

September Meeting Highlights



September 20, 2006

Welcome to Highlights, a summary of actions by the Washington State Board of Education.

The board met last Thursday and Friday in Olympia for a meeting that largely focused on the results of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) and on Next Steps for a joint K-12 action plan on mathematics for the 2007 legislative session. Superintendent Bill Lahmann from the Olympia School District and Russ Lehman President of the Olympia School Board welcomed the State Board.

RESULTS FROM THE 2006 WASL

Dr. Joe Willhoff provided an update on the 2006 results with special focus on the class of 2008. Dr. Willhoff's highlights included:

- Student achievement continues to rise in Washington.
- Compared to 2005 WASL, results are up for all 10th grade students in reading, math and writing. Results are down slightly in science.
- Fifty-two percent of 10th grade students who took the test met all three standards in reading, math, and writing. Forty-five percent of all student *enrolled* in the class of 2008 met all three standards.
- Of those who met two of the three standards, most missed math but only by one level.
- Thirty percent of students eligible to retake the WASL did so this summer.
- System requirements to achieve student success must include: alignment of the curriculum to standards, skilled teaching with professional development, intervention programs for struggling students, academic coaches at schools to help teachers, parent support, and effective principal and superintendent leadership and commitment.
- New tests are in place for 3rd, 5th, 6th and 8th grades in reading and math, which will enable us to measure individual student growth over time.

DATA HAS CHANGED HOW SCHOOL DISTRICTS OPERATE



The board also heard from the superintendents and staff from the Olympia and North Thurston School Districts. They talked about strategies to help students meet standards. They have also learned that additional help for students cannot be "optional". District staff is focused on analyzing WASL data to find out what struggling students need to learn. They are also looking at the scope and sequence of their curriculum. They expressed that students who take algebra and geometry succeed on the WASL. Parents are a key component to helping their students.

In response, the board discussed several issues about math including how to increase rigor in the middle school math curriculum, credentials for teachers, the need for professional development, and what effective practices/interventions are available for students.

JOINT EFFORT BY K-12 LEADERS TO EXAMINE MATHEMATICS

State Superintendent Dr. Terry Bergeson shared her proposed immediate and longer-term actions to improve mathematics achievement, which include providing professional development, curriculum resources, instruction modules, and diagnostic screening tools.

Jennifer Wallace, Executive Director of the Professional Educators Standards Board (PESB), discussed the actions that the Standards Board is taking, and current plans to increase the number of mathematics teachers. Including steps to make sure new mathematics and elementary teachers have the skills and knowledge to help students meet math standards.

The PESB and State Board are working cooperatively in this effort and also presented "Working Together for Student Achievement" a draft joint report to the legislature.

Bob Butts, Director of Policy for the State Board, focused on the statewide graduation requirements for mathematics, including the credit requirement and the need to pass the high school mathematics WASL beginning with the Class of 2008. He reviewed high school mathematics WASL scores and trends by demographic group. Then compared Washington's mathematics graduation requirements to the ones in other states and discussed how the graduation requirements across the nation are changing.

BOARD ACTION

The board finalized its strategic plan. The goal of the strategic plan is to improve student achievement dramatically. The board has outlined tasks and objectives it will pursue with its education partners and the community to achieve this goal. (A copy of the plan can be viewed at <http://www.sbe.wa.gov>)

PUBLIC HEARING ON COLLECTION OF EVIDENCE

On October 26th at Educational School District 121 in Renton, the State Board of Education will hold a public hearing on the alternative assessment portfolio Collection of Evidence.

Please forward this note to others who might be interested in the State Board of Education's work.

Please visit the board's Web site, (<http://www.sbe.wa.gov>) to sign up for Highlights and other messages, read complete minutes of board meetings, and learn more about K-12 education in Washington State.