



THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

A high-quality education system that prepares all students for college, career, and life.

February 29, 2016

Representative Hans Dunshee
315 John L. O'Brien Building
Olympia, WA 98504

Senator Andy Hill
303 John A. Cherberg Building
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Representative Dunshee and Senator Hill:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on major decisions impacting schools and children in the final weeks of this short 2016 session.

As you prepare your final budget agreement, and resolve negotiations on remaining bills necessary to implement the budget, the State Board of Education would ask you to pay particular attention to the following issues:

Assessment graduation requirements: While HB 2214 addresses some of our priorities, the Board favors an approach limited to [these policy changes](#):

1. Immediate and permanent elimination of the Biology End-of-Course exam as a high school graduation requirement. The Board remains open to the transition language regarding the Next Generation Science Standards assessment currently in HB 2214.
2. Expanding alternative pathways for students who are not initially successful on exit exams, by adding post-secondary credits earned in subject (dual credit), and [Bridge-to-College coursework](#) as approved assessment alternatives under 28A.655.061. This would constitute an expansion of alternatives, not a replacement of the current Collections of Evidence (COE) option.
3. Clarifying the requirements of the high school and beyond plan, which is currently a state high school graduation requirement, but one without clear statutory guidelines.
4. Avoid mid-course modifications (switching from one graduation requirement to another) for students currently in high school. With the class of 2018 (current sophomore) being the last class to take math End-of-Course assessments for exit exam purposes, and with any new law taking effect very close to this year's assessment cycle, it is perhaps best to allow the planned phase-in of SBAC assessments to run its course as current law provides. Premature elimination of math EOCs may deny students' access to retake opportunities to which they are entitled under current requirements.

Isabel Muñoz-Colón, *Chair* • Ben Rarick, *Executive Director*
Mona Bailey • Kevin Laverty • Madaleine Osmun • Bob Hughes • Dr. Daniel Plung • Baxter Hershman • MJ Bolt
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Charter schools: The Board does not have a position on SB 6194, but there are several aspects of the bill that could impact our agency operations. Please consider the following issues:

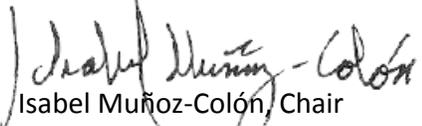
1. As has been provided for other proposed Commission members, please allow the Chair of the State Board of Education to have a designee sit on his/her behalf. Without this provision, we are committing the Chair to full membership on two statewide policy boards and the time commitment becomes prohibitive for some.
2. To the extent that the State Board of Education may be assigned duties for the administration of any reenacted charter school law, please ensure that any such duties are accompanied with commensurate funding.

Teacher shortage: The Board's position is that the current shortage is at least partially symptomatic of inadequate state funding. We support efforts to strengthen beginning teacher salaries, as part of a long-term transition to a career ladder wage structure as supported by the Professional Educator Standards Board and the Compensation Technical Working Group.

Finally, the Board has been public with its concerns about the lack of forward movement on policy to end local school district reliance on excess levies to support basic education programs and salaries, consistent with the *McCleary* decision. However, with SB 6195 already passing both chambers, we have chosen to focus this correspondence on items still in consideration.

Thank you for your consideration, and thank you for your service to the State of Washington.

Sincerely,


Isabel Muñoz-Colón, Chair
Washington State Board of Education

C: Representative Pat Sullivan
Senator Mark Schoesler
Senator Steve Litzow
Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos
Members of the State Board of Education
Ms. Deborah Merle, Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor