

Update to the Achievement and Accountability Workgroup October, 2013

Index Approval

A description of the revised Index was approved by the State Board of Education at the July meeting and was sent to the US Department of Education (USED) on August 21, 2013. Representatives of the USED have indicated that approval for ESEA Flexibility Principle 2, which includes the revised Index, may be separated from Principle 3 (teacher evaluation). Approval of the Index, therefore, is not dependent on the timetable of approval for the full waiver. An amendment to the Principle 2 flexibility waiver will be submitted in mid-October, with a target date for federal approval in early December. The federal shut-down may impact this date.

Representation of English Language Learners (ELL) in the Revised Index

AAW members were clear in their support of an 'Ever ELL' subgroup for use in the Index, with use of 'Former' and 'Current' ELL as their second choice. AAW members felt both of these options were preferable to using only 'Current' ELL to represent the performance of ELL students in the revised Index. In communications with the USED, USED representatives have suggested an 'Ever ELL' subgroup was unlikely to be approved, but were more receptive to using 'Current' and 'Former' ELL subgroups. The SBE has decided to move forward with proposing a revised Index that uses 'Current' and 'Former' ELL subgroups. However, the Board continues to support 'Ever ELL' as a better representation of the performance of students who are currently or have been in English Language programs. The SBE will explore the use of 'Ever ELL' by other states, and the possibility of approaching the USED in the future on this issue in partnership with other states.

Field Testing Common Core Assessments

In 2013-2014 the Smarter Balanced Consortium (SBAC), of which Washington State is a governing member, is seeking participation from at least 20% of students in a field test of the SBAC assessment. The field test will yield limited, if any, information on the performance of students and schools, since the field test will test items, not the complete final assessment. It will not be possible to relate field test results to state tests from previous or subsequent years. The USED is allowing applications from states for one-year waivers for required assessments for schools that field test, so such schools will not have to 'double test,' and will not experience any federal penalty for lack of state assessment results. Washington State plans to apply for the waiver. All high school students will need access to assessments required for high school graduation, so the reading and writing HSPE, mathematics EOCs, and the biology EOC will be administered, regardless of whether a high school participates in field testing.

Field testing will have an impact on implementing the revised Index. Median student growth percentile data for 2013-2014 will not be available for schools that field test, since the field test is not comparable to other assessments. It has not yet been determined if median student growth can be calculated for schools that do not field test, but it may be possible. For calculating the 2014 Index, schools that will not have growth data for 2013-2014 will have their 2012-2013 data 'carried forward.'