SYSTEM PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM: PROVISIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY INDEX AND RECOGNITION PROGRAM

SUMMARY OF POLICY ISSUE / STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION (SBE) STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

In 2005, the Washington State Legislature directed the Washington State Board of Education (SBE) to create a statewide system of accountability and support that would identify the state's most successful schools and schools in need of improvement. This directive aligns with the Board's goal to improve student achievement.

BACKGROUND

At its January 2009 meeting, the Board passed a resolution outlining its accountability framework. There are three components to the accountability framework: 1) an Accountability Index to recognize schools that are successful and those that need additional assistance; 2) targeted state programs to assist districts; and 3) required action if there are no improvements. SBE and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) will seek approval of the proposed system to replace the current No Child Left Behind (NCLB) system and provide a unified system of accountability.

The 2009 Legislature approved the Board's direction as outlined in the SBE Accountability Resolution. The core concepts of that resolution are reflected in sections 501-503 of ESHB 2261 as part of the new basic education funding system. The Legislature asked the SBE to report to the Legislature by December 1, 2009.

At the May 2009 meeting, the Board's consultant, Pete Bylsma, provided recommendations on a provisional accountability Index as well as a recognition system using the Index. The Board approved the provisional accountability index and a recognition program for Outstanding Overall Performance with recognition for high levels of performance in the Index, which include: reading, writing, math, science, extended graduation rate, strong performance on overall index, closing the achievement gap and schools with gifted programs.

Staff has moved forward to continue the work of the accountability framework in the following ways:

Provisional Accountability Index:

1. Reach out to the following groups to review the index for feedback: Education Trust, Terry Bergeson, Scott Palmer (NCLB attorney in D.C.), Jack Jennings (Center for Education Progress), Rolf Blank (Council of Chief State School Officers) – **June-July**.
2. Meet with OSPI bilingual and migrant program manager as well as OSPI Title I staff – **August**.
3. Reach out to LEAP and Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee – **July-August**.
4. Incorporate feedback to prepare for working with OSPI to discuss with the US Department of Education and Congressional delegation (to prepare for reauthorization of NCLB) – **August-September**.

Recognition Program:

1. Meet with OSPI to discuss joint OSPI/SBE recognition program to be implemented this fall – **July-August**.

Accountability Framework

1. Met with SPA work group to discuss the following issues: review of recent research and achievement gap issues, deeper analysis of struggling schools, school improvement rule revisions, state voluntary action programs, and required action for state/local collaboration. See Attachment A for a summary of the SPA June 16 meeting notes. (Next SPA work group meeting will be August 11).
2. SBE staff is developing a small contract to examine an analysis of teachers' responses to the bonus incentive for obtaining National Board Certification to work in challenged schools.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

We will share feedback we have received on the Provisional Accountability Index at the Board meeting with potential policy implications.

EXPECTED ACTION

None

Attachment A

Systems Performance Accountability (SPA) Notes
June 16, 2009

Attendees: Kris Mayer, Phyllis Bunker Frank, Amy Bragdon, Bill Williams, Mack Armstrong, Bob Harmon, George Juarez, Mary Alice Heuschel, Bob Harmon, Lile Holland, Gayle Pauley, Tonya Middling, Don Rash, Karen Davis, Roger Erskine, Martha Rice, Bob Butts, Pete Bylsma, Edie Harding

Overview of Work For 2009

Kris Mayer summarized the last SPA meeting where the overall Accountability Index with focus on ELL, alternative schools, the recognition program and the in depth analysis for struggling schools was discussed. At the May Board meeting SBE supported the provisional accountability index and agreed we need to do more work on ELL. They also supported the recognition program for outstanding overall performance using the Accountability Index, which is eight types of awards in reading, writing, math, science, extended graduation rate, close achievement gap, gifted, and overall average index.

Edie Harding outlined the work plan, which will center on the following objectives and time frame:

- Approve the provisional state accountability index and proposed joint SBE/OSPI recognition system by May 2009.
- Discuss provisional state Accountability Index with Ed Trust and others knowledgeable about NCLB before going to the U.S. Department of Education by July 2009.
- Finalize a joint OSPI-SBE recognition program in July 2009 for the 2009-2010 school year, using the new Accountability Index.
- Work with Washington LEAP group, OSPI, and others on ELL issues.
- Work with OSPI and stakeholders to refine continuous improvement model processes, which include OSPI voluntary support programs and Academic Watch, June-November 2009.
- Develop draft revised rule on school improvement planning by November 2009.
- Work with OSPI to request the U.S. Department of Education to substitute our state accountability index in place of the current federal AYP system for the 2011-2012 school year.
- Submit proposals and timeline to Legislature on the state voluntary system and required action by December 1, 2009.

There will be two additional SPA work group meetings this year: August 11 and October 13.

Review of Recent Research and Achievement Gap Issues

One of the major concerns in developing an effective accountability system is the identification of achievement gaps between students within schools, districts, states, and other countries. Teachers and other education professionals can make a significant difference in closing that achievement gap. The role of the family and community is also important.

The literature on the defining qualities of a high performing school resonates with common themes. Successful schools demonstrate a "continuity of focus on core instruction; heavy investments in highly targeted professional development for teachers and principals in the fundamentals of strong classroom instruction; strong and explicit accountability by principals and teachers for the quality of

practice and the level of student performance; and a normative climate in which adults take responsibility for their own, their colleagues', and their students' learning." [1]

Strategies oriented toward improving schools through whole school reform or school choice may be less effective than focusing on improving the teaching profession.[2] The broad, research-based consensus of the importance of teacher effectiveness in providing a catalyst for school reform must remain at the forefront of the state/school board's plan for voluntary/required action under the SBE Accountability Framework.

Based on the research included in this report, a bulleted list of actionable items in the following four areas should be considered as the Board continues its accountability work:

1. **Deeper Analysis of Struggling Schools and SBE Key Indicators for Report Card**
    - Examine indicators of teacher distribution and quality, family and community support, and the achievement gap between different groups of students.

2. **School Improvement Rule**
    - Add analysis of achievement gap.
    - Determine which parts of the Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools to include, specifically.
    - Determine whether we want to have a district improvement plan.

3. **Voluntary Programs**
    - Provide incentives for districts to align curriculum with standards in recommended menus from OSPI.
    - Provide incentives for districts to improve, through Innovation Zone particularly, in the following areas:
        - Quality teaching.
        - Personalized learning environments for students.
        - Expanded early learning opportunities.
        - Family and community support for students.
        - Adoption of CORE 24.
        - Innovative schools.

4. **Required Action for State/Local Collaboration**
    - More than one reform solution may be needed to correct the course of a struggling school.

More In-Depth Review of Schools and Districts After Accountability Index

Pete Bylsma discussed the next second step after the Accountability Index sorts schools and districts into five "tiers" from "Exemplary" to "Struggling," based on their index score. Those with a low score or not showing sufficient improvement after two years would undergo a second step review of additional data by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to determine if they should undergo an additional set of consequences as Priority Schools.

[1] http://www.uknow.gse.harvard.edu/leadership/leadership001b.html
[2] http://www.miamiherald.com/460/story/1049341.html Miami-Dade County Public Schools: School Improvement Zone, Final Evaluation Report May 2009. Office of Program Evaluation for Miami Public Schools Steve Urdegar. pviii

This deeper analysis will use contextual and assessment data reported to the state and data from the accountability matrix. It will also involve requesting other data from the district that is not available at the state level to get information on other issues. This forces the districts and schools being reviewed to take a closer look at their own data. These categories would include: contextual, student and teaching, and learning data.

Based on feedback from attendees at the SPA meeting the following matrix of data has been created:

Type of Data for In-Depth Review	Applies to Schools (S)	District (D)	Available at state?
1. Contextual			
Type of school (alternative school, institution)	S		✓
Programs in the school (e.g., concentrations of ELL, special education, gifted)	S		✓
Changes in student demographic profile (e.g., rapid increase in low-income/ELL)	S	D	✓
Community health (e.g., gang issues, unemployment rates, parent, community, business, philanthropic support for school)	S	D	
Perception results: How staff, parent, student views about school conditions differ	S	D	
2. Student (annual and trends over time)			
Achievement trends over multiple years for each subject area	S	D	✓
Trends for subgroups (gender, race/ethnicity, low-income) and programs (ELL, special education)*	S	D	✓
Size of the achievement gap between subgroups in different subjects	S	D	✓
How performance compares to similar schools	S	D	**
Results of students who have been enrolled for longer periods of time (e.g., three years)	S	D	✓
Results from retakes (high school) and collection of evidence (CAA)	S	D	✓
WLPT trends and the percentage of students exiting the ELL program	S	D	✓
Participation rates and unexcused absence rates for all subgroups*	S	D	✓
Graduation data: On-time and extended graduation rates for all students and subgroups*	S	D	✓
Dropout data: Annual and cohort dropout rates for all students and subgroups, difference in rates	S	D	✓
Retention: Number/percent of students retained, subjects not passed, level of credit deficiency	S	D	
Early learning: School readiness, achievement in grades PK-2	S		
3. Teaching and Learning			
Classroom conditions: Class sizes and student/teacher ratios by	S	D	

Type of Data for In-Depth Review	Applies to Schools (S)	District (D)	Available at state?
grade and subject			
Staff characteristics: Percentage of teachers with National Board certificates, teacher experience and education levels, endorsements in subjects taught	S	D	✓
Staff/leadership mobility: Amount of turnover, type of changes	S	D	
Resource allocation: Where staff and other resources are deployed in the district (equity in teaching distribution)	S	D	
Instructional issues: Alignment of curriculum and materials across grades and with state standards, ELL program model(s) being used	S	D	
Professional development: Types and focus, involvement of professional learning communities	S	D	
Initiatives: Number being attempted, level of integration and cohesion among activities			
Extended learning opportunities: After-school/intersession/summer school programs, number of students enrolled, attendance	S	D	
Staff relations: Level of collaboration within the school, union relations	S	D	
Collection/use of data: Quality of data, capacity to use data, staff use of data	S	D	
District role: Resources allocated to school, type of support provided, type/intensity of interventions		D	

* Data required to be reported by NCLB.
** Part of new accountability index, will be available when implemented.

OSPI now has 57 districts and 620 schools that have not met AYP and are eligible for improvement. The numbers are expected to double next year. All districts in improvement receive $20,000 and can also receive an external facilitator for $55,000. Currently OSPI identifies districts in greatest need by number of cells identified as not making AYP, number and percent of schools in improvement, number and percent of Title I schools, percent of low income students, percent of students not meeting standard in math and reading, percent of extended graduation rate. OSPI expressed concern that it won't have enough external facilitators to assist districts in improvement. The Summit District program only serves eight districts and focuses on instruction, alignment, assessment systems, and data to inform instruction. Superintendents want to know what is working from other districts. What role can OSPI play?

SBE School Improvement Plan Revisions to Rule

It was suggested that we look at what the Federal government requires for Title I, LAP, and ELL plans as part of the School Improvement Plan. A district plan may also be helpful to have to ensure that the schools' plans are aligned with it. The amount of review a plan gets and how it is used varies greatly by school district. WSSDA will have a workshop this summer on the role of the Board in plan review.

Innovation Zone Concepts

The Innovation Zone would be one option under state voluntary targeted assistance. Districts would initiate and apply to be in the Innovation Zone. People will need a different mindset to try options that have not been used before e.g., different forms of compensation or types of schools for personalized learning such as Delta High School. We should make sure to expand beyond quality teaching to quality administrators and other kinds of staff. Some questioned why this would be limited to just those in improvement status. The planning grant is a good idea. How will this work be sustained after funding goes away?

Required Action Concepts

After a district has a four year period to work under voluntary action and if there is no improvement in its schools, then it will come under a required state/local collaborative action process. This process would include a performance audit and then the local school board would develop a plan to address the audit's findings. The SBE would approve the plan and it would become binding on the district. The district would receive resources to carry it out. What will be the trigger to require a district to go into this process? What happens if some schools are better and others are not within a district? Where is the community role in this process?

SPA attendees were given a list of questions to answer about the above work and SBE staff will use the list to guide its follow up work for the summer and fall.

Next Steps

The Board will receive an update on the work session at its July Board meeting. At the August 11 SPA meeting the following topics will be covered: How ESD 113 uses data visually, professional learning communities, data on districts and schools in improvement, update on the Accountability Index, draft ideas for school improvement plan revised rule, steps for Innovation Zone, and Required Action.