

# Recognition Recommendations

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*The state should give two types of recognition using data from the Accountability Index matrix: for “Outstanding Overall Performance” in eight areas, and for “Noteworthy Performance” in 21 areas. Relatively few schools would receive the first type of recognition because they must meet very rigorous criteria; a majority of schools would likely receive recognition for Noteworthy Performance in one or more of the 21 cells of the matrix. Data from the matrix can be used for other recognition purposes as well. The form of recognition given should depend on the difficulty of reaching the award criteria—recognition for Outstanding Overall Performance should have a high profile, while recognition for Noteworthy Performance should be handled in an inexpensive and efficient manner.*

## **BACKGROUND**

The Legislature requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to “adopt objective, systematic criteria” to identify schools and districts for recognition and for receiving additional state support. The proposed criteria are in the form of a 20-cell matrix that measures five outcomes in four ways, as shown in Table 1. The results for the cells are rated on a scale of 1 to 7 (see Appendix A). The ratings are averaged to create the Accountability Index. Averages for the outcomes and indicators are also computed to provide more feedback to educators.

**Table 1: Matrix of Accountability Measures**

INDICATORS	OUTCOMES					Average
	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Ext. Grad. Rate	
Achievement of non-low income						
Achievement of low income						
Achievement vs. peers						
Improvement from previous year						
Average						<i>INDEX</i>

Several principles guided the development of the recognition system. The system should (1) be transparent and simple to understand, (2) rely mainly on criterion-referenced measures, and (3) provide multiple ways to demonstrate success. SBE and OSPI should work together to create a unified recognition system (see Appendix B for the current types of recognition).

Based on stakeholder feedback, two forms of recognition should be given, as described below. The first is for “Outstanding Overall Performance” and the second is for “Noteworthy Performance.” The rationale for each type of recognition is provided in Appendix C.

### **1. OUTSTANDING OVERALL PERFORMANCE (8 TYPES)**

**Provide recognition based on high levels of performance in the index, each of the five outcome areas, and for closing the achievement gaps (i.e., only a small difference between non-low income and low income ratings in all subjects). To ensure only truly outstanding performance is recognized, schools and districts must meet the following conditions.**

(a) For the **index**, the 2-year average must be at least 5.50 and there must be fewer than 10% students designated as gifted each year.

(b) For **reading, writing, math, science**, and the **extended graduation rate**, the overall (column) 2-year average must be at least 6.00, at least 2 of the 4 cells in the column must be rated each year, and there must be fewer than 10% students designated as gifted each year.

(c) For the **achievement gap**, there must be 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 can be no rating of 1 in any income-related cell or peer cell, there can be no more than a 1-point difference in the rating between the two income-related cells,<sup>1</sup> and there must be fewer than 10% students designated as gifted each year. Each of the above criteria must be met two years in a row.

Each of the above seven recognition areas require fewer than 10% of the students to be designated as gifted in 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. This often occurs when a district decides to concentrate these types of students in one location so they can take advantage of special programs that meet their needs. The exclusion criterion prevents school from receiving this type of recognition because they will likely have much higher than normal ratings based on district enrollment decisions. Hence, an eighth recognition area needs to be based on criteria that ensures these types of schools can also receive recognition for outstanding overall performance.

(d) 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 would receive this type of recognition, based on the 2-year average peer ratings in all four subjects.<sup>2</sup>

Table 2 shows the eight areas of the accountability matrix that would be recognized for Outstanding Overall Performance.

**Table 2: Areas of Recognition for Outstanding Overall Performance**

INDICATORS	OUTCOMES					Average
	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Ext. Grad. Rate	
Achievement of non-low income	Compare the two income-related cells to each other in each column, must have no more than a 1-point difference in each column					
Achievement of low income						
Achievement vs. peers						Gifted*
Improvement from previous year						
<i>Average</i>	<b>6.00</b>	<b>6.00</b>	<b>6.00</b>	<b>6.00</b>	<b>6.00</b>	<b>5.50</b>

\* The two-year average applies only to the four content areas (not the extended graduation rate).

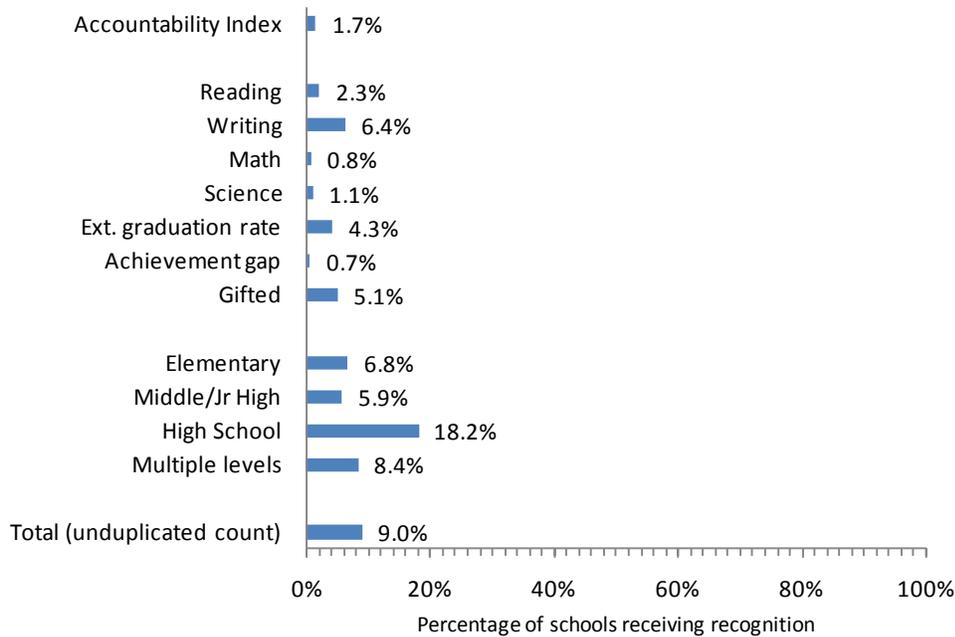
Figure 1 and Table 3 show the percentage of all schools that met the criteria in 2008. If the system were in place, recognition would have been given to 191 different schools in a total of 277 areas

<sup>1</sup>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.

<sup>2</sup>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 so not automatically receive this form of recognition.

(some schools would have received recognition in more than one area). This represents 9% of all schools. Elementary schools represent the largest percentage of schools statewide, so they would have been recognized most often. However, high schools were more likely to be recognized because of their strong performance in writing. Very few schools would have received recognition in math, science, the index, or for having closed the achievement gap in all areas.<sup>3</sup> Finally, 5% of the schools with high concentrations of gifted students receive this form of recognition. A total of 116,000 students were enrollment in the 191 schools in 2008 (11% of all students), with an average size was slightly more than 600 students per school.

**Figure 1: Percentage of Schools Meeting “Outstanding Overall Performance” Criteria (2008)**



**Table 3: Distribution of Schools Meeting “Outstanding Overall Performance” Criteria (2008)**

Type of Recognition	Elementary	Middle/ Jr. High	High	Multiple Levels	Total*
Index	27	1	1	4	33
Reading	26	3	11	4	44
Writing	29	13	62	14	118
Math	10	2	1	3	16
Science	16	4	1	0	21
Ext. Grad. Rate	—	—	10	10	20
Achievement Gap	12	0	0	2	14
Gifted	6	3	1	1	11
<b>Total*</b>	126	26	87	38	277
<b>Total**</b>	6.8%	5.9	18.2%	8.4%	9.0%

\* Duplicated count (schools can be recognized in more than one area); 19 alternative schools are included in the totals.

\*\*Based on unduplicated count of that type of school; a total of 191 schools would have been recognized.

<sup>3</sup>The uneven results occur because recognition is given based on a set of criteria rather than on a percentage basis (a norm-referenced approach) and because of differences in the relative difficulty of the assessments.

**2. NOTEWORTHY PERFORMANCE (21 TYPES)**

**Provide recognition to schools and districts for each of the 20 cells of the matrix when the 2-year average for a cell is at least 5.50, and for the index when the 2-year average is at least 5.00.** To receive this type of recognition, schools and districts must also meet the following conditions.

- (a) No rating below 5 can occur in either year in the 20 cells of the accountability matrix.
- (b) Recognition for non-low income cells in reading and writing requires a minimum 2-year average of the low income group of 4.00.

Table 4 shows the areas where recognition would be given and the minimum average.

**Table 4: Required 2-Year Average for Noteworthy Performance**

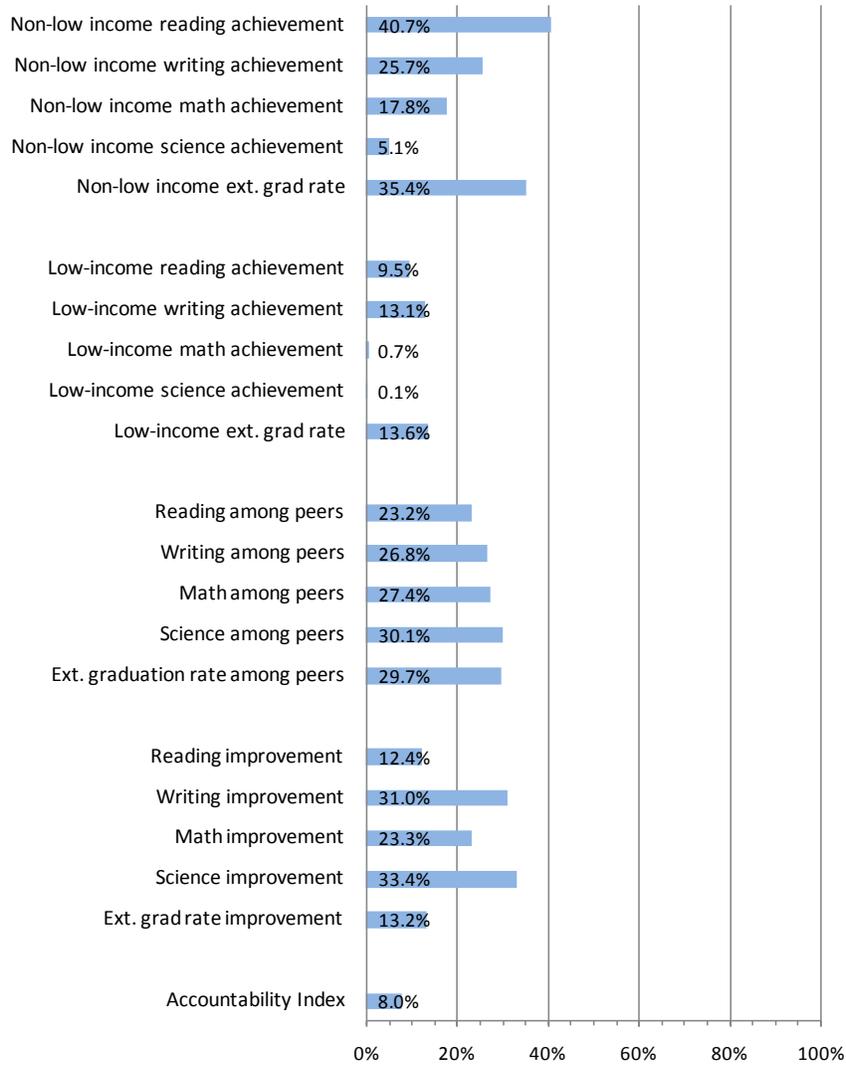
INDICATORS	OUTCOMES					Average
	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Ext. Grad. Rate	
Achievement of non-low income	**	**				
Achievement of low income	<b>5.50</b>					
Achievement vs. peers						
Improvement						
Average						<b>5.00</b>

\*\*Recognition in these cells requires the low-income cell to have a 2-year average of at least 4.00.

This option provides recognition to far more schools because it is based on performance in each of the 20 cells of the matrix as well as the index. More than 80% of the schools statewide (1,618 in total) met the criteria in some way, and some schools would have received recognition for performance in many of the cells of the matrix.

Figure 2 and Table 5 show the percentage of schools that met the criteria for recognition in the 21 cells in 2008. Some areas would have received more recognition than others. The largest number of schools (40%) met the minimum criteria for non-low income reading achievement (even when requiring the low income group to have at least a 4.0 average). Achievement in math, science, and among low-income students had far fewer schools meeting the criteria. For the index, 8% had an overall 2-year average of at least 5.00.

**Figure 2: Percentage of Schools Meeting “Noteworthy Performance” Criteria (2008)**



**Table 5: Distribution of Schools Meeting “Noteworthy Performance” Criteria (2008)**

	# of schools rated	Total recognized	Total percent
Non-low income reading achievement	1,841	750	40.7%
Non-low income writing achievement	1,668	428	25.7%
Non-low income math achievement	1,842	327	17.8%
Non-low income science achievement	1,636	84	5.1%
Non-low income ext. grad rate	460	163	35.4%
Low-income reading achievement	1,784	170	9.5%
Low-income writing achievement	1,536	201	13.1%
Low-income math achievement	1,785	13	0.7%
Low-income science achievement	1,522	2	0.1%
Low-income ext. grad rate	441	60	13.6%
Reading among peers	1,755	408	23.2%
Writing among peers	1,710	458	26.8%
Math among peers	1,757	482	27.4%
Science among peers	1,679	505	30.1%
Ext. graduation rate among peers	333	99	29.7%
Reading improvement	1,932	240	12.4%
Writing improvement	1,861	577	31.0%
Math improvement	1,931	449	23.3%
Science improvement	1,840	614	33.4%
Ext. grad rate improvement	453	60	13.2%
Accountability Index	1,972	158	8.0%

**FORMS AND TIMING OF RECOGNITION**

- The *Outstanding Overall Performance* award should be recognized in a significant manner, such as through a special event and banner. This is how Schools of Distinction were recognized. Relatively few schools (less than 200 statewide) reached these levels in 2008, so the extra cost will be relatively minimal. Public officials (e.g., legislators, OSPI staff, State Board of Education members, the Governor) could participate in any state and/or local celebrations.
- For *Noteworthy Performance*, recognition should be via a joint SBE/OSPI letter to the district with the names of the schools that are to be recognized and the reason for recognition. The results would also be posted on the OSPI Web site, as they are now. This is the least expensive and most efficient form of recognition, which is appropriate given the large number of schools that would receive this type of recognition.
- Other forms of recognition could be given by either OSPI or SBE based on their priorities. For example, OSPI could recognize a certain percentage of schools in math and science, even if they do not meet the criteria discussed above. 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.

The index can be computed retroactively using existing data, so it should be used for recognition purposes in Fall 2009. Providing recognition at that time would be considered “Phase I” in the implementation of the accountability system, with full implementation contingent upon adequate funding.

## APPENDIX A

### Benchmarks and Ratings for Outcomes and Indicators

		OUTCOMES				
		READING	WRITING	MATH	SCIENCE	EXT. GRAD. RATE <sup>1</sup>
<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>ACHIEVEMENT (NON-LOW INCOME)</b>	<u>% MET STANDARD</u> <u>RATING</u>			<u>RATE</u> <u>RATING</u>	
		90 - 100% .....7			> 95 ..... 7	
		80 - 89.9% .....6			90 - 95% ..... 6	
		70 - 79.9% .....5			85 - 89.9% ..... 5	
	<b>ACHIEVEMENT (LOW INCOME)</b>	60 - 69.9% .....4			80 - 84.9% ..... 4	
		50 - 59.9% .....3			75 - 79.9% ..... 3	
		40 - 50% .....2			70 - 74.9% ..... 2	
		< 40% .....1			< 70% ..... 1	
	<b>ACHIEVEMENT VS. PEERS<sup>2</sup></b>	<u>DIFFERENCE IN LEARNING INDEX</u> <u>RATING</u>			<u>DIFFERENCE IN RATE</u> <u>RATING</u>	
		> .20 .....7			> 12 ..... 7	
		.151 to .20 .....6			6.1 to 12 ..... 6	
		.051 to .15 .....5			3.1 to 6 ..... 5	
		-.05 to .05 .....4			-3 to 3 ..... 4	
		-.051 to -.15 .....3			-3.1 to -6 ..... 3	
		-.151 to -.20 .....2			-6.1 to -12 ..... 2	
		< -.20 .....1			< -12 ..... 1	
	<b>IMPROVEMENT (from previous year)</b>	<u>CHANGE IN LEARNING INDEX</u> <u>RATING</u>			<u>CHANGE IN RATE</u> <u>RATING</u>	
		> .15 .....7			> 6 ..... 7	
		.101 to .15 .....6			4.1 to 6 ..... 6	
		.051 to .10 .....5			2.1 to 4 ..... 5	
		-.05 to .05 .....4			-2 to 2 ..... 4	
		-.051 to -.10 .....3			-2.1 to -4 ..... 3	
		-.101 to -.15 .....2			-4.1 to -6 ..... 2	
		< -.15 .....1			< -6 ..... 1	

Note: Assessment-related results are the combined results of both the WASL and WAAS from all grades.

<sup>1</sup>This outcome only applies to schools and districts that are authorized to graduate students.

<sup>2</sup>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. 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). District calculations also control for the level of current expenditures, adjusted for student need.

## APPENDIX B

### Current Federal and State Recognition Programs

The federal and state governments each provide limited recognition. **Federal awards** are only given to schools and are competitive in nature. Three types of awards are given and only to schools that make AYP. In 2008, 59 schools receive these awards (3% of all schools statewide).

1. *Blue Ribbon Schools* are nominated by OSPI and selected by the U.S. Department of Education based on high academic performance. In order to be selected, nominated schools must provide detailed information about their school, they can be any type of school (including private schools), and they must make AYP in the year of the nomination and the following year. In 2008, four schools were recognized (seven schools had been nominated).
2. For the *Academic Achievement Award* program, Title I Part A schools that met AYP for three consecutive years in math and/or reading can apply for recognition of improving student achievement in one or both content areas. Up to nine schools can receive an award of \$10,000, and four received the award in 2008. The application provides details about successful math and/or reading strategies, and these strategies are showcased at state conferences and on OSPI's website in order to assist other schools.
3. The *Academic Improvement Award* is given to Title I Part A schools that have made AYP the past three years and shown significant gains overall, preferably among subgroups of students. Of the 48 schools receiving recognition in 2008, most were elementary schools.
4. For the *Distinguished Schools Award*, four Title I Part A schools are selected, two in the national category and two in the state category. Schools must apply for this award, which focuses on either exceptional student performance for two or more years or significant progress in closing the achievement gap. National award winners receive \$10,000 while state award winners receive \$5,000. In 2008, three schools received this award.

Two types of **state awards** have been given recently, both for improvement.

1. *Schools of Distinction* were recognized in the last two school years (2006-07 and 2007-08) based on average improvement in the Learning Index in reading and math over an extended period of time (e.g., comparing 2008 to the average of 2002 and 2003) and required achievement to exceed the state average. Only the top 5% of schools receive this award based on their improvement. This is a "norm-referenced" system, so schools with high levels of improvement may not receive the award if they do not meet the state average or others improve by a greater amount. In 2008, a total of 101 schools (53 elementary, 21 middle, 20 high, and 7 alternative) received this award (two schools received recognition for performance at two grade levels). The average index for these schools in 2008 as 4.68, which is in the Good tier. Of these schools, 41% did not make AYP and 15 were in School Improvement. One alternative school receiving this recognition in 2008 had an index in the Struggling tier. Many of the schools receiving this recognition had a relatively high percentage of gifted students (as a group, they averaged nearly twice the state average), and their percentage of low income students was less than the state average.
2. *Academic Improvement Awards* have been given since 2004 to both schools and districts that make at least a 10% reduction in the percentage of students not meeting standard from the

previous year in reading, writing, and math in grades 4, 7, and 10. (This is the level required for a school to make “safe harbor” under AYP.) Wall plaques with metal plates for updates are provided. In 2007, there were 1,255 schools (60% of schools statewide) that received a total of 2,190 awards in the three grades and subjects (a similar number of schools received awards in 2008); 241 districts (81% statewide) received a total of 804 awards in the three grades and subjects. All these awards are given regardless of AYP status.

No recognition is given at the federal or state level based on how schools or districts compare to others with similar student characteristics or for achievement by any student group, including all students combined. With new administrations at the federal and state level, the criteria for the federal awards could change, and the future status of the OSPI awards is uncertain.

## APPENDIX C

### **Rationale for Recommendations**

#### Rationale for Both Types of Recognition

- The recommended minimum 2-year averages are challenging but reachable targets. If a goal is too high, few will think they can reach it and the reward of recognition loses its motivational power.
- The same criteria are used for each subject for schools and districts for simplicity.
- The recognition system is based on a “theory of change” that people are motivated more by success than by blame or guilt and need clear, challenging, and attainable goals.
- The goals are criteria-based so schools/districts know what needs to be done to be recognized, and they do not have to worry about the performance of others. This goals are clear and encourages collaboration and cooperation among educators.
- Requiring minimum ratings ensures recognition is given only for sustained exemplary performance and not based on one good year.
- Lower averages are justified for the index because it is harder to have a high average in multiple categories. The 5.00 average is the beginning of the Very Good tier, so it would include all schools/districts with an average in the Very Good or Exemplary tiers. The 5.50 average is the beginning of the Exemplary tier.

#### Rationale for “Outstanding Overall Performance”

- Recognizing relatively few schools in high priority areas demonstrates a commitment to these areas and provides more incentive to improve where the greatest improvement needs to occur.
- A more limited system ensures that any recognition that occurs is truly special. Having too many schools getting many awards reduces the significance of the recognition.
- The strongest predictor of the achievement gap is the difference between the two socioeconomic groups (non-low income and low income). The gap is measured in terms of the cells in the matrix rather than other gaps outside the matrix (e.g., the differences between race/ethnic groups).
- Outstanding sustained performance in schools with a “regular” student composition deserves recognition. Restricting the percentage of gifted students that are assessed provides a more accurate picture of school performance. High concentrations of gifted students generally inflate the results, making it easier for schools with special programs to receive recognition.

#### Rationale for “Noteworthy Performance”

- Giving recognition for all five outcomes and four indicators conveys the belief that all parts of the system are important. Recognizing fewer cells of the matrix could generate extra focus in some areas and not others.
- Requiring the low income reading and writing cells to have at least a 4.00 average ensures that cells that have high levels of performance do not get recognized if there is a significant achievement gap.
- There is no restriction on schools receiving recognition if they have 10% or more of their students designated as gifted. This allows all schools to be eligible for this type of recognition.
- Research has found that “small victories” support continuous improvement efforts. Education stakeholders viewed even minor forms of state recognition as a way to support improvement.