

# STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

HEARING TYPE:     \_\_\_X\_\_\_ ACTION

DATE:               September 18, 2007

SUBJECT:            **END OF COURSE ASSESSMENT STUDY  
SCIENCE STANDARDS REVIEW**

SERVICE UNIT:     Edie Harding, Executive Director  
State Board of Education

PRESENTER:         Edie Harding, Executive Director  
State Board of Education

Kathe Taylor, Policy Director  
State Board of Education

## **BACKGROUND:**

At the August Retreat, the Board discussed strategies for chartering current projects and committees. The enclosed charters for End of Course Assessment and Science Standards are draft models and our first attempt to follow the structure suggested at the Retreat.



Washington State  
Board of Education



*Working to Raise Student Achievement Dramatically*

## End of Course Assessment Study

### CHARTER

#### Background/Project Purpose

Currently 25 states, including Washington, require, or plan to soon require, students to pass exit tests for high school graduation. Seven of these states use a series of “end-of course” (EOC) assessments, where students take the test(s) after completing a course(s). Senate Bill 6023 directed the Washington SBE to examine and recommend changes to high school assessments with a limited series of end-of-course assessments. The Governor vetoed the language because she felt that the study should not predetermine that end-of-course assessments would be implemented. She asked the SBE to conduct a study that would examine:

- What are the various EOC assessment systems used by other states and their purposes?
- What subjects are assessed and how do they align with state standards?
- What is the impact of EOC on curriculum and instruction?
- Are exams used singly or in combination with other assessments for graduation decisions?
- How do EOC exams integrate with the entire assessment system across all grades and subjects?
- What are the implementation issues, costs and lessons learned?

In addition, The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is directed to request that vendors bidding on its upcoming new testing contract address cost and technical aspects of implementing EOC assessments.

An additional section of the law passed, directs the SBE to examine opportunities for approved alternatives for the CAA assessment system to include one or more standardized norm-referenced student achievement tests and the possible use of reading, writing, or mathematics portions of the ACT ASSET and ACT COMPASS tests and how they relate to state standards. This review will be conducted as a part of this overall study on alternative assessments.

The Washington State Board of Education hereafter called "SBE," is initiating this Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit proposals from Consultants interested in performing an independent study of End-of-Course student assessments.

The purpose of this study is to advise the SBE on the following questions:

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of Washington moving in the direction of EOCs, which may be used in conjunction with the WASL or in place of the WASL at the high school level, including: experiences in other states with a specific focus on lessons learned and how those lessons would apply to Washington for end-of-course alternatives and detailed information on what it would take in terms of steps and schedule to implement math and science EOCs if Washington decides to pursue that direction?
2. What role do norm reference tests have as alternative tests for graduation?

### **Scope of Work**

The project manager will:

1. Supervise the execution of the RFP and work with a small team to guide the consultant's work;
2. Give feedback on the interim and final report; and
3. Ensure the Board and Board members are informed of the work.

The contractor will examine three major areas for the end of course assessment study:

1. A thorough review of the primary and secondary literature on EOCs and high school assessment systems and a documentation of what states are using EOCs and norm referenced tests currently and in what capacity
2. A set of in depth case studies of states with extensive experience implementing EOCs
3. A discussion of policy implications for Washington's high school assessment system based on lessons learned from states with EOCs

### **Deliverables**

October 20, 2007	Interim report due
January 4, 2008	Final report due

### **Timeline**

Mid September 2007	Begin work
October 20, 2007	Submit report to the SBE
Late October 2007	Meet with SBE staff and others to discuss draft report in Seattle area
January 4, 2008	Submit final report to SBE
January 9 or 10, 2008	Present findings to SBE at Board meeting in Olympia
January 15, 2008	Report due to the Governor

### **Communication Plan**

The SBE will work with OSPI, legislative staff, and the Governor's staff to keep them informed of the work and share progress with key stakeholders including legislators.

## **Connection to Other Board Work**

This work is connected to the math and science standards and curriculum review that the Board is conducting. Legislators have a keen interest in implementing the EOCs in math and science for high school students.

## **Staff Project Manager**

Edie Harding, Executive Director

## **Board Leads**



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## Science Standards and Curriculum Review

### CHARTER

#### Purpose/Background

The legislature asked the Board to review K-10 science standards and to provide feedback and recommendations to the superintendent of public instruction on recommended basic science curricula the superintendent will bring to the Board. The impetus for the work comes from two sources: *Washington Learns* and student performance on the WASL.

The Governor commissioned a Committee, "Washington Learns," to review the entire education system. The report, issued in 2006, called for the State Board of Education to adopt international performance standards for math and science benchmarked to the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) or the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and to adopt high school graduation requirements aligned with international standards.

One reason for this call to higher standards was students' performance on the science WASL. From 2003-2006, performance of students who took the 10<sup>th</sup> grade science Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) remained essentially flat, with approximately 35 percent of students meeting the standard needed for high school graduation.

The purpose of the standards review is to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of Washington's current K-10 science standards (defined as science essential academic learning requirements and grade level expectations), and recommend ways to strengthen them. A secondary purpose is to recommend appropriate grade level expectations for grades 11 and 12.

The Board will review the science curricula recommended by OSPI to help assure that the curricula best fits Washington's revised standards. Fewer curricula will assure greater consistency in implementation, streamline professional development, and increase the likelihood that students transferring across (or even within) districts will experience fewer disruptions in their learning from facing new and unfamiliar curriculum.

The ultimate goal is to ensure that Washington students are prepared through their K-12 education to successfully enter the world of work and postsecondary training with the science knowledge and skills needed.

## **Scope of Work**

The legislature directs the Board to review the science standards, provide official comment and recommendations on basic science curricula proposed by the superintendent of public instruction, and establish a science advisory panel to provide review and formal comment on proposed recommendations for revised standards and proposed curricula. The Board will need to:

1. Write an RFP, procure a consultant, and supervise the consultant's work;
2. Design a process for soliciting applications for the science panel, select panel members, and hold four meetings in the first year for the panel to respond to the consultant's work;
3. Conduct three focus groups to solicit feedback from stakeholders;
4. Receive and provide feedback on the consultant's reports;
5. Receive and provide feedback on the curricula recommendations; and
6. Publicize the work.

## **Deliverables**

*By June 30, 2008, for the standards review:*

1. A preliminary report that summarizes reviewer findings of the strengths and weaknesses of the current K-12 science standards and previews likely areas for recommended changes
2. An interim report that summarizes overall reviewer findings of the strengths and weaknesses of the current K-10 science standards along each of the nine dimensions (clarity, rigor, content, depth, coherence from grade to grade, specificity, accessibility, and measurability), makes specific recommendations for changes to the current standards, and recommends grade level expectations for grades 11-12;
3. A final report that synthesizes and evaluates the themes that emerged from public comment and testimony, taking them into consideration in the consultant's final recommendations for changes to the current standards.

*By June 30, 2009 for the curricula review:*

1. Provide official comment and recommendations to the superintendent of public instruction regarding the recommended science curricula

## Timeline

Dates	Task
October 2007	Review RFPs
October 2007	Sign contract
October 2007 – April 2008	Review standards and hold three meetings with science advisory panel
January 2008	Receive preliminary report, from consultant, and present update on project to full Board
March 2008	Receive from consultant interim report and present update on project to full Board
March/April 2008	Gather public input and testimony at three focus groups across the state
May 2008	Receive from consultant final report and present to full Board
December 2008	Receive revised standards from OSPI and review with science advisory panel
May 2009	Receive from OSPI recommendations for basic science curricula
June 2009	Provide official comment to OSPI regarding the recommended science curricula

## Communication Plan

Conduct focus groups, place reports on the Board website, and contact editorial boards to publicize the results of the work.

## Connection to Other Board Work

Work on science standards will inform the Board as it considers revisions to high school graduation requirements and addresses the question of how much science 21<sup>st</sup> century graduates will need, and whether additional lab science is needed.

## Staff Project Manager

Kathe Taylor

**Board Lead(s)**

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