

Dear partner in education:

Greetings! With the holiday season upon us, I must take a moment to share how proud I am of the tremendous progress the Washington State Board of Education (SBE) has made to ensure that every student has the best educational opportunities to succeed in postsecondary education, the 21st century world of work and citizenship.

This month, the Board approved the CORE 24 Implementation Task Force Charter. The Charter authorizes the creation of a group of highly skilled and experienced practicing educators to advise the Board and develop strategies that best address the implementation issues surrounding CORE 24. Our goal is to phase in a revised and more rigorous set of high school graduation requirements - the approval of the Implementation Task Force Charter is a step forward in this direction. If you are interested in serving on the Task Force next year, I invite you to submit an application by December 1, 2008. (To access the application, [click here.](#))

The Board made a commitment that implementation of CORE 24 would be contingent on funding provided by the Washington State Legislature. The Legislature will soon hear recommendations for a basic education funding formula from the Joint Basic Education Finance Task Force. This month, the Task Force met six times to discuss five major proposals. Nearly all proposals discuss the funding structure necessary to revise the state's graduation requirements and the need for district accountability for student academic achievement and finances.

Before heading off to join family and friends for the Thanksgiving holiday, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your valuable feedback throughout this process. With your continued support, SBE is taking positive steps towards developing its key initiatives to improve student achievement across Washington.

Edie Harding  
Executive Director

## Spotlight: Basic Education Finance Task Force

The Basic Education Finance Task Force was mandated by the

## 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.

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Legislature in 2007 to review the definition of basic education in Washington and develop a formula for a new basic education funding structure. In an effort to complete its work by December 1, 2008, the Task Force has been meeting regularly to discuss the proposals.

At the November 10-11 meeting, the Task Force discussed how state funds could be used in the most efficient manner to improve the quality of education offered to all students. Five proposals lead the agenda, including those by [Dr. Terry Bergeson](#), the [Full Funding Coalition](#), [League of Education Voters](#), Task Force Chairman [Dan Grimm](#), and the [Washington State Basic Education Funding Proposal: Preparing Children to Succeed in the 21st Century](#) by six Legislators on the Task Force. Most proposals outlined measurements for student achievement and school performance and recommended interventions for schools that don't uphold the proposed standards of quality. The Task Force Committee expects the final recommendations to incorporate the best and most feasible of these ideas.

The Basic Education Finance Task Force will complete its meetings December 8-9, 2008.

To learn more about the Basic Education Finance Task Force and the proposals under review, please [click here](#) (You may also right-click the link and paste it into your browser).

### **Spotlight: Highlights from the November Board Meeting**

At the last meeting in Des Moines, the State Board of Education (SBE) made significant progress in developing its key initiatives to improve student achievement and school performance across Washington.

The Board approved the CORE 24 Implementation Task Force Charter, designed to help Board members fully assess any implementation considerations as it determines the best policy direction necessary to implement the CORE 24 graduation requirements policy framework. The Board is currently accepting applications from current or recently-retired education practitioners to serve on the Task Force, and will move forward with a funding request to the Legislature and the Joint Basic Education Finance Task Force to support the implementation of CORE 24. To access the application, [click here](#). Applications are due on December 1, 2008.

The Board also examined proposed accountability concepts for continuous school and district improvement through an accountability index, state assistance, a time table, and consequences for districts that are unable to make

improvement. The Board agreed that it needed more time before adopting its framework to obtain input. Based up feedback so far, the Board proposes an accountability framework that contains the following guiding principles:

- Affirms that the call for stronger accountability must be accompanied by comprehensive funding reform.
- Recognizes the sense of urgency to address the needs of all our students.
- Works toward a unified system of federal and state accountability.
- Recognizes the critical role of local school districts in addressing continuous improvement in student achievement.
- Recognizes schools and districts that have demonstrated significant learning and or improvement by their students by identifying and rewarding best practices and exemplary work.
- Advocates for the state to provide proactive support for districts to make improvement in student achievement.
- Creates a new collaborative mechanism to require certain school district actions if student achievement does not improve.
- Recognizes the need for support from the local community, parents, staff in the schools and districts, regional and business partners, and state officials to improve our education system for all students.
- Demonstrates "your money at work" in a new basic education funding system with its focus on student achievement.

In January 2009, the Board plans to adopt a resolution that will contain guiding principles and key components for a new statewide accountability system. This resolution will be provided to the legislature for its consideration as a part of the revisions to funding basic education. The Board will continue to refine the details of its proposed accountability system by working collectively with its various stakeholders over the next year.

In preparation for adopting the resolution, the Board will review and discuss a draft of the resolution during its December 10 Special Board Meeting in Olympia. The Board encourages teachers, administrators, board of directors, the business community, parents, and the public to provide feedback to the Board in December and early January about the draft resolution.

At this month's meeting, the Board also approved the Strategic Teaching Report on OSPI Mathematics K-8 Curricular Menu and Board Recommendations to the Superintendent, as well as an Application for Waiver from Credit-Based High School Graduation Requirements for Big Picture High School. The Board agreed to delay action on the Tribal Memorandum of Agreement

on tribal history until January, in order to provide time to meet again with Tribal representatives to review a proposed resolution.

To view materials from the November 5-6 Board meeting, please [click here](#).

## Spotlight: Special Board Meeting

The Board will convene a special meeting on December 10, 2008 via teleconference to further discuss key initiatives in improving Science standards and Math curriculum for students across Washington.

For more information, please [click here](#).

## Get to know your board members: Dr. Sheila Fox, Bellingham Governor Appointed, through January 2010

Dr. Sheila Fox started her career as an elementary and secondary teacher in the Peace Corps in Tonga, South Pacific. Her first special education teaching position was with students in Australia and she later went on to teach adolescents for seven years at the Experimental Education Unit at the University of Washington. Her university teaching experience included a return assignment to Australia and then to the University of Alberta in Canada before moving to Western Washington University where she currently directs Western's Professional Certification and National Board Certification Programs. Those assignments plus other university roles keep her directly involved in preparing pre-service teachers for K-12 teaching positions and supporting the professional growth of in-service teachers.

Before being appointed to the State Board of Education Dr. Fox spent six years on the Professional Educator Standards Board and now serves as liaison to that Board from the SBE.

Her special interests include the development of policies to increase high school graduation rates and early warning systems designed to support individual students.

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

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

Special Board Meeting on December 10, 2008, at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Olympia, WA:

- Superintendent of Public Instruction's Recommendations on Math K-8 Curriculum and Science Standards
- Discussion of Draft Accountability Framework Resolution

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