



Meeting Highlights

March 15, 2007

On March 12th and 13th, the State Board of Education met in Olympia to examine the potential of joining the American Diploma Project (ADP) Network and the importance of science literacy for all students.

Board Action on Education Standards

The Board took action on two critical items:

- Adoption of rules to clarify the credits current and future high school students earn for graduation must be aligned with Washington standards, which consist of the ninth and tenth grade, Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) in English, mathematics, and science as well as other subject areas.
- Adoption of a motion to allow the Executive Committee and the Chair of the Mathematics Committee to enter into a contract with a consultant. This consultant successfully bid on the Board's Request for Proposals for an independent review of Washington's K-12 mathematics standards.

The American Diploma Project

To inform its work on a meaningful high school diploma, the Board heard about the ADP from Mike Cohen, President of Achieve Inc. The ADP was launched by Achieve Inc. in 2002 in partnership with The Education Trust and the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. Their objective was to identify and organize the knowledge and skills high school graduates need to succeed in postsecondary education and the workplace. Representatives from the Departments of Education in Oregon and Maryland, two of the 29 states that comprise the ADP Network, spoke about high school reform work in their states and their experiences with the ADP. The Board discussed ways that states are translating college and work readiness skills into requirements for graduation.

Science Literacy



Ever see parasites at work in a mouse's ear? Know how to efficiently displace heat from a gas fireplace during a windstorm? Through video, demonstration, and presentations, five panelists engaged the Board in a discussion of science literacy. Tahoma High School science teacher Ethan Smith talked about how science teaching and learning had evolved in his district over ten years. He credited the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) as the impetus that helped push and sustain that process. Theresa Britschgi, director of BioQuest, part of the

Seattle Biomedical Institute, underscored that Washington was a "science state," attracting pharmaceutical, biomedical, and other industries because of the strength of science knowledge. Lynda Paznokas, Associate Dean of the College of Education at Washington State

University, addressed the college readiness skills needed to bridge the gap between K–10 and college-level science. Roy Beven, Science WASL Manager at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), reviewed a sample science WASL scenario and described how it addressed the three science Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs): systems, inquiry and application. Eric Wuersten, Science Program Supervisor for OSPI, provided a context for science learning in the state and posed questions for the Board to consider in its meaningful high school diploma work and in its potential independent review of the state’s science standards.

Meaningful High School Diploma Committee

Eric Liu, Chair of the Board’s Meaningful High School Diploma Committee, distributed a draft document that synopsised the committee’s initial discussion of what would constitute a “meaningful” diploma. The Committee believes a diploma should enable a Washington high school graduate to be well-equipped with the knowledge and life skills to be productive, engaged citizens who can adapt to new challenges, opportunities and circumstances.

System Performance Accountability Committee

Dr. Kris Mayer, Chair of the Board’s System Performance Accountability Committee, presented a draft framework for what needs to be accomplished, reminding the Board that one out of four students are enrolled in schools that did not meet No Child Left Behind’s adequate yearly progress (AYP) targets. Framework issues include measuring the system’s health, selecting indicators of system performance, determining the level at which assistance would be offered and who would be responsible for outcomes of any intervention, building local capacity, specifying criteria for identifying and prioritizing schools to assist, reporting to the public, and evaluating the accountability system itself.

Joint Mathematics Action Plan Update

The State Board of Education is moving ahead to hire a consultant to conduct the review of the K–12 mathematics standards. Work will be done by September 2007. OSPI discussed its work to create a list of available formative assessments and instructional modules for teachers. The Professional Educator Standards Board is revising and strengthening its secondary teacher mathematics endorsements.

180-Day Waiver Committee Recommendations

John Schuster, Chair of the 180-Day Waiver Committee, and Dr. Jim Koval, Superintendent of the North Thurston Public Schools, presented the Committee’s initial recommendations regarding the 180-day waiver option available to districts. The Board expressed concern about students losing time at school. However, the Board also recognized that waivers are an option that districts and schools have used effectively in facilitating their school improvement plans and strategies. The Board gave its approval for the 180-Day Waiver Committee to work on refining the application process for 180-day waivers with specific attention to clarifying the purpose of waivers, specifying criteria for approval, and increasing accountability through a feedback loop. New requirements, if any, for requesting 180-day waivers will not be put into place until next school year. Current requests must continue to meet the requirements of WAC 180-18-050.

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