Proposed Performance Improvement Goals

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Background

The Legislature requires the State Board of Education to adopt performance goals for Washington schools and districts. This requirement is part of the Board's mandate, as described in *RCW 28A.305.130* (Powers and duties—Purpose). According to this legislation:

SBE shall adopt/revise performance improvement goals in:

- Reading, writing, science, and mathematics, by grade level
- Academic and technical skills in secondary career and technical education (CTE) programs and student attendance, as the board deems appropriate.

Goals may be established for:

- Student groups (all, low income, ELL, special education, race/ethnicity)
- School and district graduation rates and dropout reduction goals for students in grades 7-12.

The Board is to adopt the goals by rule, but before the goals are implemented, the House and Senate education committees of the state legislature must review them.

The only goals currently in place are associated with federal requirements, primarily the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measures related to No Child Left Behind (NCLB). These "state uniform bars" established annual performance goals in reading and math at three grade levels[1] through 2014, at which time all students are required to meet standard. NCLB also requires at least 95% of the students to participate in the state tests. Nine different student groups must meet these goals at the school and district levels. In addition, NCLB requires goals for one more indicator at the different grade levels.[2] All the goals must be met each year in order for a school and district to make AYP. Prior to NCLB, the only state goal was related to improving grade 4 reading scores.[3]

Proposed Goals

A number of principles guided the development of this set of proposed improvement goals. Specifically, the goals should be challenging yet attainable, easy to understand, based on a group's own baseline, rely on available data, include all student groups, meet the legislative requirements, and when appropriate, be consistent with state and federal accountability measures. With these principles in mind, the following goals are proposed.

1. Improvement goals should be established in reading, writing, math, science, extended graduation rate, and WLPT (for ELLs) at the school and district levels, with the results combined across all grades (e.g., a K-5 school would have goals based on results in all its tested grades).

2. Set goals for student groups using their own 2010 baseline.

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[1] NCLB required states to administer state assessments in grades 3-8 and one grade in high school. Results for grades 3-5 are combined to generate elementary school results, and the results for grades in 6-8 are combined to generate middle school results.

[2] In Washington, the "other indicators" are the extended graduation rate at the high school level and the unexcused absence rate at the elementary and middle school levels. NCLB requires these goals to be met by the "all students" group but not the eight student subgroups, except when accessing "safe harbor."

[3] The goal was to reduce the percentage of students not meeting standard by 25% from 1998 to 2001.

3. Improvement goals should reflect a 33% reduction in those not meeting the ultimate goal (e.g., 100% meeting standard, graduating) every 4 years, beginning in 2010.[4]

4. Set the 2018 goal based on the performance in 2014. It should be re-established earlier if the 2014 goal is met before 2014.

5. Do not establish goals for secondary CTE programs, attendance, dropouts, or test participation. The state does not collect data on CTE and attendance, dropout rates are used to compute the graduation rates, and very few problems exist with student participation.

Figures 1-4 provide examples of the academic improvement goals for a hypothetical district.[5] In each case, goals are established for 2014 and 2018 based on the 2010 results. These examples show trends for the "all students" group. Each student group would have similar goals when there are at least 10 students (very few schools and districts will have goals for every group).

Other Issues

Three other issues should be discussed.

1. Consider establishing post-secondary or college-readiness goals (e.g., reducing remediation rates, increasing college-going rate, increasing college-ready rates based on credits earned). The lack of available data may restrict the scope of these goals in the near future.

2. Discuss what consequences (e.g., recognition, assistance, etc.) should occur, if any, when the goals are met or not met.

3. Discuss how best to establish goals for alternative schools.

[4] Using 2010 as the baseline and a 4-year cycle allows us to have 2014 as a critical year (the same as AYP) and gives the field sufficient notice and time to improve. The 33% reduction in 4 years is about the same as a 25% reduction in 3 years and is easy to remember.

[5] Actual "all students" results for the state are shown through 2009 for grades 4,7, and 10 (5,8, and 10 for science). The 2010 results are hypothetical.

Figure 1: Hypothetical Example of Proposed Reading Goal for a District

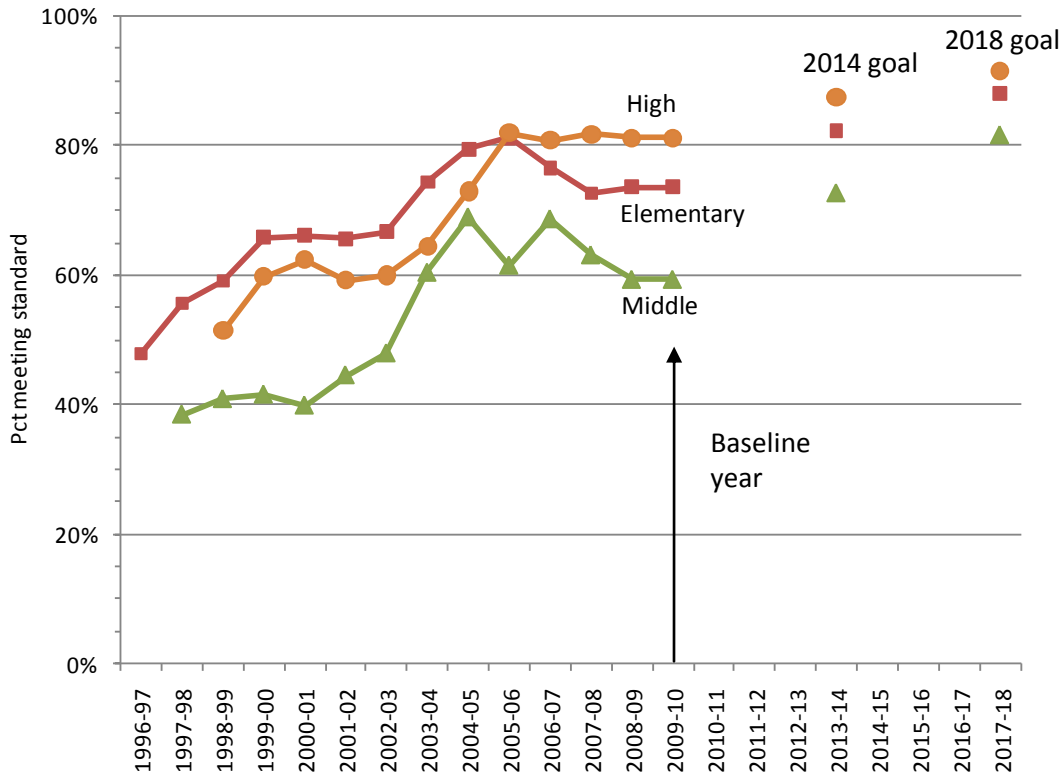

Figure 2: Hypothetical Example of Proposed Writing Goal for a District

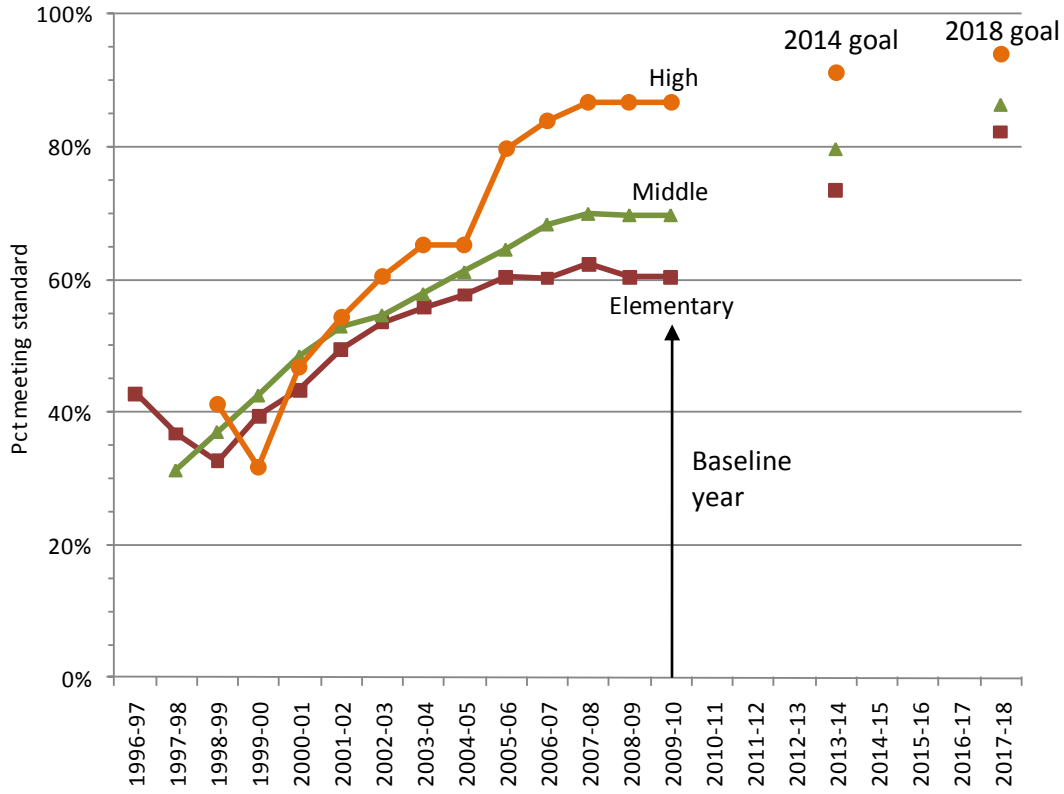

Figure 3: Hypothetical Example of Proposed Math Goal for a District

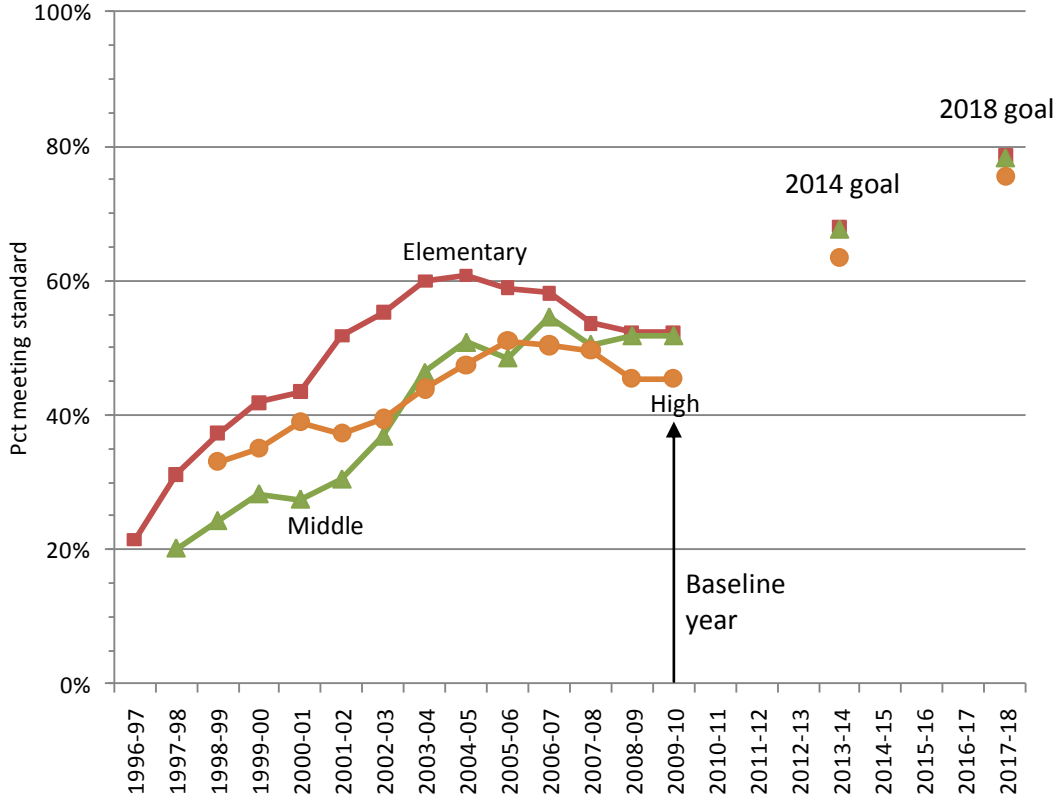
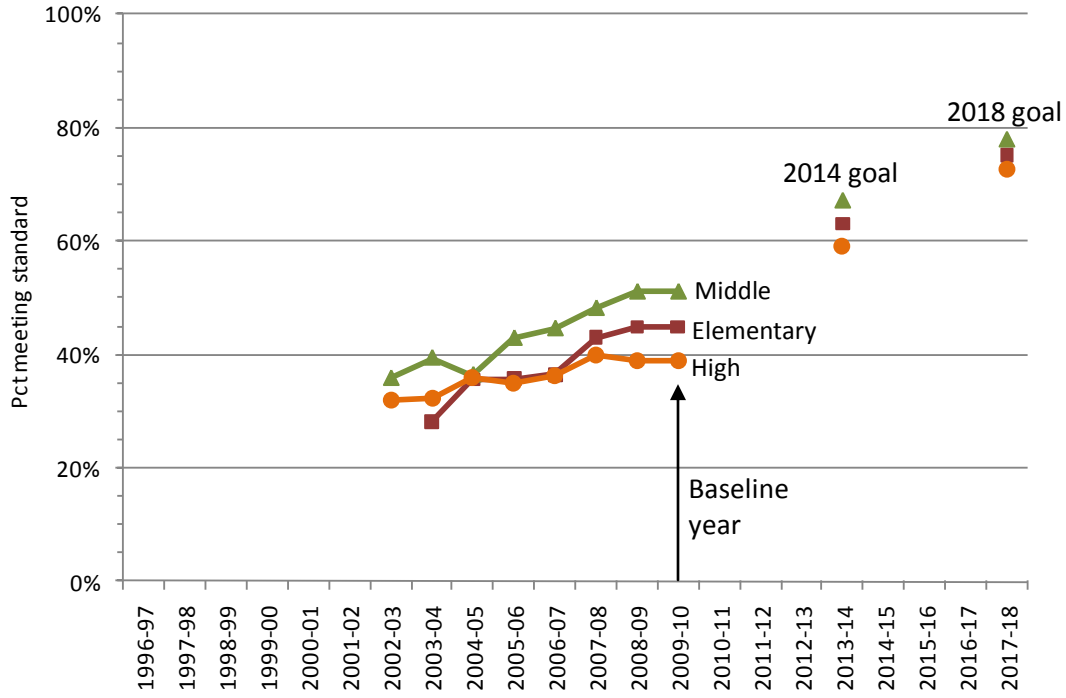
Figure 4: Hypothetical Example of Proposed Science Goal for a District