



Washington State  
Board of Education



*Working to Raise Student Achievement Dramatically*

## May 10–11, 2007 Meeting Highlights

### May 15, 2007

On May 10 and 11, the State Board of Education met at Highline Community College to examine recommendations from Mass Insight on Turnaround School Strategies and determine whether the state should join the American Diploma Project Network.

#### Board Action

- The Board adopted a new goal which the Meaningful High School Diploma and Systems Performance Accountability Committees will address in their work. The goal states: Provide all Washington State students the opportunity to succeed in postsecondary education, the 21<sup>st</sup> century world of work and citizenship.
- The Board will send a letter to the Governor recommending that Washington State join the American Diploma Project Network.
- The Board adopted the recommendations from the 180-Day Waiver Committee to revise the format and content of school and district 180-day waiver requests for the 2008–09 school year.
- The Board agreed to revise the annual Minimum Basic Education Compliance Form 1497. The revision includes a new section requiring each school district superintendent and chair of the school board to sign stating they are in compliance (or not) with the requirement that the credits offered for high school graduation are aligned to the Grade Level Expectations for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade or the Essential Academic Learning Requirements at Benchmark 3 (high school).

#### Mass Insight Education and Research Institute- School Turnaround Strategies

Mr. William Guenther and Mr. Andy Calkins from Mass Insight Education and Research Institute, Inc. presented the Institute's program for school turnaround at scale. The presentation focused on how to turnaround "chronically underperforming schools". Mass Insight's approach is motivated by three assertions: (1) marginal changes will yield marginal results; (2) changing performance requires bold comprehensive action from the state in partnership with the district; and (3) dramatic change at scale requires the state to find new capacity and capable people.

Mass Insight staff indicated that to make changes at scale for chronically underperforming schools requires courage, commitment and sufficient resources. They held numerous interviews with state, district and school administrators and staff then concluded that the current Washington school improvement assistance program has assets to build upon. However, the

current school improvement effort alone will not turn around chronically failing schools because (1) the state incentives or disincentives are not sufficient to drive major change; (2) it lacks aspects of comprehensiveness, intensity and sustainability; and (3) it needs a stronger public-private sector partnership and commitment to turnaround.

### **System Performance Accountability Committee Update**

The System Performance Accountability Committee (SPA) is working on several aspects of the state accountability system: performance indicators of system health, school improvement programs and processes, benchmarking, and state/district/school report cards. The Committee has selected indicators of system health such performance on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), graduation and dropout rates, and participation and remediation in postsecondary education to include in the accountability system. All of the indicators will be disaggregated by student subgroups. The Committee has reviewed school improvement assistance programs in Washington and other states and is considering a mandatory continuous improvement model with offers of tiered assistance depending on a district's or school's performance.

### **The Meaningful High School Committee Update**

The Meaningful High School Diploma Committee continues to consider the connections between high school graduation requirements and postsecondary, career and citizenship preparation. The Committee met twice since the last Board meeting, tapping the expertise of its diverse, 17-member Advisory Committee, and hearing presentations on career and technical education, workforce readiness, differentiated diplomas, and civics education.

### **American Diploma Project Network**

After an animated discussion about the American Diploma Project (ADP), and how its goals fit with Washington's strategic education directions, the Board endorsed the idea of Washington joining the ADP Network. The Board believes the opportunity to connect with other states who are working on similar issues (e.g., high school graduation requirements, accountability, math and science standards) will be of great benefit to the state.

### **180-Day Waiver Committee Recommendations**

John Schuster, Chair of the 180-Day Waiver Committee, and Dr. James Koval, Superintendent of the North Thurston Public Schools, presented the Committee's recommendations regarding the 180-Day waiver option available to districts and schools. While Board members continue to voice their concern about reducing contact days between teachers and students, the Board approved the recommendations to begin with the 2008–09 school year for waiver requests through a new Web-based application. Board members requested that increasing the time for staff professional development and student learning be a part of the 2008 State Board of Education legislative request.

For more information on materials presented see the State Board of Education Web site: [www.sbe.wa.gov](http://www.sbe.wa.gov)