

Dear partner in education:

Greetings and happy holidays!

December has been a very important month for education in Washington. The Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance is close to completing its report with overarching recommendations to the Legislature, including support for a phased-in implementation of CORE 24 and the accountability principles that SBE is developing.

We also had continued progress this month in the areas of math curriculum and science standards development. At the Special Board meeting on December 10, SBE received updates on the K-8 math curriculum recommendations and a report on the new science standards from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Improved student preparation in these areas is critically important to ensure our graduates remain competitive in a global workforce. I commend OSPI, Washington State Board of Education (SBE) Board's advisory panels and consultants for their hard work on these initiatives. The process has been highly collaborative and will help us make real improvements for our students.

SBE continues to fine tune the draft Accountability Framework, and the Board reviewed a draft Accountability Resolution at the December 10 meeting to share with stakeholders and solicit feedback in advance of Board action in January.

I would like to give thanks to all of you who are engaged in making positive changes for our students, especially our teachers, classified staff, administrators, school board directors and our State Board of Education members. Also I want to give a very special thank you to Superintendent Bergeson for her steadfast commitment and hard work as our State Superintendent and State Board of Education member for the last twelve years.

We look forward to continuing to work with you in 2009 to ensure that all students receive a high quality education.

All the best to you and your family during the holiday season,

Eddie Harding  
Executive Director

## Learn more about our key initiatives

- [A Meaningful High School Diploma:](#) preparing students for life after high school no matter what path they choose.
- [World-class math:](#) providing students with the math foundation they need to succeed.
- [Exemplary science:](#) fostering science education to expand students' minds and broaden horizons.
- [Accountability:](#) providing assistance to schools and districts so that no student falls through the cracks.

## Quick Links

[Washington State Board of Education](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Join Our Mailing List!

## Spotlight: Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance finalize report to Legislature

As mandated by the 2007 Legislature, the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance has been drafting recommendations to be given to the Legislature. In November, the Task Force reviewed [five plans](#) and compiled a [draft report](#) based on many of the suggestions outlined in the plans. The Task Force met on December 8 and 9 to hear from the public on the draft report. The final, revised version is expected by the end of the month. Following is a brief overview of some of the recommendations included in the draft report:

- The Task Force redefined basic education to include the phased-in implementation of [CORE 24](#), recommending that the state provide funding equivalent to six periods per day.
- The Task Force broadened the definition of basic education to include early learning for low-income preschool children, who are disproportionately at risk of not meeting state learning standards.
- The Task Force supported the State Board of Education's accountability system principles.
- The Task Force recommended K-3 classroom size reductions.
- The Task Force developed a new "model schools" approach where the Legislature would create four prototype schools--primary, elementary, middle and high schools--and build the state budget to fully fund actual class sizes, teachers and support staff and operating costs.
- The Task Force advised setting minimum support levels for special education, bilingual education, vocational programs and gifted education.

In light of the projected state budget deficit, the Task Force recommended a six-year plan to fully implement their recommendations. For additional information on the Task Force's recommendations please visit their [website](#).

## Spotlight: Special Board Meeting

SBE held a special board meeting on December 10, which included updates on OSPI's final recommendations on K-8 math curriculum and the continued development of new science standards. Additionally, the Board received a draft Accountability Resolution to share with stakeholders and gather feedback in advance of Board action in January.

## **Math**

Following up on a request from the November Board meeting, Superintendent Bergeson provided SBE with a review on Bridges in Mathematics, which concluded that the program was mathematically sound and included Bridges with the previously recommended programs.

OSPI's final recommendations on the K-8 math curricular menus are as follows:

### **OSPI Final Elementary Math Curricular Recommendations (K-5)**

Math Connects  
Bridges in Mathematics  
Math Expressions

### **OSPI Final Middle Math Curricular Recommendations (Grades 6-8)**

Holt Mathematics  
Math Connects  
Prentice Hall Mathematics

For more information on SBE's work to create World Class Math visit the [Web page](#).

## **Science**

Superintendent Bergeson then presented the revised science standards, prepared by OSPI. The revisions were the result of a collaborative process involving a host of expert reviewers and educators, with review and feedback provided by SBE's consultant, David Heil & Associates, and the Science Advisory Panel.

The new science standards were expanded to include grades 11 and 12, and include content organized around the nine "Big Ideas" in the major domains of science—Life Science, Earth and Space Science, and Physical Science. The revised standards meet the spirit of the recommendations outlined in the Final Report of the Review of the Washington Science Standards, accepted by the SBE in May 2008. The new standards should help the state to move forward in improving science literacy and achievement.

For more information on SBE's work to create Exemplary Science Standards visit the [Web page](#).

## **Accountability Resolution**

The Board received a draft Accountability Resolution that contained the principles and concepts of SBE's proposed Accountability Framework. SBE is seeking feedback on this resolution prior to taking action in January.

To view the [draft resolution](#) or for more information on SBE's work to create a shared system of accountability visit the [Web page](#).

Get to know your board members:  
Warren T. Smith Sr., Vice Chair  
Spanaway, WSSDA Elected Position 5, Western  
Washington, through January 2010

Warren T. Smith Sr. has been a member of the Washington State Board of Education since 2000, serving as president in 2004. He was previously a school director with the Bethel School District, serving as president, vice president and legislative representative from 1986 to 1999. Mr. Smith has also served in various capacities with the Washington State School Directors Association's (WSSDA) executive board, including president, president-elect and vice president.

In 2007, Mr. Smith was appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, to the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB). NAGB is an independent, bipartisan board made up of state, local and federal officials, educators, business representatives and the general public. NAGB is responsible for setting policies for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) or what is often referred to as The Nation's Report Card.

Mr. Smith brings a truly extensive range of experiences to the Board. In addition to his work with NAGB, he was also co-founder and chair of WSSDA's Diversity/Multicultural Advocacy Team, co-chair of its Legislative Committee and the delegate to the National School Boards Association (NSBA). He also served as a member of the Governors' Community Leaders Outreach Forum and as a grant reviewer for the Department of Education Challenge Grant.

"There is currently a significant achievement gap in Washington's schools, specifically with graduation rates and statewide test scores," said Mr. Smith. "As a Board, our primary goal is to create a world-class education system which ensures that each and every student in Washington has the resources necessary to succeed after high school, whether in post-secondary education or an increasingly competitive workforce. Our kids are tomorrow's leaders, and we must put their interests first."

Deeply committed to ensuring an equitable education for all children, Mr. Smith is keenly aware of the issues of diversity and fairness. He is a Graduate Fellow Class III of the American Leadership Forum, and a former member of the Northwest Regional Lab, the African American Think Tank, and the Multi-Ethnic Think Tank. Mr. Smith attended Tacoma Community College, Advance Leadership School/Military Police School, and the Institute for Intercultural Communication at Pacific University in Oregon. Mr. Smith was chair of the Equity Committee, and has been a member of the Executive and Legislative Committees.

## **We want to hear from you!**

### [Upcoming Board Meeting:](#)

Board Meeting  
January 14-15, 2009  
New Market Skills Center  
Tumwater, WA  
For meeting agendas, click [here](#).

E-mail your thoughts and questions to SBE at [sbe@k12.wa.us](mailto:sbe@k12.wa.us).