funding, data governance, early learning, and compensation.
- Accountability: refinement of the SBE work on its Accountability Framework, including the Accountability Index, Voluntary Programs of Assistance, and Formalized Comprehensive System of Improvement for Challenged Schools and Districts (see the SPA Tab for additional information).
- Teacher Standards and Certification.

The funding to support this work will be phased in and fully implemented by the legislature by September 1, 2018.

The Quality Education Council's Work under HB 2261

The Quality Education Council's (QEC) purpose is to develop strategic recommendations for implementation of a new definition of Basic Education based on evidence that the programs effectively support student learning as well as the financing necessary to support it.
In addition to guiding implementation of the bill, the QEC must also:

- Develop strategic recommendations and update them every four years on the Program of Basic Education.
- Identify measurable goals and priorities for a ten-year period for the educational system, including ongoing strategies to eliminate the achievement gap and reduce dropout rates.
- Consider the OSPI system capacity report.
- Consider the availability of data and implementation progress of data systems.

The members of the QEC include four state representatives and four state senators (with equal representation among Democrats and Republicans), as well as one representative from the Office of the Governor, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board of Education, the Professional Educator Standards Board, and the Department of Early Learning. Randy Dorn was selected by the members as Chair.

- Randy Dorn, Superintendent of Public Instruction and Chair of the QEC
- Mary Jean Ryan, Chair, State Board of Education
- Stephen Rushing, Chair, Professional Educator Standards Board
- Dr. Bette Hyde, Director, Department of Early Learning
- Dr. Jane Gutting, Superintendent, ESD 105 (Governor's appointee)
- Rep. Frank Chopp, Speaker of the House, 43rd District (D)
- Rep. Pat Sullivan, State Representative, 47th District, (D)
- Rep. Skip Priest, State Representative, 30th District (R)
- Rep. Bruce Dammeier, State Representative, 25th District (R)
- Sen. Curtis King, State Senator, 14th District (R)
- Sen. Eric Oemig, State Senator, 45th District (D)
- Sen. Joseph Zarelli, State Senator, 18th District (R)
- Sen. Rosemary McAuliffe, State Senator, 1st District (D)
- Alternate: Rep. Marcie Maxwell, State Representative, 41st District (D)

The first QEC meeting was held on August 27, 2009. The materials for that meeting and future QEC meetings may be found at: http://www.k12.wa.us/QEC/default.aspx.

Basic Education Funding Law Suit

McCleary v. State was filed in January 2007. The plaintiffs are led by the Network for Excellence in Washington Schools (NEWS), a coalition of groups including the Washington Education Association (WEA), Parent Teacher Association (PTA), 29 school districts, and several advocacy groups. The case takes its name from one of two families who are also named plaintiffs. The plaintiffs asked the court to declare that the state is not meeting its duty to amply fund basic education and to order the state to: 1) determine the actual dollar cost of providing a basic education; and 2) fund that amount. In fall of 2007, the plaintiffs sought a summary judgment order asking the court to declare, as a matter of law, that the state's constitutional obligation was measured by the WASL results and that because the WASL results show all students are not meeting standard, the state was therefore not meeting its constitutional obligation to provide a basic education. The motion failed, leaving the matter to be proven at trial, which began August 31, 2009 and is scheduled to last at least four weeks. During their opening arguments, state attorneys cited increased K-12 investments over the last thirty years and previewed the upcoming testimony of expert witnesses who will argue that increased financial investment does not always result in higher achievement. The plaintiffs began to counter that claim through the testimony of their witnesses.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

The Board will be discussing its accountability framework with an emphasis on Required Action for Persistently Low Achieving Schools, which should incorporate guidance from to the Race to the Top application and the new proposed federal School Improvement rules to ensure consistency between all of these efforts.

EXPECTED ACTION

None