



WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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System Performance Accountability Update

SUMMARY OF POLICY ISSUE /State Board of Education (SBE) STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL:

The Board will hear presentations from its consultants on the final report of the policy barriers study and state/local partnerships for improving Priority Schools (chronically underperforming schools) as part of the Board's work on system performance accountability.

This work is related to the Board's goal of improving achievement for all students.

BACKGROUND

The legislature has charged the Board with developing a statewide accountability system. The Board has focused on three initial areas to accomplish that work: 1) an accountability index that identifies schools by tiers in need of assistance, as well as those who are performing very well; 2) a study to understand the potential state and local policy barriers in Washington that may affect student achievement; and 3) the creation of state/local partnership to turnaround schools that are identified through the accountability index in need of additional resources and focus. The Board plans to consider recommendations for addressing the criteria, steps, and resources needed to address partnerships with Priority Schools at its September Board meeting for the 2009 legislative session.

The Board hired the Northwest Regional Educational Lab (NWREL) to conduct a macro systems report using a literature review and interviews with a sample of policy makers and key stakeholders and practitioners with a focus on Washington. The findings from the policy barriers study will be used in the work done to strengthen state/local partnerships to improve the performance of Priority Schools in Washington. The Board hired Mass Insight to work with a Washington team of educators to develop a suggested partnership strategy to address the turnaround efforts needed for Priority Schools.

The Board has done some preliminary outreach on accountability issues during its June outreach sessions and online survey. The information will be shared with the Board at its July meeting.

On June 19, the Board held a work session on the draft policy barriers report and the preliminary ideas for state/local partnerships.

The final report from NWREL, on its policy barriers study, is attached for your review. An update report from Mass Insight on its work developing preliminary concepts for state/local partnerships for Priority Schools is also attached. Consultants from both firms will present to the Board during the July meeting.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

The Board will need to consider the findings from the NWREL policy barriers study as it proceeds with its work with Mass Insight on creating partnerships between the state and local districts on Priority Schools. Highlights from the Policy Barriers draft report included: lack of state program coherence; lack of state funding and sustainability of funding; lack of operating flexibility (e.g. personnel management and targeting resource effectively); lack of coherent system support for entry, retention, and recruitment of quality staff; and lack of time for professional development and teacher collaboration.

Mass Insight's work focuses on the need for a mutual responsibility of the state and local districts to create something stronger than current improvement efforts for Priority Schools. Under consideration is an Innovation Zone, which would enable districts to volunteer to participate in the Zone and meet the criteria identified with additional resources, or opt out and meet performance goals of their own. A timeline with expectations and consequences, as well as roles and responsibilities from the state (including the Board's role) and locals will be discussed.

EXPECTED ACTION

None