



Washington State  
Board of Education



*Working to Raise Student Achievement Dramatically*

## **BOARD'S SYSTEM PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY PROPOSALS**

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Board has focused on how to address system performance accountability issues over the last year and a half. Why has the Board engaged in this work aside from the fact that the legislature tasked the Board with the duty to create a system? The Board wants to recognize schools that are doing an outstanding job. Many of them are. It is also concerned about the 70,500 students<sup>1</sup> enrolled (1 out of 14 students in the K-12 system) in struggling schools (identified by our accountability index) where there has not been improvement looking at a variety of different indicators. There are no state incentives or consequences for making transformational changes in these schools and districts, thus the need for the Board's work to help students in those schools.

Staff has prepared a background memo, documenting the work over the last year and a half, which is enclosed. The Board is examining two key areas: 1) an accountability index to identify schools and districts to be recognized and those who are struggling and need a targeted strategy, and 2) the targeted strategy for a state/local partnership for struggling schools, called Priority Schools, which includes an Innovation Zone and a range of possible intervention options if all else fails. Two additional reports are enclosed. One by Pete Bylsma that presents his work on the accountability index and a second by Mass Insight on the state/local partnership strategies for struggling schools.

### **POLICY CONSIDERATION:**

The Board will discuss these basic concepts at its September meeting. Some key questions will be prepared for the discussion and need for further clarification. On October 21 we will have another work session to go into further detail on these issues in preparation of our November Board meeting where the Board may take action on a proposed framework and budget to submit to the legislature.

### **EXPECTED ACTION:**

None

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<sup>1</sup> **If alternative education students are included, the number is 83,000 students.**



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## **System Performance Accountability Final Paper on Background**

### **I. SUMMARY OF POLICY ISSUES/SBE STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL**

Washington State statute<sup>1</sup> assigns the Board the authority to create a statewide accountability system, which includes:

- Setting performance improvement goals in key subject areas.
- Identifying cut scores for proficiency on state assessments.
- Identifying objective, systematic criteria for successful schools and districts.
- Identifying objective systematic criteria for schools and districts in need of assistance or where significant numbers of students persistently fail to meet state standards.
- Identifying range of state intervention strategies for legislature to consider authorizing.
- Creating performance incentives.
- Reviewing the assessment reporting system to ensure fairness, accuracy, timeliness, and equity of opportunity.

The Board has three strategic plan goals to: 1) improve student achievement; 2) improve graduation rates; and 3) improve student preparation for success in post secondary education, 21<sup>st</sup> century world of work and citizenship. A statewide accountability system is one strategy for meeting these goals and fulfilling the legislative requirements. In addition, the Board is developing objectives, indicators, and measures for performance improvement goals. Over the past eight years, the Board has set the cut scores on the WASL and the alternative assessments.

This paper provides the work that the Board has engaged in to develop its draft proposals to address a statewide accountability framework. The proposals include two key and connected components:

1. An accountability index, which uses objective systematic criteria to identify successful schools and districts as well as those in need of assistance or those where students persistently fail to meet state standards, and

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<sup>1</sup> RCW 28A.305.130 (4). See Appendix A for full statutory language.

2. A proposal for a range of state intervention strategies for districts with schools where students persistently fail to meet state standards including: 1) an Innovation Zone for Priority Schools identified through the Accountability Index and a subsequent detailed analysis. The Innovation Zone would allow local school boards to create a comprehensive transformation in how their schools operate through the use of state targeted investment as well changing the current rules and expectations, and 2) Options for graduated state oversight and changes at the local school board level, or school or district management level if conditions do not improve after a defined period of time.

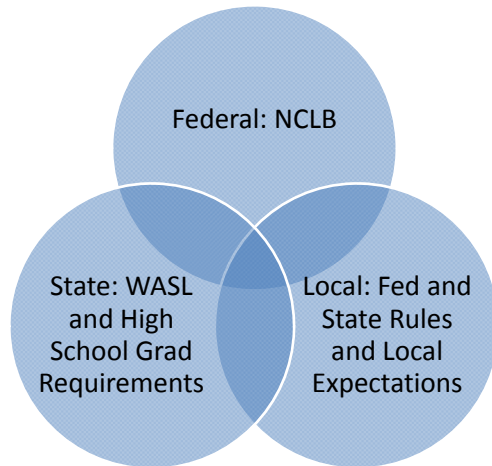
Why has the Board engaged in this work aside from the fact the legislature tasked the Board with the duty to create a system? The Board wants to recognize schools that are doing an outstanding job and many of them are. It is also concerned about the 70,500 students<sup>2</sup> enrolled (one out of 12 students in the K-12 system) in struggling schools (identified by our accountability index) where there has not been improvement looking at a variety of different indicators. There are no state incentives or consequences for making transformational changes in these schools and districts, thus the need for the Board's work, to help these students.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **A. The Current Accountability System**

The current accountability system for student performance is a patchwork of federal, state, and local requirements.

## Current Patchwork for Education Accountability in Washington



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<sup>2</sup> If alternative education students are included, the number is 83,000.

## 1. Federal requirements

Accountability for student achievement is strongly influenced by the federal “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) law, which requires schools and districts, in each state, to make “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP)<sup>3</sup> to increase the academic proficiency of all students. Washington’s accountability system presently mirrors these federal measures. The expectation under AYP is that all schools and districts will increase the percent of students passing the reading and math tests each year so that 100 percent of all students will be proficient in reading and math by 2014. To accomplish this, each state is required to establish a uniform bar of performance, which is increased over time to reach 100 percent student proficiency in 2014. NCLB requires a state to implement a system of corrective action for all schools and districts receiving Title I federal funds<sup>4</sup>. Some of the corrective actions include:

- Providing school choice.
- Providing supplemental services.
- Providing technical assistance.
- Replacing school personnel.
- Taking over specific schools for governance.
- Taking over a district for governance.

Schools are evaluated in up to 37 categories (and districts in up to 111 categories) that examine performance in reading and math for each grade tested for each sub group of student (e.g. race and ethnicity, poverty, special education and English Language Learners). All students must take the tests including special education and English Language Learners. A school moves into improvement if it misses its AYP goals in the same subject for two years in a row. Schools that do not receive Title I schools are not subject to these consequences, even if they have students who persistently fail to meet state standards.

NCLB encourages states to provide a system of rewards, assistance, and interventions; however, it falls short of compelling such actions.<sup>5</sup> In Washington, the legislature has not authorized any state interventions to address poor student achievement except to permit the withholding of federal funds and providing professional development. Washington has used a voluntary approach of technical assistance to work with struggling schools since 2002.

## 2. State requirements

In addition to the Board’s statutory authority to develop a statewide accountability system, under the present system, state accountability is defined by: 1) annual measurement of student academic performance on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) in reading and mathematics for grades 3-8 and 10, as well as science and writing for selected grades, and 2) the high school graduation requirement that students meet the state standards for reading

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<sup>3</sup>Adequate Yearly Progress is defined by a baseline and increments of improvement in student performance on a state test in reading and math, (Washington uses the WASL) so that by 2014 all students by all subgroups (race and ethnicity, special education, low income, and English Language Learners) will reach proficiency. On-time graduation for high school and unexcused absences for elementary and middle school are also included as federal accountability measures.

<sup>4</sup>Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (the current reauthorization is No Child Left Behind) provides states with additional funding, to be distributed to schools and districts based on poverty as measured by having 40 percent or more students on free and reduced lunch.

<sup>5</sup>Up to 20 percent of Title I or other funds are available to pay transportation for students who choose to go to another school or for supplemental education “tutoring services.”

and writing, by passing the 10<sup>th</sup> grade WASL. Beyond public reporting of the WASL scores by different student subgroups at the school, district, and state levels, there are no consequences for schools' or districts' poor performance. While there are some rewards programs, they are independent of each other and are used inconsistently from year to year. A timeline of the evolution of Washington's accountability system for the last sixteen years and major milestones is in Appendix B.

### **3. Local requirements**

Local school boards are accountable to their constituents for the continuous improvement of their students' performance as well as additional community expectations. They are also accountable for meeting a myriad of federal and state requirements, including proper expenditures of funds, offering 180 days of instruction, meeting specified teacher-to-student ratios, assuring special education student procedures, and meeting the requirements of No Child Left Behind.

## **B. National Perspectives on Accountability Roles and the Work to Improve Student Achievement**

### **1. National studies**

The main goal of current state and federal accountability systems is to improve student learning for all students. The primary way to measure student learning progress is through test performance and non academic measures such as dropout and attendance rates. These measures involve high stakes for students and schools, but few for teachers and administrators.<sup>6</sup>

Dr. Richard Elmore, from Harvard's Graduate School of Education, recommends the following roles for policy makers, researchers, and practitioners: "Policy makers should focus on "translating" diverse political interests and adjudicating conflicts between them, to arrive at goals regarding what should be taught, the rewards offered for getting the job done, and the sanctions aimed at those schools or individuals consistently failing to improve... Distinguished practitioners, professional developers, and researchers (should) design pre-service and in-service learning opportunities and pilot successful new instructional practices. Administrative leader (should) design improvements in "resource allocation, hiring, evaluation, retention, and accountability."<sup>7</sup>

The Rennie Center for Education describes key roles for state departments of education to undertake: 1) providing guidance on curricular materials aligned to state standards, as well as diagnostic tools and data to help teachers understand the skills and knowledge of their individual students; 2) moving schools beyond the school improvement planning stage to address identified deficiencies in curriculum, professional development, and assessment; 3) setting standards for educators and increasing training programs for leaders; and 4) increasing expert staff in curriculum and professional development areas, particularly for math, special education, and English Language Learners.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Elmore, Richard. "The Limits of Change". Harvard Education Letter January/February 2002

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.uknow.gse.harvard.edu/leadership/leadership001b.html>

<sup>8</sup> Rennie Center for Education, "Reaching Capacity: A Blueprint for the State Role in Improving Low Performing Schools and Districts" Spring 2005

Randi Weingarten, President of the United Federation of Teachers in New York, proposes an accountability system that “presents a more balanced picture of the strengths and weaknesses of each school, where it is succeeding and where it needs help. It focuses on what makes a school not only academically successful, but also safe, collegial, and well supported—one that educates not only every child, but the whole child. (She suggests) four distinct pillars: academic achievement; safety, order, and discipline; teamwork for student achievement; and central-administration accountability. The information for making judgments would come primarily from three sources—available hard data, reports of highly trained independent teams who observe and evaluate schools on-site, and the results of a comprehensive survey of parents, teachers, administrators, and students.”<sup>9</sup>

McKinsey and Company conducted a study on twenty-five of the world’s school systems, including the top ten performers. They found that: “three things matter most: 1) getting the right people to become teachers; 2) developing them into effective instructors; and 3) ensuring that the system is able to deliver the best possible instruction for every child.”<sup>10</sup>

In addition to the top performing schools and systems internationally, there has been considerable research on high performing schools in the United States. These include: “Continuity of focus on core instruction; heavy investments in highly targeted professional development for teachers and principals in the fundamentals of strong classroom instruction; strong and explicit accountability by principals and teachers for the quality of practice and the level of student performance; and a normative climate in which adults take responsibility for their own, their colleagues’, and their students’ learning.”<sup>11</sup>

Mass Insight has done extensive research on high performing, high poverty schools in the U.S. and distilled the information into nine strategies that provide: 1) safety, discipline and engagement; 2) direct action to focus on students’ poverty driven deficits; 3) close student adult relationships; 4) shared responsibility for achievement; 5) personalization of instruction using diagnostic assessments and adjustable time on task; 6) continuous improvement through collaboration and job-embedded learning; 7) school leaders who can have authority to make decisions about people, time, and money; 8) leaders who can leverage resources and partners to enhance their work; and 9) system flexibility to respond to changing conditions.

In summary, states have over invested in testing and under invested in building teaching capacity.<sup>12</sup> Accountability goals must shift from earlier approaches, which required a focus solely on district compliance with state laws to one that builds capacity and requires states to redesign their support systems.

## **2. Status of States’ Intervention Authorities**

Thirty-two states have the authority to intervene in local schools and/or districts in some capacity if performance does not meet state standards. The interventions range from minimal measures, up through complete school and/or district takeover. Eighteen states do not have the authority to intervene in local schools/districts but offer assistance to struggling schools who

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2008/05/14/37weingarten.h27.html?print=1>

<sup>10</sup> McKinsey and Company, “How the World’s Best-Performing School Systems Come Out on Top” September 2007.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.uknow.gse.harvard.edu/leadership/leadership001b.html>

<sup>12</sup> SBE staff conversation with Dr. Richard Elmore December 2006.

want help. Research shows that districts are not likely to solicit state help voluntarily<sup>13</sup>. See Appendices C and D for full report.

## **C. Current Conditions in Washington**

### **1. Schools and Districts Not Meeting AYP and OSPI Response**

In 2007, 280 schools<sup>14</sup> and 30 districts were in a step of improvement under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). These schools serve 212,787 students or one in five public school students in the state. Twenty-eight percent of the students in Title I schools are eligible for some federal funding under NCLB; however, seventy-two percent of the students who are not served in Title I schools are eligible for federal funding. Math performance is the major reason why schools are in a step of improvement. In many schools the categories of students of color is too small to be reported.

In 2008, the number of schools jumped to 628 and districts to 57. Reasons for this large increase are primarily due to the increase in the uniform bar of expected reading and math proficiency (Washington has a stair step approach which increases every three years). Washington is one of the 18 states with a voluntary program for school and district improvement assistance. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and State Board of Education are prohibited from intervening in schools and districts whose students persistently do not meet state standards, unless the Legislature authorizes such action.

Over the last six years, the OSPI “focused assistance” or School Improvement Assistance Program has served 148 schools. Schools must participate for three years and the number of schools participating has steadily increased. In 2007-08, OSPI served 83 schools. Nine million dollars, from federal, state, and foundation grant sources, was invested in 2007 School Improvement Assistance program schools. An additional \$2 million is provided for the High School Initiative and the District Assistance program—each school receives between \$100,000 and \$135,000 per year, based on size and grade levels. The support of a school or district improvement facilitator is included in the funding. The majority of the funding is from the federal government, which expects the funds to be directed primarily to Title I schools.

Based on outside evaluations, the success of the OSPI School Improvement Assistance Program has been mixed, in terms of improvement of student achievement as measured by the WASL.<sup>15</sup> The program has contributed to the success of 30 schools exiting school improvement after making AYP two years in a row. Some of the challenges include: districts are not viewed as partners in the school improvement process, a lack of continuity in facilitation, and a lack of sustainability of change, once the three years of state service has concluded.

In spring 2008, OSPI launched a new federally funded initiative for \$7 million, called the “Summit District Improvement Initiative” with five districts to increase their capacity to accelerate achievement for all students across the districts’ system of schools. Four consulting firms were

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<sup>13</sup> The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2005). *School Restructuring Options Under No Child Left Behind: What Works When? State Takeovers of Individual Schools*.

<sup>14</sup>This is out of a total of about 2,200 schools based on the spring 2007 administration of the WASL.

<sup>15</sup>Evaluations of the OSPI School Improvement Assistance Program have been conducted by the BERC Group and Northwest Regional Educational Lab.

hired to provide technical assistance in the areas of: effective leadership; quality instruction; access and use of data; assessment; intervention and monitoring; and system alignment and coherence. One of the main reasons for moving to a district approach is that as more schools do not make AYP, there will be insufficient capacity to serve all of them with school improvement facilitators and also districts need to develop their own internal systems to address school performance issues.

## **2. Student Performance on the Washington State Assessment of Learning**

The Board has also reviewed the WASL performance trend data. While significant improvements have been made in reading and writing, math and science performance for many students continues to lag behind even the state average.

For example, in the past seven years, 343 schools had less than half their students meet the mathematics standard every single year.<sup>16</sup> These schools had a total enrollment of 212,472 students in 2007, or about 21% of the state's enrollment. Moreover, the gap between their average math performance and the state as a whole, is larger now than it was in 2001.

Results in reading are better, but many schools still have large portions of students not meeting the standard. In reading, 73 schools had less than 60% of their students meet the standard in each of the past seven years. These schools had a total enrollment of 37,218 students in 2007. These low-performing schools need to accelerate their rate of improvement dramatically, if they are to have most of their students ready for graduation and then work or college. Below are more details about low-performing schools in mathematics:

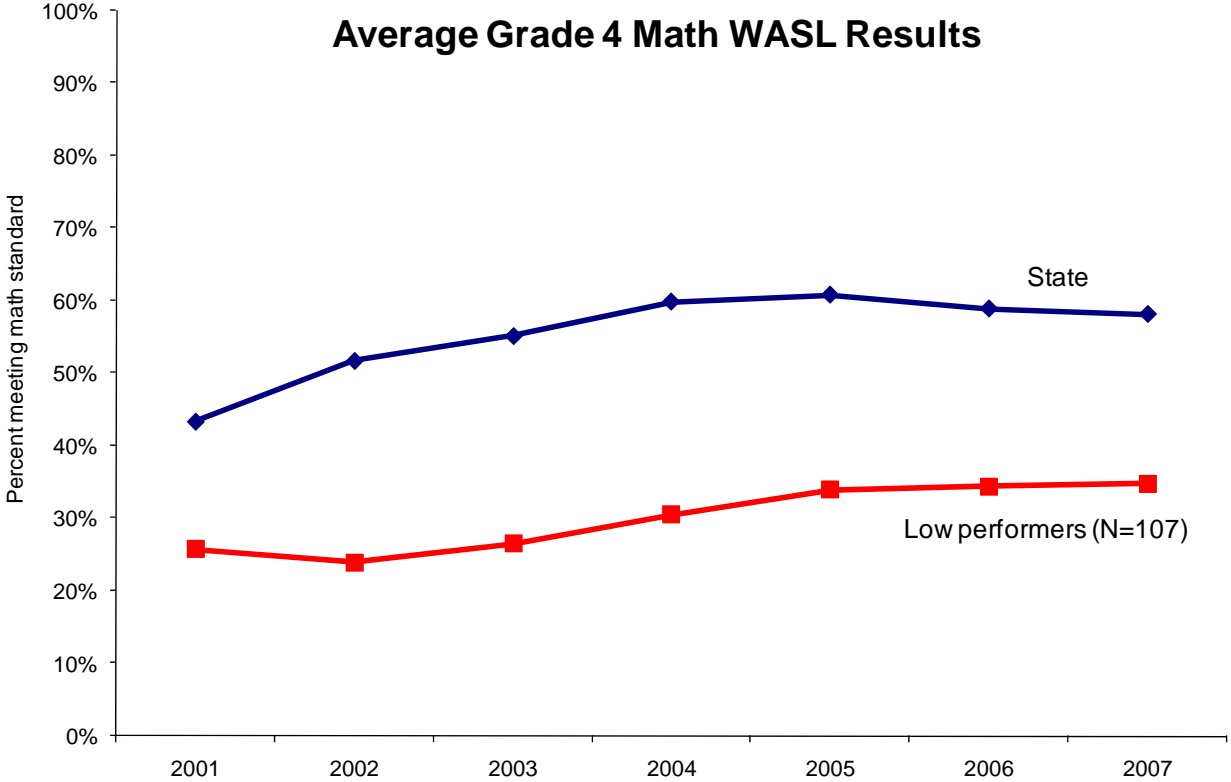
- 107 elementary schools had less than 50% of their students meet standard on the 4<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics WASL for seven consecutive years. These schools enrolled 46,453 students in 2007. On average, only 35% of students in these schools met the math standard in 2007, which was 23 percentage points below the statewide results.

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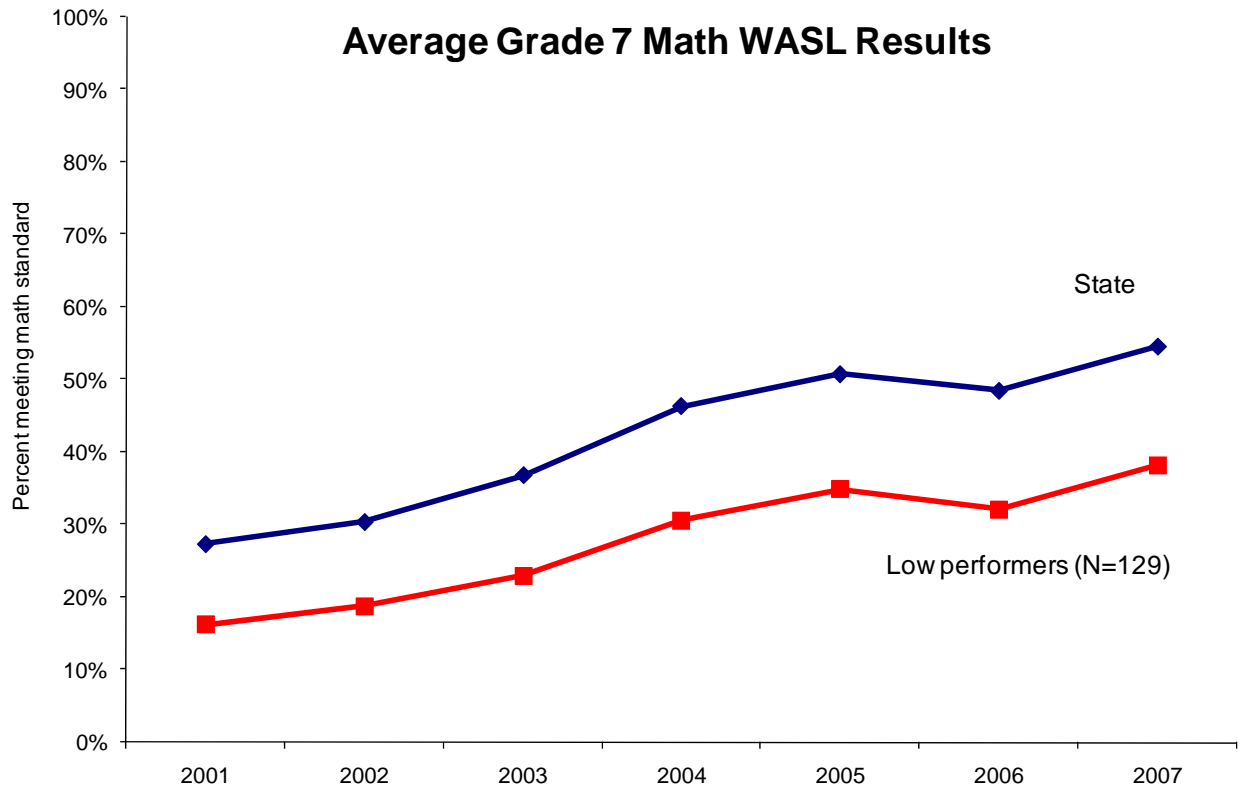
<sup>16</sup>Some of these schools have made significant progress during the seven-year period, but they still had less than half their students meet the math standard. Some are relatively new and did not administer the WASL all seven years.



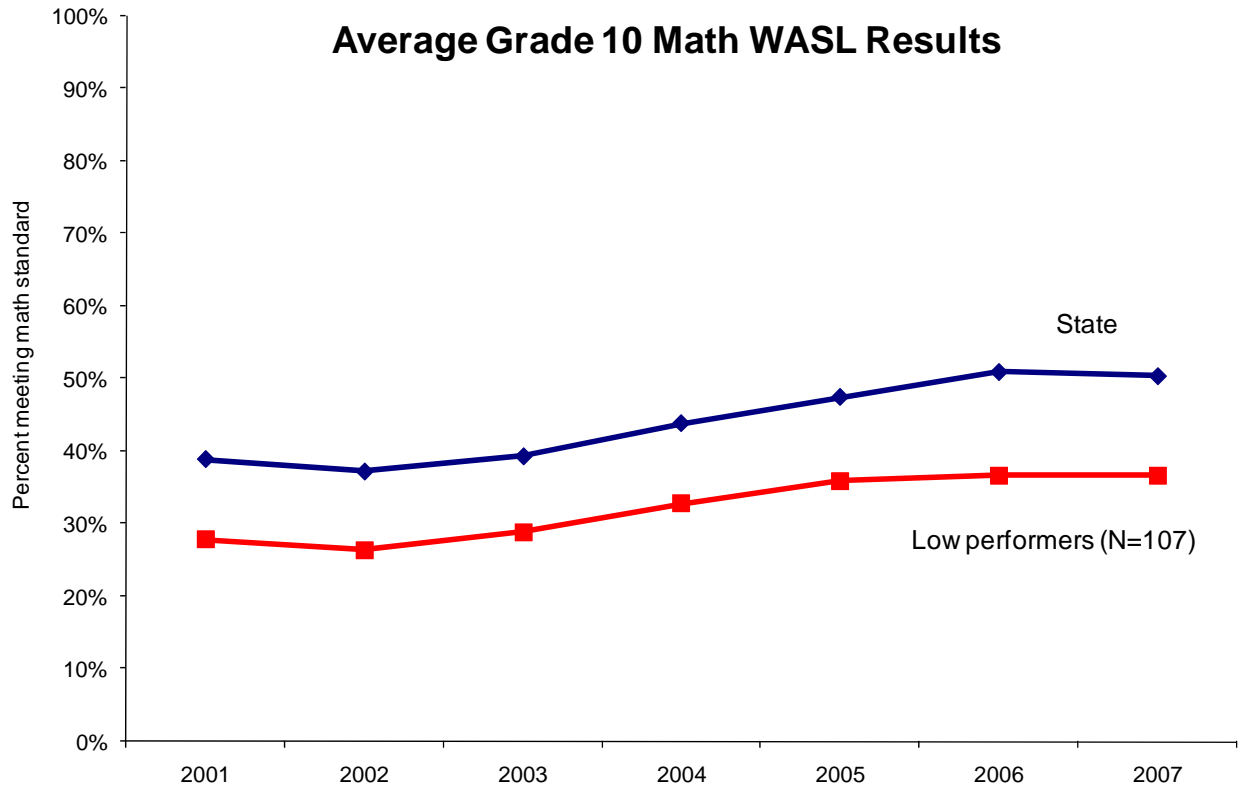
# Average Grade 4 Math WASL Results



- 129 middle/junior high schools had less than 50% of their students meet standard on the 7<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics WASL for seven consecutive years. These schools enrolled 66,715 students in 2007. On average, only 38% of the students in these schools met the math standard in 2007, which was 16 percentage points below the statewide results.



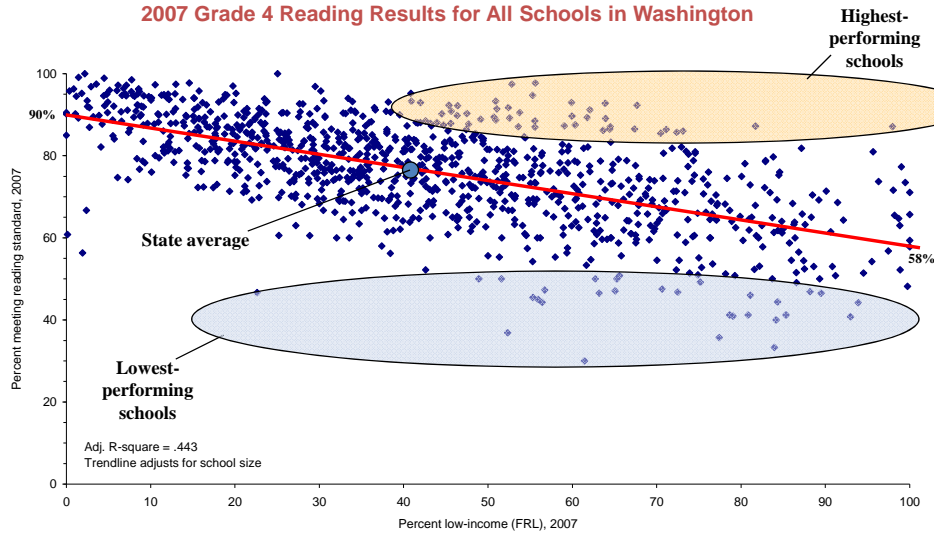
- 107 high schools had less than 50% of their students meet standard on the 10<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics WASL for seven consecutive years. These schools enrolled 99,304 students in 2007. On average, only 37% of the students in these schools met the math standard in 2007, which was 14 percentage points below the statewide results.



While some would say that the reason for the disappointing scores is due to poverty, the Board reviewed the data of all elementary schools performance in 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading and math and found that student performance varied but that some high poverty schools were able to do a lot better than the state average and some low poverty schools did a lot worse than the state average.

## What this is about: Changing the odds

2007 Grade 4 Reading Results for All Schools in Washington



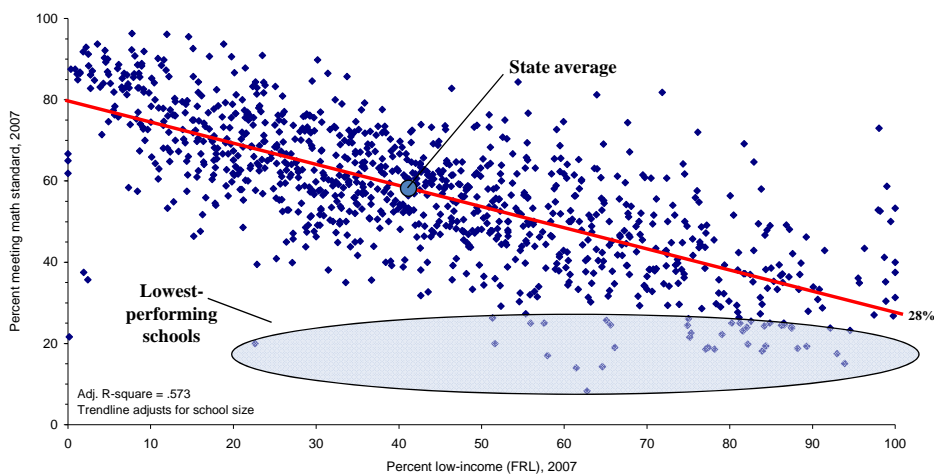
Source: Washington State Board of Education

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## What this is about: Changing the odds

2007 Grade 4 Math Results for All Schools in Washington



Source: Washington State Board of Education

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### D. SBE Work

With this review of national research and state baseline data, the Board spent the last year and a half examining ideas for a state wide accountability system. The Board chartered a process, through its System Performance Accountability (SPA) work group, and held a series of work sessions providing presentations at Board meetings. They reviewed the OSPI school and

district improvement programs, the school improvement programs in other states, and Washington teacher mobility issues. They commissioned two studies through a competitive national process: one on Washingtonian educator's and stakeholder's perceptions of the current Washington policy barriers and another on developing potential state/local partnerships to address schools with students that persistently fail to meet standards. The Board developed an accountability index to identify successful schools and districts, as well as those in need of greater assistance. They are also listening carefully to what a variety of stakeholders and the public have to say. The Board has had a group of System Performance Advisors including school board members, the Washington Education Association, Washington Association of School Administrators, Association of Washington School Principals, selected educators and business members participate in its work sessions.

## **1. Review of OSPI School Improvement Program**

In spring 2007, the Board contracted with Mass Insight Education, a nonprofit research organization in Boston, to examine Washington's current school improvement assistance program. Mass Insight Education staff has been doing extensive research, nationally, to address the issues with schools that are chronically underperforming.

**Major findings:** The consultants highlighted the following as strengths of the current Washington School Improvement Assistance Program on which any new state assistance program should build on:

- Well-regarded facilitator network.
- State-targeted effort of improvement for those schools that volunteer.
- Partially-integrated approach with the nine elements of a high performing school.
- Collaborative nature.

The consultants noted challenges with current school improvement initiatives across the nation, including Washington's. These include:

- No incentives or disincentives to drive major change at the local level.
- No means to change local operating conditions.
- No comprehensive strategy to address deeper needs of high poverty students.
- Lack of comprehensiveness, intensity, and sustainability.
- Lack of highly visible public and private sector commitment.

Board members affirmed many of these findings from their spring field visits to selected schools across the state.

## **2. Review of Other States, Advisor Input and Research**

Based on staff investigations of other states; including Massachusetts, Kentucky, and North Carolina, research on effective schools, and input from its advisors, the SPA Work Group identified characteristics of high-performing schools and districts:

- Strong leadership in schools and/or districts.
- A talented pool of effective educators to assist schools and districts.
- Knowledge or access to knowledge, about successful schools and districts.
- School and district specific challenging goals and effective ongoing feedback.
- A viable district curriculum and instruction aligned to state standards.
- Use of curriculum-based formative assessments to inform instruction.
- Use of data to improve instruction.

- Professional development aligned to school and district strategic plans.
- Professional development that is job-embedded and ongoing.
- Use of a cycle of inquiry and reflection.

### 3. Trends in Teacher Retention and Mobility in Selected Washington Middle and High Schools

In fall 2007, SBE contracted with The Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession, (CSTP) to complete a study on teacher resources in our schools. The study focused on the middle schools and high schools in six districts—Highline, Pasco<sup>17</sup>, Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma, and Yakima. The six districts were selected based on the variability among their middle schools, in students' performance on the WASL. As noted in the study, these six districts are not to be considered representative of districts in the state or any groups of districts in the state.

**Major findings:** There was a high degree of mobility, particularly among middle school teachers:

- 46 percent left their school within five years compared to 40 percent of high school teachers.
- The differences are greater among schools within a district, than across districts in teacher mobility rates and percent of teachers with fewer than five years of teaching experience.<sup>18</sup>

The following relationships were found among teacher mobility and student and teacher characteristics:

- Higher teacher mobility rates were related to higher levels of student poverty and higher percentages of teachers with fewer years of experience<sup>19</sup> (particularly those with fewer than five years of experience).
- Lower teacher mobility rates were related to higher performance on the reading and math WASL.

**Implications:** Four implications emerged from this study:

- The middle school climate and culture in some schools may not be conducive to supporting teachers and students.
- High levels of teacher mobility can be very disruptive to school cultures and the learning environment. Frequent turnovers can lead to lack of cohesiveness in the teaching community and increase the need for professional development services.
- The differences in mobility rates across schools in a district, suggest possible inequities in levels of teacher resources available to a district's students.
- To the extent that level of experience differentially impacts student learning, large differences among schools in the percent of teachers with less than five years of experience may indicate inequitable distribution of learning resources for children.

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<sup>17</sup> The Pasco School District brought to the Board's attention that the study did not take into consideration the opening of a new middle school which invalidated some of the conclusions about their district.

<sup>18</sup> This finding is based on SBE calculations using data provided by CSTP.

<sup>19</sup> This finding is based on SBE calculations using data provided by CSTP.

#### **4. Study of State and Local Policy Barriers to Raising Achievement Dramatically for All Students**

In spring 2008, the Board contracted with Northwest Regional Educational Lab to study the perceptions that state policy makers and local educators had on the Washington barriers to student achievement. They interviewed several hundred educators and policy makers in Washington. All stakeholders agreed that there is a lack of statewide program coherence. All too often districts receive multiple inputs from various educational policy-making bodies at the state level.

**Major findings:** Key policy barriers identified from both teachers and administrators included:

- Insufficient and impermanent resources.
- Lack of time for professional development and teacher collaboration time.
- Inflexibility in allocating resources to higher need areas to improve student achievement.
- Lack of coherent systems that support the entry, development, and retention of quality staff members.

Another big barrier teachers identified was class size. Principals and superintendents identified the inability to dismiss ineffective staff as a large barrier.

**Implications:** Washington State may wish to:

- Coordinate the efforts of the various state educational agencies and policy-making bodies to increase program coordination and the perception of program coherence when viewed from the district and building level.
- Develop and maintain a stable funding source for school improvement that educators can count on over time.
- Establish and provide additional time – allowing teaching staff and administrators the opportunity to focus on student achievement through collaboration and professional development.
- Find ways to remove or moderate restrictive provisions of the collective bargaining agreement in a manner that strengthens building teams and provides adequate teacher participation in critical decisions.

#### **5. Feedback from SPA Advisers:** SPA advisers identified that districts need:

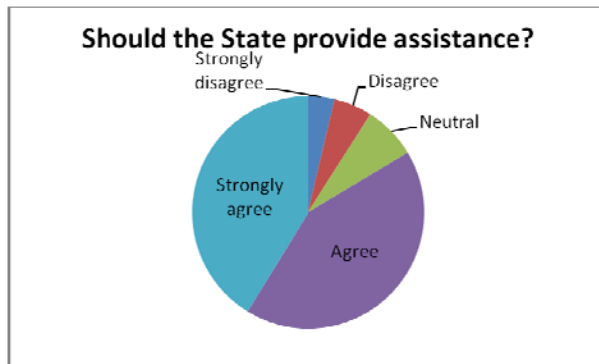
- Ways to focus on improving student achievement:
  - Share data on students across the state and for teachers to see how their individual students performed.
  - Provide formative assessments to help teachers see where students are on a regular basis.
  - Share information on interventions that work.
  - Provide opportunities so that cluster feeder schools enable teachers to talk with each other.
  - Use peers from like schools to work with each other.
  - Examine different student populations.

- Meaningful and streamlined School Improvement Plans:
  - Reduce the time on process when we want to focus on real and authentic change.
  - Avoid any accreditation system that has different requirements from a school improvement plan.
  - Streamline any state review processes; avoid more layers of state review.
- Accountability that:
  - Creates a sense of trust.
  - Includes a role for local school boards.
  - Builds a deep level of ownership at local level.
- Resources to:
  - Build capacity to do school/district improvement plans and planning.
  - Train leaders (principals, teachers) to make changes.
  - Allow flexibility in resources, removing strings attached from legislature on different pots of money and reexamining current collective bargaining agreements, increasing the number of math and science teachers through retooling for current teachers to get new endorsements and examining performance pay.
  - Provide more time to review data and make changes in instructional practice.

## 6. Feedback from Public on Initial Accountability Proposals

The State Board of Education gathered accountability feedback from 86 group comment forms filled out at public outreach meetings and 373 online and paper surveys, for a total of 459 responses.

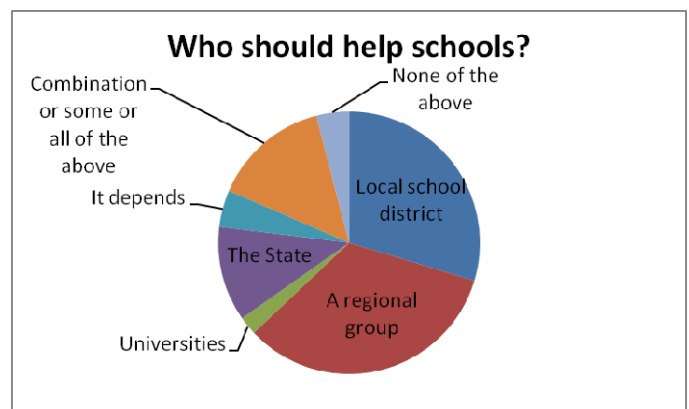
### Should the state provide more assistance to schools/districts that consistently don't meet standards?



More than ¾ of survey respondents agree that the state should provide greater assistance to schools and districts that consistently don't meet standards.

### Who should help schools that consistently fail to meet standard?

Respondents indicate that local groups (the school district, an ESD, or some combination) are preferred, with funding from the state.

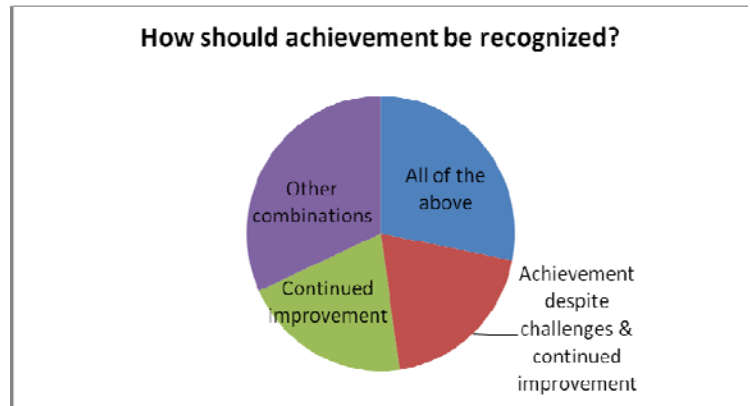




## How should schools be recognized for improvement/achievement?

Continued improvement on performance for all groups of students was the most selected single category. However, respondents indicated schools should be recognized for a combination of factors; the most important being continued improvement, and achievement despite challenges.

**Currently, schools are evaluated statewide on their student WASL scores and graduation rates. What other measures should be used to evaluate school performance?**



In a fall 2008 meeting with approximately 100 union members at WEA, teachers encouraged the Board not to use the WASL in its accountability index, but to use some of these other indicators:

- Other testing measures:** standardized or standards based tests, other than the WASL including (but not limited to): ACT, SAT, ITBS, MAPS, and tests allowing national/international comparison.
- Future student outcomes:** postsecondary attendance rates, success in postsecondary, remediation rates after high school, wages post-high school, 1-10 year post high school student outcomes, postsecondary completion rates, future life satisfaction.
- Assessment of the whole student:** qualitative measurements, student satisfaction, formative assessments, multiple assessment measures to create a picture of the whole child, teacher observation, student community involvement etc.
- Individual growth:** compare student data from the beginning to the end of the year, track K-12 cohort data, end-of-course assessments, student grades, and getting failing students back on track.

## Draft Proposals

### A. Proposed Accountability Index

See Pete Bylsma's Paper

### B. Proposed Innovation Zone and Options for Graduated State Oversight

See Mass Insight's Paper

## **APPENDIX A - State Board of Education Statewide Accountability Duties Defined by Statute RCW 28A.305.130 (4)**

The state board of education shall for purposes of statewide accountability:

(a) Adopt and revise performance improvement goals in reading, writing, science, and mathematics, by subject and grade level, once assessments in these subjects are required statewide; academic and technical skills, as appropriate, in secondary career and technical education programs; and student attendance, as the board deems appropriate to improve student learning. The goals shall be consistent with student privacy protection provisions of RCW 28A.655.090(7) and shall not conflict with requirements contained in Title I of the federal elementary and secondary education act of 1965, or the requirements of the Carl D. Perkins vocational education act of 1998, each as amended. The goals may be established for all students, economically disadvantaged students, limited English proficient students, students with disabilities, and students from disproportionately academically underachieving racial and ethnic backgrounds. The board may establish school and school district goals addressing high school graduation rates and dropout reduction goals for students in grades seven through twelve. The board shall adopt the goals by rule. However, before each goal is implemented, the board shall present the goal to the education committees of the house of representatives and the senate for the committees' review and comment in a time frame that will permit the legislature to take statutory action on the goal if such action is deemed warranted by the legislature;

(b) Identify the scores students must achieve in order to meet the standard on the Washington assessment of student learning and, for high school students, to obtain a certificate of academic achievement. The board shall also determine student scores that identify levels of student performance below and beyond the standard. The board shall consider the incorporation of the standard error of measurement into the decision regarding the award of the certificates. The board shall set such performance standards and levels in consultation with the superintendent of public instruction and after consideration of any recommendations that may be developed by any advisory committees that may be established for this purpose. The initial performance standards and any changes recommended by the board in the performance standards for the tenth grade assessment shall be presented to the education committees of the house of representatives and the senate by November 30th of the school year in which the changes will take place to permit the legislature to take statutory action before the changes are implemented if such action is deemed warranted by the legislature. The legislature shall be advised of the initial performance standards and any changes made to the elementary level performance standards and the middle school level performance standards;

(c) Adopt objective, systematic criteria to identify successful schools and school districts and recommend to the superintendent of public instruction schools and districts to be recognized for two types of accomplishments, student achievement and improvements in student achievement. Recognition for improvements in student achievement shall include consideration of one or more of the following accomplishments:

(i) An increase in the percent of students meeting standards. The level of achievement required for recognition may be based on the achievement goals established by the legislature and by the board under (a) of this subsection;

(ii) Positive progress on an improvement index that measures improvement in all levels of the assessment; and

(iii) Improvements despite challenges such as high levels of mobility, poverty, English as a second language learners, and large numbers of students in special populations as measured by either the percent of students meeting the standard, or the improvement index. When determining the baseline year or years for recognizing individual schools, the board may use the assessment results from the initial years the assessments were administered, if doing so with individual schools would be appropriate;

(d) Adopt objective, systematic criteria to identify schools and school districts in need of assistance and those in which significant numbers of students persistently fail to meet state standards. In its deliberations, the board shall consider the use of all statewide mandated criterion-referenced and norm-referenced standardized tests;

(e) Identify schools and school districts in which state intervention measures will be needed and a range of appropriate intervention strategies after the legislature has authorized a set of intervention strategies. After the legislature has authorized a set of intervention strategies, at the request of the board, the superintendent shall intervene in the school or school district and take corrective actions. This chapter does not provide additional authority for the board or the superintendent of public instruction to intervene in a school or school district;

(f) Identify performance incentive systems that have improved or have the potential to improve student achievement;

(g) Annually review the assessment reporting system to ensure fairness, accuracy, timeliness, and equity of opportunity, especially with regard to schools with special circumstances and unique populations of students, and a recommendation to the superintendent of public instruction of any improvements needed to the system; and

(h) Include in the biennial report required under RCW 28A.305.035, information on the progress that has been made in achieving goals adopted by the board;

## APPENDIX B – No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

In 2002, the No Child Left Behind legislation reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The reauthorization strengthened the accountability provisions of Title 1 of ESEA. It requires states to set definitive timelines for improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps experienced by low-income and minority students (compared to non low-income and non-minority students, respectively). These requirements are the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) provisions. Further, NCLB ensured that parents and the public would have access to information on how schools are doing through state, district, and school report cards.

**Adequate Yearly Progress:** NCLB requires that all (100%) students be proficient in reading and mathematics by 2014. To attain this goal, Washington State established baseline performance levels from 2000, 2001, and 2002 WASL data and annual targets (a.k.a. annual measurable objectives or state uniform bars). In addition to WASL performance goals, schools must meet annual targets for an “other performance indicator.” In Washington, this other indicator is the unexcused absence rate goal for elementary and middle schools and the graduation rate goal for high schools. Finally, school districts and schools must meet a 95% participation rate goal on both the reading and mathematics WASL. The WASL performance and the participation rate goals must be met by all students as well as by the following student subgroups: African Americans, American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asians and Pacific Islanders, Caucasians, English Language Learners, Low-Income students, and special education students. Therefore, in total, there are 37 different cells for which a school or school district must meet the annual target in order to be designated as making AYP.<sup>20</sup>

**School Improvement:** Schools are identified for improvement when any group does not make AYP in two consecutive years for the same measure; that is, reading proficiency, math proficiency, reading participation, math participation) or the other school-wide indicator. Districts are identified as needing improvement if all their grades do not meet AYP for the same measure—reading or math proficiency or participation or other indicator—in two consecutive years. Not meeting AYP targets—same group for same measure—for the first two consecutive years puts a school or district in step one of school improvement. A school or district advances to the next step of school improvement (i.e., steps 2, 3, 4, 5) if it continues not to make AYP for the same group and measure. If a school or district makes AYP, it remains at its current step of school improvement. Making AYP two years in a row gets a school or district out of steps of school improvement.

Although all schools are identified as making or not making AYP, only Title I schools are subject to federal requirements for not making AYP. Schools identified in step one must develop a two-year plan to improve. The school receives technical assistance through the school district as it develops and implements its improvement plan. The plan must include research-based strategies, a ten percent set-aside of Title I dollars for professional development, extended learning time, strategies to promote effective parental involvement, and mentoring for new teachers. Students in step one schools must be offered the option of transferring to another

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<sup>20</sup> There are many numerous details with regard to calculating AYP. For example, there are requirements for the minimum number of students tested to do a calculation; the use of performance data for students enrolled for a “full academic year” only, and the application of margins of error to the percent proficient numbers. There are also Safe Harbor stipulations through which a student group makes AYP, even though it does not make the math or reading AYP targets or a school makes AYP even though it does not make the other indicator target.

public school in the district that has not been identified as needing school improvement. In Washington, some of these schools are invited to participate in the state's three-year School Improvement Assistance Program (SIAP).

The school district must continue to offer public school choice to the students in step two schools. In addition, students from low-income families are eligible to receive supplemental educational services, such as tutoring or remedial classes, from a state-approved provider.

The school district must implement corrective actions to improve schools in step three. Corrective actions may include replacing certain staff, fully implementing a new curriculum, significantly decreasing management authority at the school level, extending the school day or year, appointing an outside expert to advise the school on its progress toward making AYP in accordance with its school plan, or internal reorganization of the school. Districts must continue to offer public school choice and supplemental educational services for low-income students.

A district must initiate plans for restructuring a school in step four. Restructuring may include reopening the school as a charter school, replacing a principal and all or most of the school staff, turning over school operations, either to the state or to a private company with a demonstrated record of effectiveness, or any other major restructuring of school governance.

For schools in step five, the district must implement an alternative governance plan no later than the first day of the following school year.

States must institute corrective action immediately for districts receiving Title I funds and identified in step one for improvement. Such districts are required to create an improvement plan within three months, allocate ten percent of their Title I, Part A funding for professional development, and receive technical assistance.

**Reporting:** NCLB requires each school district to disseminate annual local report cards that include information on how students in the district and in each school perform on state assessments. The report cards must state student performance in terms of three levels: basic, proficient, and advanced. The achievement data must be disaggregated by subgroups: race, ethnicity, gender, English language proficiency, migrant status, disability status, and low-income status. The report cards must also tell which schools have been identified as needing improvement and the step of improvement. The report card for each school will include:

- State assessment results by performance level, including: 1) two-year trend data for each subject and grade tested; and 2) a comparison between annual objectives and actual performance for each student group.
- Percent of each group of students not tested.
- Graduation rates for secondary school students disaggregated by student subgroups.
- Aggregate information on any other indicators used by the state to determine the adequate yearly progress of students disaggregated by student subgroups. Washington has chosen unexcused absence rates for schools with elementary or middle school grades.
- Performance of school districts on adequate yearly progress measures, including the number and names of schools identified, as needing improvement.
- Professional qualifications of teachers in the state, including the percentage of teachers in the classroom with only emergency or provisional credentials, and the percentage of

classes in the state that are not taught by highly qualified teachers, including a comparison between high- and low-income schools.

States must also issue report cards for their level. In Washington, OSPI provides the NCLB-required and other information for the state, districts, and schools on its website. The report cards include WASL, NCLB, AYP, student demographic, teacher information, and financial data.

**Rewards:** NCLB requires states to provide academic achievement awards to schools that close achievement gaps between groups of students or that exceed academic achievement goals. States are allowed to use Title I funds to reward teachers in such schools. States must designate as distinguished schools, those that have made the greatest gains in closing the achievement gap or in exceeding achievement goals.

#### **Education Accountability Timeline<sup>21</sup>:**

- 1992:** Legislature passes ESHB 5953, which creates a Commission on Student Learning, an 11-member board appointed by the Governor and State Board of Education. The Commission is set to expire in 1999.
- 1993:** Governor's Commission on Education Reform and Funding established.
- 1993:** Washington State Legislature passes the Education Reform Act, (House Bill 1209) calling for the creation of common learning goals for all students, an assessment system to measure student progress in meeting the state standards, and accountability for continuous improvement in student learning. The Commission on Student Learning is charged with developing and implementing key components of the Act.
- 1993-96:** Academic standards are developed in reading, writing, math, social studies, science, arts, and health and fitness.
- 1996-01:** The Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), which tests reading, writing, and math, is phased in as a requirement for grades 4, 7 and 10. Teachers and community members oversee development of WASL.
- 1999:** Commission on Student Learning expires.
- 1999:** Legislature passes SSB 5418, creating the Academic Achievement and Accountability (A+) Commission, to develop and implement accountability and assistance programs for Washington's schools and districts.
- 2000:** State Board of Education determines that the class of 2008 will be the first to meet new statewide graduation requirements: pass the 10<sup>th</sup>-grade WASL, complete Culminating Project, create High School and Beyond Plan, and earn minimum class credits.
- 2001:** Failed legislative effort to pass a comprehensive bill.
- 2001:** No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires annual testing in grades 3-8 and once in high school, in reading and math. NCLB also requires every classroom to have a "highly qualified" teacher.
- 2004:** State Legislature recommit to education reform efforts by putting into law the graduation requirements. The state provides students five opportunities to take the 10<sup>th</sup>-grade WASL and earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement. It also calls for struggling students to receive individualized academic help and an alternative for

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<sup>21</sup>Marc Fraser of Education First Consulting May 2008

students that struggle, to demonstrate their skills on the high school WASL. The Certificate of Individual Achievement is created for special education students that are unable to take the WASL.

- 2005:** Legislature passes HB 5473, which reconstitutes State Board of Education, and E2SHB 3098, which dissolves the A+ Commission and transfers its duties to the Board. The new Board consists of five members elected by local school board members, one private school representative elected by members of state-approved private schools, the Superintendent of Public Instruction elected statewide, seven members appointed by the Governor, and two non-voting high school students.
- 2005:** Legislature approves \$2 million, matched by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to expand OSPI's school improvement assistance program to serve more school districts and high schools. Districts volunteer for improvement services and are selected through a competitive process.
- 2006:** Students in the class of 2008 take the WASL as sophomores. Students who do not pass the exam the first time have two more years to get help, retake the exam or access an alternative to the test.
- 2008:** First class to meet new statewide graduation requirements, including passing the reading and writing WASL.
- 2013:** Passing the high school math and science WASL added to the graduation requirements.

## **APPENDIX C – The National Picture of State Intervention Authority in Low Performing Schools and Districts, Jessica Ganet Summer Intern to the SBE**

### **Washington Statute**

The Washington State Board of Education and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction lack the authority to intervene in low performing schools and districts unless they volunteer for assistance. The statute states that the State Board of Education can:

*Identify schools and school districts in which state intervention measures will be needed and a range of appropriate intervention strategies after the legislature has authorized a set of intervention strategies. After the legislature has authorized a set of intervention strategies, at the request of the board, the superintendent shall intervene in the school or school district and take corrective actions. This chapter does not provide additional authority for the board or the superintendent of public instruction to intervene in a school or school district (RCW 28A.305.130 (4) (e))*

### **Overview**

This report summarizes the national picture of state authority to intervene in consistently low performing schools, along with an in depth look at the models in a few states. The information provided is collected from a variety of sources including: state statutes from each of the 50 states, Education Commission of the States (ECS), WestEd Policy Center, Education Development Center, Arizona Department of Education, REL Southwest at Edvance Research, Rhode Island Department of Education, Texas Department of Education, Louisiana Recovery School District, and Federal Department of Education Consolidated State Performance Reports. The table in Appendix A displays the intervention authority by state, along with the state laws, and a list of possible actions that states can take.

### **The National Picture**

Approximately 60% of states have the authority to intervene in local schools and/or districts in some capacity. The interventions range from minimal measures, up through complete school and/or district takeover. For the most part, states that do not have the authority to intervene in local schools/districts offer assistance to struggling schools; however, in Washington, assistance is completely voluntary. Research shows that districts are not likely to voluntarily solicit state help<sup>22</sup>.

### **States with Intervention Authority**

The three main authorities granted to states are: district takeover, school takeover, and school reconstitution. Thirty-two states have the authority to do one or more of the following:

- 25 states have the authority to take over whole districts.
- 16 states have the authority to take over individual schools.
- 20 states have the authority to reconstitute schools.

School or district takeover generally involves a comprehensive review process followed by replacing staff, administration and/or board members. In several states, takeovers also involve the state taking charge of resource allocation for the school/district.

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<sup>22</sup> The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2005). School Restructuring Options Under No Child Left Behind: What Works When? State Takeovers of Individual Schools.



School reconstitution presents a wide variety of options. States with this authority employ a variety of methods including (but not limited to): contracting with private or nonprofit agencies to run the school, implementing new curriculum, providing professional development, reassigning students/staff/administration, implementing research supported improvement methods, changing school procedures, establishing a state appointed expert team within the school, and creating charter schools.

### **States with No Intervention Authority**

Eighteen states do not have the authority to intervene in consistently low performing schools. These states include: Alaska, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming, and Virginia. In general, these states offer voluntary assistance to local schools/districts.

### **State Intervention Models**

While several states have the authority to step in with local schools and districts, few have done so. Examples of different intervention models are summarized as follows: Arizona's model involves intervening with individual schools, and has been more effective at improving achievement than most states. Texas uses a strict model that allows them to effectively monitor large numbers of underperforming schools. Rhode Island's model intervenes with whole districts, and can specify interventions for working with collective bargaining agreements. Louisiana has an interesting model that involves transferring individual struggling schools to a state Recovery School District. Pennsylvania exercises less intervention authority, but provides very clear intervention steps for low performing schools.

### **Arizona: School Takeover**

If a school fails state standards for three consecutive years, the state begins taking steps to "take over." State staff conducts an extensive three-day site visit to classrooms and observe teachers; as well as interview students, administrators, teachers, and parents. The staff creates a report that outlines an intervention strategy. Strategies include:

- Minimal intervention, generally just giving schools more time to improve, which is rare, and has only been used twice. In both cases the schools recently made a leadership change for the better and just needed more time to improve.
- An in between step is to deploy a mentor principal appointed by the state. This is used when the current principal has some deficiencies but shows promise. The mentor principal works intensively with the building principal throughout the year. They meet two to four times per month and communicate daily.
- In most cases, more extensive interventions are deemed necessary. The state replaces the principal with a turnaround principal. Turnaround principals are selected from a pool of people that are screened and approved by the state. The principal gets a salary from the district plus a stipend from the state.
- In addition, two teachers screened and selected, by the state, are deployed to a low performing school to serve as a coach/mentor/model. These teachers are generally in a school for three years.

Arizona has had more success than many states. Originally they intervened with 11 schools; nine were successfully removed from failing status in two years. Currently, the state is intervening with nine schools; four of which are in one district. As a reaction, the state has recently extended the authority of the Arizona State Board of Education to intervene in whole

districts where 50% of the schools in a district are underperforming or failing. Arizona is currently establishing its district intervention process.

### **Louisiana: Recovery School District (RSD)**

Louisiana has a unique model that transfers failing schools into the Recovery School District; a state run district overseen by the State Board of Education. All staff, teachers, and administrators for RSD are hired by the state, which uses its own salary schedule and calendar. Schools remain part of RSD for five years, at which point RSD presents a report to the Board, who decides if the school can be transferred back to its district. The RSD has a small leadership team hired by the state and a streamlined central organization providing instructional and operational support; as well as an advisory committee of local, national and international education experts who connect RSD with expertise and best practices. The district has seven main objectives:

- 1) Student achievement
- 2) Quality leadership
- 3) Parental and community collaboration
- 4) Transparency and accountability
- 5) Equal access and equity
- 6) High quality charter schools
- 7) Positive collaborative relationship with New Orleans Public School System.

### **Pennsylvania: Education Empowerment Districts**

Pennsylvania has limited authority to intervene in low-performing districts as a group. A few districts can be designated as “education empowerment districts”, allowing the SBE to:

- Establish any school as a charter school, or designate a school as independent from a district.
- Employ certified professional staff.
- Reconstitute a school.
- Reassign, suspend, or dismiss a professional employee.
- Supervise and direct principals, teachers, and administrators.
- Rescind the contract of the superintendent and other administrative personnel.
- Reallocate resources, amend school procedures, and develop achievement plans and other evaluation procedures

Pennsylvania has intervened with a few school districts. The first interventions were unsuccessful, mainly because the process was rushed and the board appointed to oversee the process was too small; not representative of stakeholder groups; and had strong affiliations with the low-performing system. Later interventions appear to be somewhat more successful.

### **Rhode Island: Whole District Intervention**

The State of Rhode Island has the following district intervention authority:

*If after a three (3) year period of support there has not been improvement in the education of students as determined by objective criteria to be developed by the board of regents, then there shall be progressive levels of control by the department of elementary and secondary education over the school and/or district budget, program, and/or personnel. This control by the department of elementary and secondary education may be exercised in collaboration with the*

*school district and the municipality. If further needed, the school(s) shall be reconstituted. (RIGL § 16-7.1-5)*

The following is an example of the actions the state took with one consistently underperforming district:

- Superintendent transition: the State Board appointed a new superintendent who is an extension of the Rhode Island Department of Education (DOE).
- Corrective action plan: the DOE read the plan submitted by the district and noted several changes that needed to be made, such as increasing building central office capacity, implementing electronic portfolios, and implementing various literacy techniques.
- Teacher contract issues: the DOE notes issues with the current teacher contract that are barriers to improvement and insists that the district reopen contract negotiation and bring barriers to the table.
- Middle school issues: include restructuring action plans, revising the tenured teacher evaluation system, establishing grade level teams, protecting staff at the alternative middle school, and working with the education commissioner.
- High school issues: include developing a corrective action plan that targets areas of concern, undertaking course analyses particularly in math, creating greater coherence between middle school and high school, and descriptions of how to work with the commissioner.
- Additional items: continuing work with a dropout prevention program, as well as new grading standards and procedures.

Rhode Island is in the middle of the improvement process with this district; therefore, the success of the process is unknown at this point.

### **Texas: Site Based Intervention Teams**

The Texas model uses two different types of school intervention teams: Technical Assistance Teams (TATs) and Campus Intervention Teams (CITs).

**TATs** are a prevention measure for schools at risk of becoming “academically unacceptable.” When schools meet standard for the current year, but score low enough to not meet standard for the next year they must form a TAT. The TAT is made up of two people from the district, but not from the at risk site. They work through an improvement process with the school but do not submit official paperwork.

**CITs** are for “academically underachieving” schools. This two member team is made up of one external member who has no affiliation with the school or district, and one internal member who is affiliated with the district, but not the school. The CIT uses data analysis, needs assessments, and improvement plans, working closely with a state monitor. A state employee typically oversees 40-50 CITs. A CIT stays with a school until it is ranked “academically acceptable” for two consecutive years.

Schools not complying with their CIT are placed on escalated intervention and a state monitor is placed in the school. Schools that remain “academically unacceptable” are at risk of losing their accreditation.

## **Further Resources**

The majority of states are still in the experimental stage of state intervention. Several education policy organizations have published studies on what has and has not worked so far. The majority of the research is based on anecdotal evidence, and cites lessons learned from failed attempts at intervention, rather than successful endeavors.

The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, in particular, has published several papers about the pros and cons of state takeovers, citing that few states have been able to truly improve student achievement through state intervention<sup>23</sup>.

- **Pros:** States hold the primary responsibility for education; state departments have more money than local districts; and the federal government has given states a big role in improving local education. The state is more likely to be informed about researched best practices.
- **Cons:** States often lack the capacity to intervene successfully; boundaries between state and local authority are complex; and improving performance in persistently low performing districts is difficult.

Some helpful lessons that have been learned through this research are<sup>2</sup>:

- State intervention requires an effective oversight body that is representative, independent, knowledgeable, well planned, tough, and sensitive to local concerns.
- The State needs staff dedicated to intervention; the process is time and labor intensive.
- Fairness, transparency and adequate funding are essential for success.

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**APPENDIX D**

**Summary of States' Intervention Authorities in Low Performing Schools and Districts**

				<b>State Intervention Authority</b>		
<b>State</b>	<b>District Take-over</b>	<b>School Take-over</b>	<b>School Reconstruction</b>	<b>State Statute</b>	<b>State Statute</b>	<b>List of Possible Actions the State Can Take</b>
Alabama	Yes	Yes		The state superintendent of education is required to intervene and appoint a person or persons to run the day-to-day operation of a low performing school. The local board may petition the SBE for release from state intervention by showing acceptable improvement in achievement or financial stability or other just cause.	16-6B-3 and 16-6B-6	Guide school in self-study, designate a team of practicing professionals to visit a school, conduct a study, consult with parents and make specific recommendations, appoint people to run the day-to-day operation of the school, assistance program for local boards of education
Alaska				The State has recommended actions (not mandatory) for actions schools in various levels of improvement.	none found	

				<b>State Intervention Authority</b>		
Arizona	Yes	Yes	Yes	The SBE has the discretion to determine to what extent they will participate in the operation of a low-performing school.	15-241	Evaluation by the SBE of adherence to school improvement plan, align curriculum with academic standards, provide teacher training, prioritize the budget, implement proven strategies to improve academic performance, public hearing to determine if a government nonprofit or private organization can submit an application to manage the school, participate in the operation of the school including replacing teachers, admin, staff, and district level people, modify the budget
Arkansas	Yes	Yes	Yes	The SBE may require the school to dismiss staff and administrators, annex the school to another school that is not in need of improvement, and/or take other such action as deemed necessary by the state department	ADE 188 (10.1.6)	Students have option to move to a school/district not in improvement, the SBE approves a plan and specifies corrective actions, school restructuring, annex the school into another school, take over the school.

				<b>State Intervention Authority</b>		
				and the state board.		
California	Yes	Yes	Yes	In California this is voluntary. The State Education Code says: Superintendent of Public Instruction, with the approval of the State Board of Education, shall invite schools that scored below the 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile on the achievement tests administered pursuant to Section 60640 both in the spring of 1998 and in the spring of 1999 to participate in the Immediate Intervention /Underper-forming Schools Program. A school invited to participate may take any action not otherwise prohibited under state or federal law and that would not require reimbursement by the Commission on State Mandates to improve pupil	52053-52055.5	



				<b>State Intervention Authority</b>		
				performance." If districts apply and are approved for this process there are many actions the state can take.		
Colorado		Yes	Yes	Schools rated "unsatisfactory" for three years in a row must become a charter school	22-30.5-301	

				<b>State Intervention Authority</b>		
Connecticut	Yes		Yes	<p>"The local or regional board of education shall monitor progress made by the school under the improvement plan. If two years after the date of approval of the improvement plan, the SBE finds that the school has not made sufficient progress, the SBE shall develop a plan for such school that requires the board to take one or more of the following actions in order to improve student achievement: (1) Close and reconstitute the school; (2) restructure the school in terms of the grades included or the programs offered, or both; (3) provide for site-based management of the school; and (4) allow students in the attendance area of the school to attend other public schools in the school district. The local or regional board of education may</p>	P.A. 99-288	<p>The improvement steps up until those mentioned in the Public Act are all voluntary and are undertaken at the district level by the local or regional board, the state only steps in as stated in the Statute</p>

				<b>State Intervention Authority</b>		
				include in such plan a provision for the transfer of employees in conjunction with any such action.		
Connecticut cont.				The local or regional board of education shall submit its plan to the commissioner for approval and, upon such approval, shall implement the plan."		
Delaware				No authority to step in.	DE ADC 103	

				<b>State Intervention Authority</b>		
Florida			Yes	Local school boards determine actions to be taken with failing school with recommendations from the state. If local decisions do not move schools out of "failing" in two years, the state can withhold funds if the local boards don't take state suggestions.	SS 1008.33	Withhold funds
Georgia		Yes	Yes	If a school is judged as low-performing for two consecutive years, the SBE may appoint a school master or management team to oversee and direct the duties of the principal until performance improves. After three years they can implement more interventions.	20-14-41	Issue public notice to local school board, order a hearing, order an improvement plan, appoint an improvement team to conduct a comprehensive on-site evaluation, recommend changes in school operations, appoint a school master or management team to oversee the principal, remove school personnel on recommendation of the master, call for implementation of a charter school, mandate the complete reconstitution of a school, institute an intensive student

				State Intervention Authority		
						achievement improvement plan, public school choice, set maximum class sizes, expenditure control.
Hawaii				In Hawaii the state is the LEA because there is only one district. The DOE has developed a Framework for School Improvement, which outlines requirements, sanctions, support services, reports and assessments.	CSPR 1.4.4.2	Restructuring schools may select conversion to a charter school or state takeover. The state does a comprehensive assessment by Complex Area Teams. Based on the assessment schools can access the following support from the state: Critical Ally Team, assessment and prioritization of areas needing improvement, comprehensive needs assessment, assistance implementing corrective action, professional development,

				<b>State Intervention Authority</b>		
						consultative or on-site services, school leadership development, standards-based education development, assessment system, learning environment, family and community support- in Hawaii, school restructuring means state takeover
Idaho				State support is voluntary. The state does provide support for districts/schools not meeting the reading targets set by the state.	33.1616	The SDE provides an intervention program that consists of at least a site visit and recommendations to the district for improvement on the State reading goals
Illinois	Yes	Yes	Yes	The SBE can direct the state superintendent of education to appoint an independent authority to operate a low-performing school. The SBE can also authorize the state superintendent to direct the reassignment of	5/2-3.25	Loss of state funds, remove school board members, appoint an independent authority to run the school or district, change the status of the school/district to non-recognized, reassign pupils

				<b>State Intervention Authority</b>		
				pupils and administrative staff.		
				After the third year in the lowest category, the SBE establishes an expert team in the school that includes representatives from the community surrounding the school to assist in revising the school plan and recommend changes. After the fifth year, the SBE has the authority to take the actions listed to the right.		After three years, establish an expert team that includes community representatives and possibly superintendents, governing bodies, teachers, special consultants, etc., to revise school plan. After five years, hold a public hearing for testimony on the following options: merge school with nearby school, assign special management team to operate school, implement department recommendations for improvements, change school procedures, professional development, intervention for teachers or administrators.
Indiana					IC 20-31-9-3,4	
Iowa	Yes			No authority to step in.		
Kansas			Yes	Nothing found in admin. code.		

				<b>State Intervention Authority</b>		
Kentucky	Yes			No authority to step in.	703KAR5:20	
Louisiana			Yes	Failing school can be transferred to the statewide Recovery School District. The school shall be operated by the Recovery School District in the manner it determines most likely to bring the school to an acceptable level of performance including closing the school or contracting with an outside entity to run the school.	17:10.5	School is operated by the Recovery School District in the manner it deems necessary, revoke all school approval, school choice, reopen the school as a charter school or a school with a outside contract.
Maine				The commissioner of schools can provide assistance to districts.	SS20-A 6210	
Maryland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Code talks about prescribed actions that local districts must take upon failing to meet AYP in successive years, but doesn't talk about actions for the state to take.	SS 13A.01.04.0 7	State can takeover and reconstitute schools



				State Intervention Authority		
Massachusetts	Yes		Yes	If a school is deemed underperforming for 24 months after instituting an improvement plan the SBE may step in and take action.	69-1J	Remove the principal of the school for the following school year, the new principal can remove any teacher or employee in the school without regard to procedure or contract, the commissioner can make available funds to increase the salary of teachers or principal in the school, any other actions determined by the SBE to be "reasonable calculated to increase the number of students attending the school who satisfy the student performance standards."
Michigan	Yes	Yes		Schools that fail to meet standards for three consecutive years have four options to choose from, listed at the right.	380.128	The superintendent of public instruction appoints a new administrator of the school at the district's expense, parents can choose to send their child to a different school, the SPI will approve a research-based

				<b>State Intervention Authority</b>		
						school improvement model and/or an affiliation with a college or university, the school is closed.
Minnesota				No authority to step in. The commissioner is a resource districts can use for improvement.	SS 120B.35	
Mississippi	Yes			If school districts fail to meet accreditation standards, the SBE establishes a mandatory program of development for the district. If the school does not comply, or conditions do not improve the Commission on School Accreditation requests that the governor declare a state of emergency in the district, which allows the state to step in and take further measures with the district.	37-17-6	Override decisions of the local board or superintendent, Assign an interim conservator to oversee the finances of the district, supervise day to day activities of district staff, attend meetings, and approve or disapprove extra-curricular activities, give students transfers to other schools, reduce supplements paid to staff for financial reasons, itemize the accounting of the district, put a notice in the newspaper, take over the district completely until the state of

				State Intervention Authority		
						emergency is over.
Missouri	Yes		Yes	Local district boards have the authority to intervene in academically deficient schools. The SBE has the authority to request a school improvement plan.	160.54 and 160.720	
Montana				Schools can lose accreditation status if they fail to implement improvement plans.	10.55.605	
Nebraska				No policy.		
Nevada		Yes		The state DOE can restructure the governance or oversee the operation of Title I schools that are restructuring under NCLB.	385.376	Replace employees who contributed to the failure of the school, enter into a contract with a private management company with a record of effectiveness to operate the public school, oversee operation of the

				State Intervention Authority		
						school, restructure the governance of the school.
New Hampshire				No authority to step in.	193H:4	
New Jersey	Yes			"The commissioner may seek partial or full state intervention in a public school district".	NJAC 6A:30-6.2	Appoint a district superintendent, appoint one or more highly skilled professionals to provide direct oversight, appoint up to three additional district board members.
New Mexico	Yes			The public education department can manage or operate "corrective action" schools. The State Secretary of Education can terminate or discharge district employees. The PED is authorized to manage or make governance changes.	6.19.2.11 and 22-2C-7(j)	Suspend the authority of a local school board, the DOE will adopt rules to provide services to low income students such as tutoring, replace staff, implement a new curriculum, decrease management authority, extend the school day or year, change the school's internal organizational structure, open the school as a charter school, make other governance changes.

				<b>State Intervention Authority</b>		
New York	Yes		Yes	After five years of failing to meet AYP districts must create a plan to restructure the school. The state approves (or does not approve) the plan.	8NYCRR 100.2	
North Carolina	Yes	Yes	Yes	The State Board can assign an assistance team to an underperforming school. If a school fails to improve the SBE can intervene in various ways listed at the right.	115C-105.38 and 115C-105.39	Recommend that the local board retain, remediate, or remove the current principal; dismiss teachers, assistant principals, directors, and supervisors, appoint an interim superintendent, suspend the duties of the local board.
North Dakota				Local interventions, not state interventions.		Local Interventions: Year five - replace key staff, new curriculum, new management, extend the year/day, restructure and increase state oversight Year seven - defer administrative funds to improvement, offer signing bonus, offer school choice across district boundaries, contract with

				State Intervention Authority		
						outside expert, other forms of major restructuring.
Ohio	Yes			Districts can turn a school over to the DOE if that school is restructuring.	3302.04	Conduct a site evaluation of the school/district, withhold a portion of Title I funds, direct the district to replace key personnel, institute a new curriculum, establish alternative forms of governance, appoint a trustee to manage the district, appoint an intervention team.
Oklahoma	Yes	Yes	Yes	The SBE can intervene in low performing schools via several routes listed at the right.	1210.54	Special funding, reassignment of district personnel, transfer of students, operation of the school by personnel employed by the State Department of Education, mandatory annexation, placing operation of the school with an institution of higher education as a developmental

				State Intervention Authority		
						research school.
Oregon				DOE can provide ongoing technical assistance at the request of the district.	9-30-329.085	
Pennsylvania	Yes			Certain districts with high numbers of low-performing schools can take certain actions when designated "education empowerment districts."	17-1701-B	Establish a charter school, designate a school as independent, employ professional staff, contract with for-profit or nonprofit organizations, reconstitute a school, reassign, suspend or dismiss a professional employee, supervise and direct principals, teachers and admin, rescind the contract of the superintendent, reallocate resources, amend school procedures.

				<b>State Intervention Authority</b>		
Rhode Island	Yes	Yes	Yes	The SDE, in collaboration with the school district and the municipality can exert progressive levels of control over a low performing school's budget, program and/or personnel.	16-7.1-5	Levels of control over school budget, program, personnel, restructure the school governance, make decisions regarding the continued operation of the school, technical assistance in improvement planning, curriculum alignment, student assessment, instruction, and family and community involvement, policy support, resource oversight, help create supportive partnerships with education institutions, business, governmental, or nonprofit agencies, provide additional state resources
South Carolina	Yes	Yes	Yes	The State Superintendent, after consulting an external review committee and with the approval of the SBE, can declare a state of emergency in a low performing school and replace the principal or	59-18-1520	Furnish continuing advice and technical assistance in implementing the recommendation of the SBE, replace the principal, assume management of the school



				<b>State Intervention Authority</b>		
				otherwise assume management of the schools.		
South Dakota				Local District manages the improvement process, not the state.	24.42.04.11	
Tennessee	Yes			The state Commissioner of Education can assume any or all powers of governance for a school that has been on probation for low performance for two consecutive years and has not made any progress to meet the standards.	49-1-602	Study the school, approve allocation of state grants, provide technical assistance, approve the allocation of financial resources, appoint a local community review committee, replace or reassign staff, mandate a new research based curriculum, decrease school management authority, appoint instructional consultants, reorganize internal management structure, contract with an institution of higher education for school operation, remove the school from the school

				<b>State Intervention Authority</b>		
						system and place under the DOE, restructure the school as a public charter school, assume all powers of governance, recommend to the SBE that the director of the LEA be replaced, recommend to the SBE that the local board members be replaced, pilot project programs that can include before/after school, Saturday school, and summer programs.
Texas	Yes	Yes	Yes	The state Commissioner of Education can reconstitute or order the closure of a school that has been identified as low performing for two consecutive years or more. In reconstituting the school, a special school intervention team shall be assembled to decide which educators may be retained; those not retained may be assigned to another position in	39.1324	Reconstitution of the school, assign a campus intervention team to help with developing and executing an approved improvement plan, the team decides what teachers will be retained, the commissioner can close a school, order a school to acquire professional services at the expense of the district select an external auditor,

				<b>State Intervention Authority</b>		
				the district.		provide for the appropriate training of district staff or board members.
Utah				The state provides assistance, but not intervention.	none found	
Vermont		Yes	Yes	The state Commissioner of Education can recommend that the SBE assume administrative control over a low-performing school or close the school and require the district to pay tuition to another public school or an approved independent school. The action ultimately ordered by the SBE "shall be least intrusive consistent with the need to provide students attending the school substantially equal educational opportunities."	165	Technical assistance, adjust supervisory union boundaries or responsibilities of superintendent, assume administrative control to the extent necessary, close the school and require that they school district pay tuition to another public school.
Virginia				The SBE may require a division level academic review and then	22.1-253.13:3	

				<b>State Intervention Authority</b>		
				approve or disapprove a corrective action plan.		
Washington				Identify schools and school districts in which state intervention measures will be needed and a range of appropriate intervention strategies. After the legislature has authorized a set of intervention strategies, at the request of the SBE, the superintendent shall intervene in the school or school district and take corrective actions. This chapter does not provide additional authority for the board or the superintendent of public instruction to intervene in a school or school district.	(RCW 28A.305.130 (4) (e))	

				<b>State Intervention Authority</b>		
West Virginia	Yes			The SBE can intervene in the operation of a low-performing school. Interventions may include, but are not limited to, establishing instructional programs, taking such direct action "as may be necessary to correct the low performance", and declaring that they position of principal is vacant and assigning a new principal "who shall serve at the will and pleasure of and, under the sole supervision of the state board".	18-2E-5	Technical assistance, professional development, money, additional staffing and resources, appoint a team of improvement consultants, appoint a monitor, paid at the county's expense to cause improvements, establish instructional programs, replace the principal, allow students to transfer schools, replace the board.
Wisconsin				No state intervention authority.	none found	Schools/districts follow NCLB guidelines.
Wyoming				The SBE and SPI set goals and oversee progress of schools, but do not directly step in.	21-2-304	

## APPENDIX

This appendix provides more detailed information about the proposed accountability system. It includes how the indicators and outcomes were selected, how the ratings and index number is calculated, the initial list of qualitative and quantitative factors that could be examined to identify *Priority* schools, and other issues related to the proposed system.

### **SELECTION OF INDICATORS AND OUTCOMES**

One of the guiding principles for the accountability system is the use of multiple measures. The *Technical Issues and Awards* advisory group decided to use four indicators and five outcomes, resulting in a 4x5 matrix with 20 outcomes. The group discussed other indicators and outcomes besides the WASL and graduation rates and wanted to include more outcome data in order to have multiple measures. However, the group could not identify any other reliable and accurate data available, statewide that could be used in an appropriate way.

The index is achieved by using the simple average of the ratings across the 20 outcomes. The graduation rate is not applicable for elementary and middle schools, but these types of schools have multiple grades with WASL results that generate the ratings. By using averages, schools without data for some indicators are still included in the system and a separate system is not needed for different types of schools.

The group preferred a system that uses fixed criteria rather than norm-referenced measures in order to keep the measures simple and to avoid changing goals over time and the use of measures (e.g., standard deviations) that vary by subject. This means that awards would be given when schools meet certain criteria, and there would not be a limit to how many schools can be recognized (unlike the Schools of Distinction, which only recognized the top five percent, based on improvement). With fixed criteria in place, a school and district would know in advance what it needed to do to receive an award, regardless of how others perform.

The advisory group discussed other types of analyses that could provide more accurate results (e.g., structural equation modeling, hierarchical linear modeling, and value-added growth models). However, these methods were not selected because they lack transparency, are overly complex, and are not calculated easily at the school and district levels, due to capacity and software limitations.

The advisory groups were unanimous in their belief that the federal AYP system is not a valid way to identify schools for awards and additional support. The groups felt the current system is too complex, has too many adjustments, and is neither transparent nor fair in its accountability determinations. Moreover, AYP is almost entirely punitive in nature and does not include two subjects (writing and science) that are assessed in a standardized manner statewide, which has resulted in a narrowing of the curriculum. AYP's narrow emphasis on students who meet standard has often resulted in more focused help being given to students that perform near that cut point (known as the "bubble kids") and at the expense of students who are farther above and below that level of performance.

The proposed system is preferred because it is more inclusive and less complex than the federal AYP system. The ratings are based on the results for all students, including those who are not "continuously enrolled" since October 1. No margin of error is used, and the minimum N is ten across the entire school/district (rather than a grade) in order to increase the chance that

very small schools and districts (e.g., those with less than ten students in a grade) are included in the accountability system. For example, a K-6 school that has only four students in each tested grade (grades 3-6) would have a total of 16 students with assessment results and would therefore be included in the system. (Grade-level results are not reported when there are fewer than ten students in a grade in order to keep the results confidential). Grade configurations are not an issue when calculating the results because the same benchmarks are used for each grade and subject (AYP uses grade bands of 3-5, 6-8, and 10 with separate results generated for each grade band, regardless of the school's grade configuration). The current AYP system for holding districts accountable is even more complex than the school accountability system. It has different rules and sometimes produces results that are confusing and at odds with its school-level results (e.g., a district might not make AYP but all its schools do and vice versa). A district's size is the major determinant in its AYP results—only two districts with fewer than 1,000 students are in improvement status. The proposed district accountability system is essentially the same as the system for schools, which makes it relatively easier to understand and compute.

### **USING THE INDEX**

The results from the 20 ratings create an index number for each school and district based on the average rating. Schools and districts are assigned to a “tier” based on their index number.

- Those with the highest index numbers, from 3.00 to 4.00, are in the “exemplary” tier.
- Those with an index of 2.00 to 2.99 are in the “good” tier.
- Those with an index of 1.00 to 1.99 are in the “average” tier.
- Those with an index below 1.00 are in the “below average” tier.

Schools should not be compared and judgments should not be made about school quality based solely on their overall index score. Even though the index uses multiple measures, some schools have missing data that can affect their index number. Moreover, schools that administer assessments with lower scores overall (e.g., science and math) will tend to have a lower index score than those that do not. For example, schools serving grades 5, 8, and 10 give the science WASL, and these results tend to be very low compared to the other subjects. So a K-4 school will likely have a higher index score than a K-5 or K-8 school. As a result, the index is only comparable across schools that serve the same grades. In addition, the index does not reflect how close a school may be to the benchmarks—small differences in results could still generate different ratings (e.g., 85%=3 and 86%=4). The lack of vertical alignment of the assessments presents another complicating factor when making comparisons across schools that serve different grade levels.

The accountability system will need to remain flexible. Changes in NCLB, graduation requirements, the assessment system (e.g., moving to end-of-course exams in math, adjustments to cut scores), and standards (e.g., science) may have an impact on some measures, which may require adjustments to the accountability system. Moreover, as data systems improve statewide and more information becomes available, other indicators can be added to the system<sup>24</sup> and other more sophisticated analyses could be used (e.g., growth models).

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<sup>24</sup> Most of the other outcomes relate to high schools and the transition to higher education. Some data require transcript information, such as AP enrollment, dual enrollment, and college-ready rates. Other data sources could provide information about college entrance exams, college going rates, and remediation rates in higher education institutions.

## ACHIEVEMENT INDICATOR

This indicator looks at five outcomes: the four subjects tested by the WASL/WAAS statewide (reading, writing, math, and science) and the extended graduation rate (see explanation on how the rate is calculated below). The measure used is the percentage of “all” students meeting standard. Unlike the AYP measure, this indicator is what is shown on OSPI’s Report Card and does not reflect any adjustments (i.e., margin of error, continuous enrollment). The percent meeting standard includes both the results of the WASL and the WAAS, which is given to students with disabilities. For grade 10, only the first grade 10 attempt, as reported in June of the tested year is used (this includes results for students who met standard in grade 9). Results from August assessments and retakes will be considered when looking at the “below average” schools and districts to determine if they should be included in the Priority tier. This will recognize the districts that go to extra effort to help students who are in danger of not graduating unless they pass the required assessments. Subgroups results (for the various race/ethnicity groups, low-income, ELL, students with disabilities, gender) are used when examining the “below average” schools and districts to determine if they should be included in the Priority tier. Results for students of color are used in aggregate in a separate indicator described below.

Students from all tested grades in a school are combined for each subject, and the percentage of these students that meet standard on their respective tests is the school’s percent meeting standard for that subject. This means the index can be calculated easily, regardless of a school’s grade configuration (although grade configurations influence the results due to differences in the tests given). The same scoring benchmarks are used for all subjects. This gives equal importance to each subject.<sup>25</sup> It also encourages the vertical alignment of the state assessments.

A school/district must have at least ten students for it to be included in the accountability system. The minimum number used by OSPI is ten, but this policy is applied at the test and grade level. Using an N of ten for a *school* means that very small schools will now be included in the accountability system because they will likely have at least 10 students assessed across the entire school. Combining all the test results together and using an N at the school level increases the overall N, so a single student in a small school has less impact on the results and causes less of a change in the results from year to year. By using this system, scores that are currently suppressed at the grade level when there are less than ten students assessed will become known in their aggregate form. This N policy means the state accountability system is more inclusive than the current AYP system, where the N is either 30 or 40 and applies only students who are continuously enrolled. The groups felt that the education system has a moral responsibility to serve all students, and having a small minimum N and counting students who

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<sup>25</sup> The advisory group did not have consensus about how to include science results in the index. Some felt that science should not be included at all because of changing standards and that it is not being taken seriously in many cases, which results in low scores across the state and relatively little improvement over time. As a result, it has little ability to differentiate school performance. Some suggested using lower cut points and raising them over time or including science but giving it less weight. After much discussion, a majority of the group concluded that since science will be a graduation requirement relatively soon, the only way to have science taken seriously was to treat it like the other subjects. Keeping the same rating system as the other subjects also keeps the system consistent and less complex and provides the opportunity to receive high ratings for improvement. Moreover, science achievement affects only two of the 20 cells of the matrix. Finally, not including science with equal weight penalizes those who work hard in this subject and sends the wrong message about the importance of students learning science concepts.



have not been in class all year helps hold schools accountable for meeting the needs of *all* their students.

### **ACHIEVEMENT VS. PEERS INDICATOR**

This indicator uses the Learning Index (described below) level and controls for student characteristics beyond a school's control. Scores are the difference between the school's adjusted level and the average level among the school's peers. Specifically, the school/district score is the un-standardized residuals generated by a multiple regression. Those with scores above zero are performing better than those with the same student characteristics, and those with scores below zero are performing below those with the same student characteristics. The results are those for a single year, rather than averages over multiple years for simplicity and to avoid the distortions when change takes place over time (e.g., when averaging, schools that have dramatic declines have better outcomes and schools with dramatic increases have worse outcomes).<sup>26</sup>

Four student characteristics are the independent variables in the multiple regressions: the percentage of (1) low-income students (percent eligible for free or reduced-price lunch<sup>27</sup>), (2) English language learners, (3) students with disabilities, and (4) mobile students (not continuously enrolled). A school's Learning Index from each of the four assessments as well as the graduation rate for high schools and districts are the dependent variables. The regressions are weighted by headcount (number of students assessed) to prevent a small "outlier" school from distorting the regression (predicted) line. Although there is a high correlation between all the independent variables except special education, the regressions showed that all four variables helped improve the quality of the predicted levels, regardless of the regression method used.

The mobility measure may need to be refined after further discussion takes place. Currently, there is no common definition of mobility, and migrant student data does not include many students who are mobile. OSPI's student data system includes information about students who are/are not continuously enrolled from October 1 through the testing period, as part of the AYP system. The proposed measure may not identify students who move in and out of a school or district multiple times during the school year and are considered continuously enrolled. This "churn" has a detrimental effect on the learning environment. The proposed measure, the percentage of non-continuously enrolled students, can be used until a better measure is identified. (Data for these students in 2007 were obtained from OSPI using the 'All' student group.)

The advisory group discussed other possible independent variables that could be included in the analysis. These include the percentage of students who are enrolled in a gifted program, the percentage of minority students, school size (enrollment), and the amount of local funding available.

- A gifted variable was not included because of a lack of reliable data, although the system should somehow take into account when a school has concentrations of these students.

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<sup>26</sup> Due to data limitations, analyses have not yet been conducted to see how the index changes over time among very small schools. A single student at these schools could cause large changes in the results from year to year.

<sup>27</sup> The percentage of students in high schools who are eligible is often higher than what is reported, but this proxy for socioeconomic status is still the best available.

- A race/ethnicity variable was not included because it is highly correlated with the other variables; the statistical analyses found it added very little to the explanatory power of the model, and using it would reduce our ability to identify schools where students of color are treated differently. Instead, the performance of students of color is included as a separate indicator.
- A school size variable was not included because research findings, to date, reveal mixed results about how school enrollment levels affect student outcomes. School size is also a factor that can be controlled somewhat at the district level through the use of specialized programs and boundary lines. Other methods can be used to help schools compare themselves to those with similar sizes once the accountability results are made known.
- Funding levels can only be included at the district level because school-level financial data are not available. For district accountability, we recommend using an additional independent variable in the regression to control for the level of funding available by the community. Given the current method for distributing state funds, the recommended financial variable is the total amount of operating revenue per weighted pupil, with higher need students “inflating” the enrollment figure because they require more resources to educate. The extra weights used are .20 for ELL and low-income students and .93 for students with disabilities.

**IMPROVEMENT INDICATOR**

The Improvement indicator relies on changes in the Learning Index for the four assessed subjects and the graduation rate from one year to the next. Specifically:

- Improvement on *assessments* are scored on a scale of 0 to 4 based on the following levels of change in the Learning Index:
  - > .12 ..... 4
  - .051 to .12 ..... 3
  - .05 to .05 ..... 2
  - .051 to -.12..... 1
  - < -.12 ..... 0
- Improvement on *graduation rates* are scored on a scale of 0 to 4 based on the following levels of percentage point change in the extended graduation rate from the previous year (see below for more information on how the graduation rate is calculated):
  - > 6 ..... 4
  - 3.01 to 6.00 ..... 3
  - 3.00 to 3.00 ..... 2
  - 6.00 to -3.01 .... 1
  - < -6 ..... 0

The Learning Index was developed by the Commission on Student Learning and refined by the A+ Commission.<sup>28</sup> The index takes into consideration the percent of students performing at the different WASL levels. Specifically, the WASL tests have five levels of performance:

- Level 0 – No score given<sup>29</sup>
- Level 1 – Well below standard
- Level 2 – Partially meets standard
- Level 3 – Meets standard
- Level 4 – Exceeds standard

The Learning Index, calculated like a grade point average with 4.0 as the highest score, reflects the level of student performance across the entire range of proficiency, not just those meeting standard. It gives greater weight to higher levels of proficiency on the state assessments and provides an incentive to support the learning of all students, including those well below standard (Level 1) and those that already meet the standard (Level 3) so they can move up to the next level. There is a “ceiling effect” when using this measure, but preliminary results show that even high-performing schools were achieving large gains because of the movement of students from Level 3 to Level 4. Once a school has all of its students in Level 4, there would not be any possibility to improvement any more, but the all ratings together would still result in a school being in highest tier.

Improvement is based on the change (gain or loss) in the Learning Index from a prior year. We recommend using the one-year change rather than using averages of previous years or a change from a year further in the past because it is the simplest calculation, it reflects the most recent set of results, and it does not distort the most recent results (using a two-year average helps a school if scores go down and penalizes the school if scores go up). New schools would only need two years of data to generate an improvement score.

The following example shows how the Learning Index is calculated. The same method is used to calculate the index for all WASL tests (reading, mathematics, writing, science) in all the tested grades:

- Level 0: 5% of all students assessed
- Level 1: 15% of all students assessed
- Level 2: 20% of all students assessed
- Level 3: 40% of all students assessed
- Level 4: 20% of all students assessed

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Learning Index} &= (0 \cdot 0.05) + (1 \cdot 0.15) + (2 \cdot 0.20) + (3 \cdot 0.40) + (4 \cdot 0.20) \\ &= 0 + .15 + .40 + 1.20 + .80 = 2.55 \end{aligned}$$

The group discussed other possible improvement measures, including a 10% reduction in those not meeting standard (the AYP “safe harbor” measure), a 25% reduction in those not meeting standard over a three-year period (the goal used for grade 4 reading several years ago), a percentage point gain from the previous year (or over several years), and a change in the scale score. While each of these have merit, the group decided that a change in the Learning Index provided the best measure of improvement because it focused on more than just those meeting standard and uses available data. The other measures can be used when analyzing “below average” schools for possible designation as a Priority school.

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<sup>28</sup> These Commissions are no longer in existence.

<sup>29</sup> The “No Score” designation includes unexcused absences, refusals to take the test, no test booklets but enrolled, incomplete tests, invalidations, and out-of-grade level tests.

## **ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS OF COLOR INDICATOR**

Wide disparities exist in the level of academic achievement between white students and students of color (except some Asian groups). This indicator is included because it will keep a focus on this achievement gap. The indicator uses the same five outcomes as the Achievement indicator: the four subjects tested by the WASL/WAAS statewide (reading, writing, math, and science) and the extended graduation rate. However, the measure used is the aggregate percentage of students who are American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic, and multi-racial who meet standard on the assessments and who graduate by the age of 21. The results will not be different from the Achievement indicator if there are few or no white students at a school. On the other hand, a school may not have any results in this indicator if there are less than ten students of color in all the tested grades. The same rating scales are used as the achievement indicator. For simplicity, data for the individual groups are not used separately. The enrollment and outcome data are available for review on OSPI's Report Card for those who want to know how the aggregate percentage is determined.

## **GRADUATION RATE MEASURE**

The Washington State definition of the on-time graduation rate is the percentage of students who graduate from public high school with a regular diploma (not including a GED or any other diploma not fully aligned with the state's academic content standards) in the standard number of years. The period of time required for students with disabilities to graduate is specified in each individualized education program (IEP). Students with disabilities, who earn a diploma by completing the requirements of an IEP in the required period of time, are counted as on-time graduates. The period of time required for LEP and migrant students to graduate is determined on an individual basis when they enter the district and may be longer than the standard number of years. The period of time required to graduate for a migrant student who is not LEP and does not have an IEP can be one year beyond the standard number of years. LEP and migrant students who earn a diploma in the required period of time are counted as on-time graduates.

The on-time graduation rate is calculated as follows:<sup>30</sup>

$$\text{On-Time Graduation Rate} = 100 * (1 - \text{grade 9 dropout rate}) * (1 - \text{grade 10 dropout rate}) * (1 - \text{grade 11 dropout rate}) * (1 - \text{grade 12 dropout rate} - \text{grade 12 continuing rate})$$

with  $\text{Dropout Rate} = \frac{\text{number of students with a dropout, unknown, GED completer code}}{\text{total number of students served (less transfers out and juvenile detention)}}$

To encourage schools to serve students who remain in school beyond four years, a separate graduation rate is calculated that includes students who graduate in more than four years. This "extended rate" is being used for AYP purposes and the rate used in the accountability index. The formula for calculating this rate is as follows:

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<sup>30</sup> See <http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/pubdocs/GradDropout/03-04/Graduationanddropoutstatistics2003-04Final.pdf>, chapter 1, for more information about these formulas.

*Extended Graduation Rate* = number of on-time and late graduates

# of on-time graduates/on-time graduation rate

All rates are rounded to the nearest whole number using normal rounding rules. Dropouts are not being counted as transfers. Since graduation data is not reported until after the beginning of the school year, the rates from the previous year are used.

### **IDENTIFYING PRIORITY SCHOOLS (LOWEST TIER)**

The *Priority Schools* advisory group generated an initial list of quantitative and qualitative data that could be used to determine which schools in the “below average” tier should be identified as needing more significant support from the state over a longer period of time. These are the schools with the greatest need based on consistent underperformance on multiple measures (grades, subjects, indicators) over multiple years. The advisory group assumed that being in this tier would generate the opportunity for substantially more support and not have consequences immediately. However, the group was not clear about the level of support that schools in the various tiers would receive.

The following factors were identified by the group. However, given the comprehensive nature of this list and the limited capacity to analyze all of these types of data, for every school and district in the “below average” tier, the list will be re-examined by the group to determine which are the most important factors to analyze.

#### **Contextual Data**

- Type of school (alternative school, institution)
- Changes in student demographic profile (e.g., rapid increase in low-income or ELL students)
- What programs are included in the school (e.g., concentrations of ELL, special education, gifted)
- Program changes (e.g., establishing new ELL or special education programs)
- Student mobility
- Number of languages spoken by students
- Feeder schools
- Boundary changes (closures, consolidations)
- Construction or renovation projects

#### **Analysis of WASL/WAAS Results (annual and trends over time)**

- Achievement trends over multiple years for each subject area
- Size of the gap between WASL scores in different subjects
- Size of the achievement gap
- Percent students meeting three of three and four of four standards
- Trends for subgroups (gender, race/ethnicity, low-income) and programs (ELL, special education)
- Level of growth over time
- Changes in scale scores
- How performance compares to similar schools
- Results of students who have been in the school for longer periods of time (track cohorts of students to see how percent meeting standard changes over time, review results for just “continuously enrolled” students, the percentage of students meeting standard the next year in

the next grade compared to the previous year, e.g., the percent in grade 4 in one year compared to the percent in grade 5 the next year)

- Results from retakes (high school) and collection of evidence

### **AYP Results**

- Results generated with minimum Ns, confidence intervals, and continuously enrolled students (helps prevent false positives)
- How far the “all” group is from the annual goal
- Proficiency, participation, and other indicator results for all subgroups
- Number and percentage of cells not making AYP
- Which subgroups and subjects did not make AYP (ELL, special education, and participation rates countless, all and race/ethnic groups count more)

### **Other Quantitative Data (some may only be available at the district or school levels)**

- *Graduation data*: On-time and extended graduation rates for all students and subgroups, difference in rates, percentage of students still enrolled after four years
- *Dropout data*: Annual and cohort dropout rates for all students and subgroups, difference in rates
- *Discipline data*: Number of suspensions and expulsions, source of referrals, types of infractions, types of students being disciplined the most
- *Perception results*: Surveys of staff, parents, and students about school conditions and how the results differ from one another
- *Classroom conditions*: Class sizes, student/teacher ratios by grade and subject
- *Staff characteristics*: Percentage of staff with certificates, teacher education/experience levels
- *Staff turnover*: Teacher and leadership changes at school and district levels
- *District assessments*: Results from any other assessments (e.g., MAP, grade 2 reading, portfolios)
- *WLPT results*: Performance of students from different language backgrounds, percentage of students exiting ELL programs
- *Volunteers*: Number of parent volunteers, how they are used
- *Retention*: Number and percentage of students retained in grade, number and type of subjects not passed, level of credit deficiency
- *Finances*: Amount generated by local levies/bonds, fund balances, amount and sources of outside funding, stability in funding over time
- *District characteristics*: Number and percentage of schools in Tier 3, percentage of district students enrolled in Tier 3 schools
- *Data anomalies*: Incorrect data reported that could affect analyses, missing data, reason for missing data, number of ratings generating the average index

### **Qualitative Data**

- *District role*: Resource amounts and types allocated to school, type of staff and programs provided, funding levels, type and intensity of interventions made to date, appropriateness of district policies, data analysis capacity, role of the district in school improvement efforts
- *Initiatives*: Number being attempted, focus and validity of initiatives, level of integration/cohesion among activities
- *Data use*: Quality of data system, capacity to use data, how information is used
- *Self-assessments*: Quality and use/implementation of school improvement plans
- *Staff relations*: Level of collaboration among staff and administrators within the school, union relations
- *Results from external reviews*: Results from accreditation and CPR, input from ESDs

### **ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS**

Pete Bylsma and two advisory groups are working to prepare the proposed index for Board review. The *Technical Issues and Awards* advisory group is working on the details of the “tiered” accountability system. This group reviewed the work that was done to date, discussed numerous technical issues related to the proposed index, and will be discussing a set of specific criteria for making awards at its next meeting. Members of this group are:

Ms. JoLynn Berge, OSPI (Federal Policy and Grant Administrator)  
Dr. Phil Dommes, North Thurston SD (Assessment Director)  
Dr. Linda Elman, Tukwila SD (Assessment/Research Director)  
Dr. Peter Hendrickson, Everett SD (Assessment Director)  
Mr. Doug Goodlett, Vancouver SD (Special Services Director)  
Dr. Feng-Yi Hung, Clover Park SD (Assessment/Evaluation Director)  
Dr. Nancy Katims, Edmonds SD (Assessment Director)  
Dr. Bill Keim, ESD 113 (Superintendent)  
Mr. Bob Silverman, Puyallup SD (Executive Director for Assessment)

The *Priority Schools* advisory group identified quantitative and qualitative data that can be used to examine schools in the “below average” tier, to determine if they should be a Priority school needing much greater state assistance. Members of this group are:

Ms. Maggie Bates, Hockinson SD (Assistant Superintendent)  
Ms. JoLynn Berge, OSPI (Federal Policy and Grant Administrator)  
Mr. Doug Goodlett, Vancouver SD (Special Services Director)  
Dr. Bill Keim, ESD 113 (Superintendent)  
Ms. Linda Munson, South Kitsap SD (Special Programs Director)  
Dr. Michael Power, Tacoma SD (Assistant Superintendent)  
Mr. Bob Silverman, Puyallup SD (Executive Director for Assessment)  
Ms. Nancy Skerritt, Tahoma SD (Assistant Superintendent)  
Dr. Lorna Spear, Spokane SD (Executive Director for Teaching and Learning)  
Dr. Alan Spicciati, Highline SD (Chief Accountability Officer)

### **Outreach meetings SBE Conducted June-October 2008**

Community meetings were held in Spokane, Yakima and Seattle in early June.

Board members and staff met individually with the following groups:

Association of Washington School Principals  
City of Seattle Office for Education  
League of Education Voters  
The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
Washington Association of School Directors  
Washington Education Association  
Washington State Parent Teacher Association  
Washington State School Directors Association