

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM UPDATE

BACKGROUND

Voluntary Participation in the Federal School Improvement Grant Process in 2010 for Districts with Lowest Achieving Schools

The U.S. Department of Education has issued new rules to determine which schools are eligible for its school improvement grants. Based on these rules, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has identified the five percent persistently lowest achieving Title I and Title I eligible schools in reading and math over the last three years (2007-2009) based on state assessment data. They looked at overall achievement; the level of progress schools made during those three years, and identified high schools with an average of graduation rates less than 60 percent. To be counted, a school had to have at least 30 students tested in each subject in all three years. Approximately 40 schools were identified. OSPI has not released the list of schools yet, but it will be available by the Board meeting. OSPI worked with districts where these schools are located to determine if the district wants to apply for the federal school improvement grants by March 5, a very quick process. If districts apply for these grants, they must pick one of the four federal intervention models. The process for required action, as proposed by the SBE in its legislation, does not apply to these voluntary “2010” districts. The Required Action Plan process includes additional pieces such as community review of the plan, required renegotiation of collective bargaining contracts, and what happens if there is an impasse, are not a part of this voluntary process. Janell Newman from OSPI will provide an update at the March meeting.

SBE Accountability Index: AYP and Recognition

SBE and OSPI staff will be in Washington DC at the end of March to discuss the SBE Accountability Index with the U.S. Department of Education. We will see if the department is willing to grant us a waiver to use the SBE Accountability Index in place of the current No Child Left Behind system. SBE staff is also following up with congressional staff for consideration in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

SBE and OSPI will jointly recognize schools for their students’ performance on the SBE Accountability Index on May 5, 2010. Details about the schools and the award ceremony will be provided at the March Board meeting. See Attachment A for the award categories.

Performance Goals Legislative Mandate

Educational accountability systems require several components: (1) measures of effectiveness, (2) goals to guide improvement efforts, (3) a set of consequences that recognize exemplary performance and support those needing more help, and (4) reports that provide useful information to policymakers, educators, and parents. The Accountability Index recently approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) addresses the first component, and efforts are underway to provide a more complete set of consequences.¹

¹ Recognition is scheduled to occur in spring 2010 based on results from the Accountability Index over a two year period, and new systems are being designed to assist those with the greatest need.

To address the second component, the legislature requires the SBE to adopt performance goals for Washington schools and districts. This requirement is part of the Board's mandate, as described in *RCW 28A.305.130* (Powers and duties—Purpose). According to this legislation:

SBE shall adopt/revise performance improvement goals in:

- Reading, writing, science, and mathematics, by grade level.
- Academic and technical skills in secondary career and technical education (CTE) programs and student attendance, as the Board deems appropriate.

Goals may be established for:

- Student groups (all, low income, ELL, special education, race/ethnicity.)
- School and district graduation rates and dropout reduction goals for students in grades 7-12.

The Board is to adopt the goals by rule, but before the goals are implemented, the House and Senate education committees of the state legislature must review them.

Current Goals

The only goals currently in place are associated with federal requirements, primarily the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measures related to No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The "state uniform bars" are annual performance goals in reading and math at three grade levels² through 2014, at which time all students are required to meet standard. NCLB also requires that at least 95 percent of all students participate in the state tests. Nine different student groups must meet these goals at the school and district levels. In addition, NCLB requires goals for one more indicator at the different grade levels.³ All the goals must be met each year in order for a school and district to make AYP. Prior to NCLB, the only state goal was to improve grade four reading scores.⁴

Stakeholder Views

At the February 2010 SPA meeting, stakeholders expressed concern about establishing new goals at this time. The stakeholders understand the Board's mandate and were presented with options for new improvement goals in various academic subjects for student subgroups. However, the stakeholders believe the federal ESEA reauthorization process may result in a new set of goals. Moreover, the measures included in the new Accountability Index create another set of metrics that need to be monitored. Stakeholders felt that having too many or conflicting goals will cause frustration and confusion among educators and the public. As a result, the stakeholders recommended that the Board defer establishing improvement goals until there is more information about federal expectations and more clarification about the possible use of the Accountability Index when determining AYP. Stakeholders will continue discussing the topic of improvement goals at its April SPA meeting. See Attachment B for the February SPA meeting notes.

² NCLB requires states to administer state assessments in grades 3-8 and one grade in high school. Results for grades 3-5 are combined to generate elementary school results, and the results for grades in 6-8 are combined to generate middle school results.

³ In Washington, the "other indicators" are the extended graduation rate at the high school level and the unexcused absence rate at the elementary and middle school levels. NCLB requires these goals to be met by the "all students" group, but not the eight student subgroups except when accessing "safe harbor."

⁴ The goal was to reduce the percentage of students not meeting standard by 25% from 1998 to 2001.

Guiding Principles

Regardless of when the Board establishes improvement goals, some general principles should guide the Board's thinking. Specifically, the goals should:

- Be reasonable in number.
- Be challenging, yet attainable.
- Be easy to understand.
- Rely on available data.
- Focus on outcomes for student subgroups as well as for all students combined.
- Reflect improvement from a group's own baseline.
- Meet legislative intent.
- Be consistent with state and federal accountability measures.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

Next Steps for Performance Goals

Staff recommends that the Board wait until ESEA is reauthorized to determine next steps for performance goals in reading, math, and science. Staff recommends that the Board focus on College and Career Readiness goals as part of its Strategic Plan and accountability efforts.

Discussions about the ESEA reauthorization have emphasized a focus on college and career readiness. Given this focus and the Board's examination of a Core 24 framework for high school graduation requirements, it makes sense to consider setting goals that will help students acquire the skills and knowledge they need to be successful after graduation. Recent studies have concluded that the same set of skills and knowledge necessary to be college ready are also those needed to be ready for the workforce. As a result, goals can be established in relatively few areas. Among the options to consider are improvements in the percentage of students who:

- Complete Algebra I by the end of grade nine (an early indicator of high school success).
- Take at least one advanced placement or honors course during the year.
- Enroll in a "dual enrollment" program (e.g., Running Start, Tech Prep, any college courses offered within the high school system).
- Take a college entrance exam (e.g., SAT, ACT, WA math college readiness tests).
- Graduate from high school.
- Graduate with the credits required to enter a four-year public higher education institution in Washington State.
- Attend a two-year or four-year college within six months of graduation.
- Take remedial courses in either math or English in college.
- Complete one year of college credit within one year of high school graduation.
- Obtain a credential within one year after completing a career and technical education (CTE) program.
- Make at least \$10/hour within nine months of graduation.

While goals should be set in only a few of the above areas, data for the other measures can be provided to enhance accountability through public reporting. Data is already available for nearly all of these measures, but have not been made available to the public because there is no requirement to do so. Positive incentives and rewards can also be given for exemplary performance in any of the above areas. In addition, the Board could work with OSPI to provide ways to highlight districts' progress toward these goals on the OSPI Report Card or on the SBE Web site.

Staff would like Board member feedback on how to proceed with selecting some of the college and career ready goals to pursue. Staff will then work with the SPA group on examining the data for these goals and options for how to use the goals in our accountability efforts. This will involve selecting appropriate goals for schools and districts to reach in a designated period of time (e.g., a ten percent increase in the next three years).

EXPECTED ACTION

None.

The Washington Achievement Award

Providing recognition using data from the Accountability Index results is considered “Phase I” in the implementation of the new state accountability system. The recognition component of the Accountability Index is the Washington Achievement Award. The Washington Achievement Award relies mainly on criterion-based measures and provides multiple ways to demonstrate success. The State Board of Education and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction have approved using data used to generate the Accountability Index for recognition purposes.

Outstanding Overall Performance

- For schools whose overall 2-year average⁵ puts them in the top five percent⁶ (in four levels: elementary, middle/junior, high and comprehensive). Schools must have at least 10 cells of the matrix rated each year and fewer than 10% students designated as gifted each year to be considered.⁷

Special Recognition

- Schools will also receive recognition for being top performers in:
 1. Language arts (reading and writing combined)
 2. Math
 3. Science
 4. Extended Graduation rate
 5. Gifted Education
 - For **language arts** (reading and writing combined), **math**, **science**, and the **extended graduation rate**, the overall (column) 2-year average is at least 6.00, at least 2 of the 4 cells in the column are rated each year, and there are fewer than 10% students designated as gifted each year. For language arts, both reading and writing must have a 2-year average of at least 6.00 and at least 2 of the cells rated in each column each year.
 - For **gifted education**, any school that has at least 10% gifted students in both years, a 2-year peer average of at least 6.00, and at least 2 cells rated in the peer row each year.⁸

Awards for closing the achievement gap will be provided in next year’s recognition program.

⁵ For purposes of recognition ‘2-year average’ refers to the average of the 2008 and 2009 indexes.

⁶ For purposes of recognition ‘five percent’ refers to five percent of total schools at that level in the 2009 index.

⁷ For purposes of recognition when a tie occurs at the five percent cut off, all schools with that score will be recognized.

⁸ Results for the peer indicators control for the types of students attending the school (percent gifted, low income, ELL, special education and mobile). This ensures schools with the highest concentrations of gifted students do not automatically receive recognition.

**Systems Performance Accountability (SPA) Notes
February 9, 2010**

Attendees: Kris Mayer, Phyllis Bunker Frank, Amy Bragdon, Bob Hughes, Bob Harmon, Gayle Pauley, George Juarez, Mary Alice Heuschel, Janell Newman, Karen Davis, Bill Williams, Phil Brockman, Caroline King, Martha Rice, Pete Bylsma, Edie Harding, Bill Porter

Overview:

Edie Harding went over the SPA work plan for 2010 which includes the following tasks:

- Work with OSPI (and national groups) to request the U.S. Department of Education to use the provisional state Accountability Index when making AYP decisions, beginning with results generated in the 2010-2011 school year (we realize we may need to adapt our Accountability Index to meet federal expectations).
- Develop performance goals on student achievement (new work in 2010).
- Develop college and career readiness goals as part of the performance goals.
- Revise school and district improvement plan rules (new work in 2010).
- Consider SBE Report Card indicators on topics such as college and career readiness (new work in 2010).
- Examine how the prototypical school model could be used in a system of accountability (new work in 2010, as required by ESHB 2261).

Edie provided an update to the current Education Reform Package, which includes the Board's Required Action Legislation under SB 6696 and HB 3038. These bills would provide a state/local partnership for districts designated as "Required Action Districts" with schools that fall within the lowest five percent of persistently lowest achieving schools to develop a plan to implement one of the four federal turnaround models for those schools using federal funds. The plan must be developed with staff and community input as well as findings from an OSPI Academic Audit. The collective bargaining agreements must address the implementation issues identified in the plan. There is a provision for impasse through mediation or a final court decision if the local parties cannot agree. If the district does not submit a plan, OSPI may reallocate the district's Title I dollars based upon the audit findings. Districts will have three years to develop and implement their plans.

Pete Bylsma provided an update on the recognition for schools using the new SBE Accountability Index; OSPI is running the latest numbers. The recognition ceremony will be May 5, 2010. Pete also discussed the Board's recent action to amend the SBE Accountability Index to exclude English Language Learners (ELL) from the first three years of enrollment from being included for purposes of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The Board did however request the Superintendent of Public Instruction to post Washington Language Proficiency Test (WLPT) results on the OSPI Report Card and to link WLPT and content tests for AYP purposes.

Pete discussed the legislative requirement to the SBE to adopt performance goals in reading, writing, science, and math. Goals could also be developed around student groups, school/district

graduation rates, and dropout reduction goals. He presented potential proposed goals for districts based on a 33 percent reduction in not meeting goals in reading, writing, math, and science every four years beginning in 2010.

The SPA workgroup members expressed concern about establishing new goals at this time. The stakeholders understand the Board's mandate and were presented with options for new improvement goals in various academic subjects for student subgroups. However, the stakeholders believe the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left B) reauthorization process may result in a new set of goals. Moreover, the measures included in the new Accountability Index create another set of metrics. Stakeholders felt that having too many, or conflicting, goals will cause frustration and confusion among educators and the public. As a result, the stakeholders recommended that the Board defer establishing improvement goals until there is more information about federal expectations and more clarification about the possible use of the Accountability Index when determining AYP. Stakeholders will continue discussing the topic of improvement goals at its April SPA meeting.

Bill Porter, from Achieve, presented some suggestions for measuring and incentivizing college and career readiness. He discussed the current accountability systems, which focus on consequences rather than incentives. He provided information on evolving accountability systems, which encompass: 1) college and career readiness is central, 2) assessment is part of the broader array of indicators, 3) low-performing schools are differentiated and diagnosed, and 4) combination of consequences with positive incentive and support.

Bill provided a range of uses for college and career ready indicators (as well as some examples) that include: 1) core school and district accountability determinations, 2) statewide performance goals, 3) public reporting, and 4) positive incentives and rewards. Hawaii has a very interesting report card on college and career readiness indicators, which Bill shared.

Bill also defined some key indicators for college and career readiness: 1) earning a college and career ready diploma, 2) scoring college ready on a high school assessment, 3) earning college credit while in high school, and 4) requiring remedial coursework upon entering college. He suggested using our state end of course exams to add questions for students, to determine if they are on a college level path.

SPA workgroup members discussed ways to use college and career readiness indicators. One way would be to use the math college readiness tests developed by our higher education institutions to give to all junior level students so they could see if they were ready for college math. The legislature did not provide the funds to implement this assessment. Another set of measures can be through OFM, which is adding apprenticeship information as well as employment wages for high school graduates. The military has an entrance level test that might be worth looking at as an indicator too. The group discussed that what gets counted gets done so we should be thoughtful about the indicators. They also discussed the importance of talking to parents about what their students need for careers. The group felt we needed to include a way to measure students being "on track" in elementary and middle school.

The SPA workgroup laid out four ways to move forward: 1) determine how to signal college and career readiness, 2) define what is college and career, 3) make a better accountability system; and 4) understand the data we have in place.

Eddie provided an update on Race to the Top. The RTTT requirements for 50 points for addressing low performing schools include: 1) intervention authority by the state to intervene in the lowest

achieving schools and 2) a high quality plan to identify the lowest achieving schools and support districts in turning around their lowest performing schools.

She shared draft concepts that OSPI has proposed for Low Performing Schools which include: 1) serving additional districts and schools that might include schools in the lowest ten percent that are Title 1 eligible, 2) cluster similar schools for specific professional development and support, 3) create a cadre of turnaround teachers and principals, 4) create a list of education management organizations to support turnaround models, 5) provide professional development for educators in effective instructional practices.

Eddie distributed sample RTTT applications from four states: Tennessee, Florida, Illinois, and Colorado for their proposals on low performing schools. Work group members were asked to examine the four proposals and describe features they liked best. Illinois had specific timelines and goals for improvement, addressed feeder patterns, and had an interesting dropout retrieval program. Colorado had entrepreneurial nimbleness and was training lots of people to be “transformative” leaders. Tennessee was focusing intensively on 13 schools in a state run district. Florida had created regional super heroes to work with its lowest achieving schools. It also focuses on ways to ensure cultural competency as well as college and career readiness goals in instruction. SPA members were encouraged to provide feedback to Eddie on the Washington proposed initiatives for low performing schools by Friday, February 12.

The next SPA meeting will be April 13 at the Puget Sound ESD from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. which will cover the following topics:

- Update on progress with Feds on SBE Accountability Index (Eddie, Bob H., and Pete).
- Proposed performance goals and career/college readiness goals and indicators (Pete) and SPA feedback.
- State data and report cards (OSPI, SBE, and OFM).
- School and district improvement plans (Janell/OSPI and Brad) and SPA feedback.
- Accountability using the prototypical schools model (Pete).
- Update Race to the Top Initiatives (Eddie and Janell).

Outcomes:

Prepare revisions to SBE rule on school and district improvement plans for SBE consideration in summer/fall. Prepare response to legislature on prototype schools. Take feedback to Board on performance goals and Race to the Top initiatives.