

## **STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION UNOPPOSED ELECTIONS**

### **BACKGROUND**

To reduce costs for the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the State Board of Education staff proposes that if a qualified candidate for an elected Board position is unopposed, OSPI would not go through a balloting and election process.

Under RCW 28A.305.021, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) runs the elections for the State Board of Education positions that are elected through public school board members. There is a similar provision for OSPI to run the elections for the Educational Service Districts (ESDs) for board members. OSPI is planning to request legislation in the 2010 session to revise its law RCW 28A.310.100. The law would be changed to allow OSPI the ability to declare the position is filled without an election if a single candidate is unopposed.

### **POLICY CONSIDERATION**

Staff suggests that the Board consider proposing a similar change to the election process of Board members to RCW 28.A.305.021 in the 2010 session. Thus, if a qualified candidate files for an elected Board position and is unopposed, OSPI would declare the position filled and no election would occur.

### **EXPECTED ACTION**

Approve the proposed change below and submit for the 2010 session, per the underlined language below.

#### **RCW 28A.305.021**

#### **Election of board members — Restrictions.**

The election of state board of education members by school directors and private school board members shall be conducted by the office of the superintendent of public instruction for the members of the state board who begin serving on January 1, 2006, and thereafter.

(1) The superintendent shall adopt rules for the conduct of elections, which shall include, but need not be limited to: The definition of the eastern Washington and western Washington geographic regions of the state for the purpose of determining board member positions; the weighting of votes cast by the number of students in the school director's school district or board member's private school; election and dispute resolution procedures; the process for filling vacancies; and election timelines. The election timeline shall include calling for elections no later than the twenty-fifth of August, and notification of the election results no later than the fifteenth of December; Provided, however, that if there is only one qualified candidate for an elected position, it shall not be necessary for the superintendent to conduct an election for the position but instead the superintendent shall declare the candidate elected to the board without opposition.