THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Accountability | World-Class Math and Science Standards | Meaningful Diploma/CORE 24

Systems Performance Accountability (SPA) Notes
October 13, 2009

Attendees: Kris Mayer, Phyllis Bunker Frank, Warren Smith, Bernal Baca, Steve Dal Porto, Amy Bragdon, Connie Fletcher, Bob Hughes, Mack Armstrong, George Juarez, Erin Jones, Janell Newman, Tonya Middling, Gary Kipp, Karen Davis, Mike Bernard, Bill Williams, Phil Brockman, Caroline King, Martha Rice, Pete Bylsma, Edie Harding, Brad Burnham

Recap of Progress To Date and Current Work on Accountability Framework for Voluntary and Required Action

Edie Harding gave an update on progress to complete the details of the State Board of Education (SBE) Accountability Framework. OSPI and SBE will ensure our Accountability Framework is seamless, integrates with the new Federal School Improvement guidelines, and builds upon the work of our Systems Performance Accountability (SPA) work group, which includes: a continuous system of improvement for schools and districts, a joint state/local collaboration for voluntary and required action, a focus on improvement and additional state criteria to determine which districts move into Required Action.

The accomplishments of the SPA work group and the SBE include: a review of current national research issues and Washington state school and district policy barriers and performance issues; a collaborative accountability framework; a provisional accountability index to recognize high achieving schools that improve; close the achievement gap and out perform their peer schools; and creation of a process for reviewing districts with persistently low achieving schools for voluntary and required action.

Janell Newman discussed the expectations under the draft Federal School Improvement guidelines. New measures will be used to determine the lowest achieving schools that include measuring absolute performance as well as growth in the all category of students for reading and math. One cohort of Title I and Title I eligible schools will be identified by Washington based on these and other criteria to receive federal funds under school improvement (through the district with these schools). Districts will be asked to participate based on a determination of greatest commitment to follow through on the four federal models of intervention. These models are: turnaround, closure, restart and transformation.

Edie outlined the proposed steps that would occur for those very few districts that would fall under the SBE proposal for Required Action. The steps include a joint state/local collaboration with recommendation from an independent external audit that the local school board will use to create a plan using one of the four federal models or a state model or local model. SBE will need to approve the local school board plan. The state will be responsible for providing the resources and authority to districts to implement the binding conditions of the plan.

Feedback forms in hard copy and electronically were distributed to the SPA group for input. Some of the initial thoughts from the group included: concerns about the sustainability of the school improvement funds after three years and timing with the Quality Education Council and basic education funding revisions. Members of the groups wanted a way to be clear about the role of districts vs. schools in the voluntary and required action, the capacity to address the four federal models for school

improvement, and details of how opening up the collective bargaining agreement would work in required action.

SBE will consider action at its November Board meeting to approve further refinements of its Accountability Framework:

1) The details for Voluntary and Required Action for addressing the role of the state and local districts with low performing schools to improve educational outcomes for their students – a final report and a draft bill for the 2010 legislation session will be prepared based upon the Board's action.

2) Revisions to the SBE Provisional Accountability Index to examine high and low achieving schools. The current SBE Provisional Accountability Index will be used for a Joint OSPI/SBE Recognition Program for high achieving schools as well as those that show gains in achievement and closing the achievement gap, compared to their peers or overall improvement. SBE/OSPI will work with the Federal government to pursue a waiver or changes in No Child Left Behind to use the revised Accountability Index with low achieving schools.

Review of Criteria for District Identification for Voluntary and Required Action

Pete Bylsma outlined some suggested state criteria to determine what additional measures beyond the federal school improvement rule could be used to identify districts with persistently low achieving schools. These include as a first step: identification of the bottom 25 percent of schools (both Title I and non Title I) based on percentage of all students in both reading and math for four years; the use of the AYP uniform bar as a metric; the results for elementary, middle, high and multiple grade bands; and examination of those in the bottom quartiles of their grade band in both math and reading for 4 years. Under the second step, a deeper analysis would include: contextual data (school type, changes in student population, feeder patterns, district governance); other assessment data (subgroups, achievement gaps, Washington Language Proficiency Test); teaching and learning issues (staff qualifications and experience, curriculum alignment, extended learning opportunities, community involvement); other data (dropout rates, external evaluations, participation and unexcused absences); cells of the SBE Accountability Index (peer ratings, close the achievement gap, graduation rates). State criteria for Required Action for districts will need to be legally defensible: quantitative and not open to subjective interpretation.

Race to the Top

Edie provided an update on Washington's plans to seek funding from the Race to The Top competitive grant in Round 1 (January 2010) and Round 2 (June 2010). She handed out an organizational and work plan. The Governor, Superintendent and Chair of the State Board of Education must sign off on the application. There are a number of work groups involved, including one on struggling schools, that the SPA group will be consulted on. We will solicit feedback from local districts and other education stakeholders. Proposals must address: the state's full range of students, show effective strategies to change and improve educational outcomes, be equitable, be research based, be able to take to scale, and be sustainable.

Revisions to SBE Provisional Accountability Index and Sub Group Analysis

A critical revision to the Provisional Accountability Index is the addition of the subgroup analysis. Pete Bylsma made revisions based upon feedback from his technical advisers, federal experts and SPA members which will: 1) keep reporting all subgroups on the OSPI Report Card, 2) keep the Accountability Index the same as the Board adopted last May and use for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) decisions for all students, and 3) use a separate modified Index with more subgroups to make AYP decisions based on each individual subgroup (this last one was suggested by the SPA group discussion).

The all student group will use SBE Provisional Accountability Index (reading, writing, math, science and graduation rate) and schools and districts must have a 2-year average of at least 3.00 as an overall average on the Accountability Index to make AYP.

On the additional index for subgroups, four more subgroups will be added. The outcomes for the subgroups will be limited to those in the Federal accountability – reading, math and extended graduation rate, computing a row average for each subgroup. Any subgroup may not make AYP if the average of the subgroup row does not improve at least once every two years. Special education students will have no restriction on the percent of students who can count as meeting standard on the Washington Alternate Assessment System (WAAS) and special education students who reach level 2 on the state wide assessments will be deemed as meeting standard.

The Board will consider taking action on these changes at its November Board meeting.

Revisions to the 180 Day Waiver Process

Brad Burnham presented one of the options for consideration for revisions to the 180 day waivers. The proposed option would shift long term planning efforts for student achievement to OSPI to administer under the new accountability system in both voluntary and required action. SPA members felt that these waivers should not be available to schools and districts that were going to receive additional funds under voluntary or required action. They felt the waivers should be handled in one office (SBE). All acknowledged the dilemma in terms of trading time for professional development and instructional time for students.

Staff does not plan to go forward with a recommendation on this particular revision to the 180 day waiver process.

The next SPA meeting is scheduled for 1- 4 p.m. on February 9, 2010 at the Renton School District.