

**RECOGNITION FOR ACHIEVEMENT GAP AWARDS AND  
SPECIAL RECOGNITION FOR IMPROVEMENT AWARD**

**BACKGROUND**

Using the State Board of Education's Accountability Index, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education (SBE) recognized 174 schools through their new joint recognition program "Washington Achievement Awards" on May 5. There were six possible awards: one for overall excellence as well as five special recognition awards: language arts (reading and writing combined), math, science, the extended graduation rate and gifted programs. While we planned to recognize schools that closed the socioeconomic achievement gap, the criteria established to receive this award ended up being too stringent, so no schools met the criteria and no recognition was given.

Senate Bill 6696, from the 2010 Legislative Session, requires the State Board of Education to have ongoing collaboration with the Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee regarding measures used to compute the achievement gap and recognition for schools that close their achievement gaps.

Pete Bylsma, SBE Consultant, shared a preliminary draft of options with our System Performance Accountability (SPA) Work Group on April 13. They recommended two awards for closing the achievement gap: one for socioeconomics and one for race/ethnicity. In addition, they recommended that no school should receive an overall excellence if that school has a socioeconomic or racial/ethnic achievement gap.

The SPA work group recommended several other changes:

- 1) There should be a special recognition for improvement added to the special recognition awards. No changes would need to be made to the SBE Accountability Index to add this award.
- 2) Schools that receive multiple years of awards should be highlighted in the award ceremony.

**POLICY CONSIDERATION**

OSPI and the SBE want to find a method to provide recognition next year for schools that have reduced or closed the achievement gap. Attached is Pete Bylsma's memo with a proposal to determine two kinds of awards for closing the achievement gap: one for socioeconomics and one for race/ethnicity. The Board will be asked for its feedback on this proposal and staff will meet with the Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee, as well as the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction staff, to obtain their thoughts before bringing a final recommendation to the Board in July.

**EXPECTED ACTION**

Feedback only. No final action until July 2010 Board meeting.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACHIEVEMENT GAP RECOGNITION

Pete Bylsma, EdD, MPA

May 13, 2010

### BACKGROUND

OSPI and State Board of Education (SBE) provided recognition to schools in six areas in March 2010. The Outstanding Overall Performance award was given to schools whose 2-year Accountability Index average put them in the top 5%, based on the number of schools in each of the four grade levels (elementary, middle/junior, high, comprehensive). Special Recognition awards were given to schools for high performance (a 2-year “column” average of at least 6.00) in four areas: **language arts** (reading and writing combined), **math**, **science**, and the **extended graduation rate**. These five awards required fewer than 10% of the students to be gifted each year. To ensure schools with a gifted program were not excluded, Special Recognition was also given to **schools with a gifted program** (i.e., those with  $\geq 10\%$  gifted each year) that had a 2-year peer average of at least 6.00.

The matrix used to calculate the Accountability Index is shown below. The green cells relate to areas where recognition was given. Additional criteria used for these awards and details about the winners are shown in Appendix A.

	Outcomes					
Indicator	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Ext. Grad. Rate	Average
<i>Non-low inc. achievement</i>						
<i>Low inc. ach.</i>						
<i>Ach. vs. peers</i>						<b>6.00*</b> for gifted
<i>Improvement</i>						
Average	<b>6.00*</b>	<b>6.00*</b>	<b>6.00*</b>	<b>6.00*</b>	<b>6.00*</b>	<b>Top 5%*</b>

\* Minimum 2-year average rating to earn recognition

↑  
**INDEX**

OSPI/SBE had planned to recognize schools that had closed the achievement gap. However, the criteria established to receive this award ended up being too stringent, so no schools met the criteria and no recognition was given.<sup>1</sup> OSPI/SBE want to find a method to provide recognition next year for schools that have reduced or closed the achievement gap.

<sup>1</sup> The initial criteria established to earn recognition for closing the achievement gap was rather complicated. It required a school to have at least 10 students in at least 2 of the 5 outcomes (columns) in both of the income-related cells (non-low income and low income), there could be no rating of 1 in any income-related cell or peer cell, there could be no more than a 1-point difference in the rating between the two income-related cells (e.g., if the reading non-low income cell is rated 5, the reading low-income cell could be rated no lower than 4 and no higher than 6), and there had to be fewer than

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Two types of Special Recognition should be given that relate to the achievement gap. Both are criteria-referenced, so they are similar to the other types of Special Recognition.

- Use the Accountability Index matrix to measure the achievement gap in terms of performance by students with different *socioeconomic status* (SES).
- Use the modified matrix created to examine subgroup results to measure the achievement gap in terms of performance by various *racial/ethnic groups*.

Details for each type of recognition are provided below.

**Socioeconomic Gap** Examine the difference in the averages of the non-low income and the low income rows (see yellow cells of the matrix below). The following minimum criteria should apply:

1. The 2-year average for each row must be at least 4.00;
2. The Accountability Index must be at least 4.00 each year;
3. At least 2 of the 5 cells in the row must be rated each year; and
4. There must be fewer than 10% students designated as gifted each year.

	Outcomes					
Indicator	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Ext. Grad. Rate	Average
<i>Non-low inc. achievement</i>						Compare ↑ ↓
<i>Low inc. ach.</i>						
<i>Ach. vs. peers</i>						
<i>Improvement</i>						
Average						

***Give recognition to any school that has a difference between the row averages of less than 1 in both years.<sup>2</sup>***

If the above criteria were used in 2009, 30 schools would have been recognized in 2009 (18 elementary, 2 middle, 7 high, 3 comprehensive). This represents 1.4% of schools statewide. This type of recognition has the advantage of relying on the same Index matrix that is used for the other awards. It also recognizes that the achievement gap is driven primarily by differences in socioeconomic status.

---

10% students designated as gifted each year. Each of the above criteria had to be met two years in a row. Original estimates found that less than 1% of schools met these criteria using 2007 and 2008 data.

<sup>2</sup> This includes when the low income row has a higher rating than the non-low income row.

Racial/Ethnic Gap Examine the average size of the gap between the four groups that have historically underperformed (American Indian, Black, Hispanic, Pacific Islanders) and the two groups that have historically performed at higher levels (Asian, White).<sup>3</sup> This type of recognition uses concepts in the modified matrix that was developed to examine subgroup results for possible AYP use. This matrix uses the same concepts as the Accountability Index<sup>4</sup> but includes only the outcomes used for federal accountability (reading, math, extended graduation rate) and combines the two income-related indicators. A “row average” is calculated for each subgroup, as shown in the table below for a hypothetical high school.<sup>5</sup> The following minimum criteria should apply:

1. The 2-year average for each row must be at least 3.50;
2. At least 4 of the 9 cells in the row must be rated each year; and
3. There must be fewer than 10% students designated as gifted each year in the school.

Subgroup	READING			MATH			EXT. GRAD. RATE			Average rating	Change from previous year
	Met Std. (All stud.)	Peers	Improve.	Met Std. (All stud.)	Peers	Improve.	Met Std. (All stud.)	Peers	Improve.		
American Indian	4	4	4	1	5	4	1	4	4	3.44	0.33
Black	3	3	3	1	3	5	1	3	2	2.67	-1.00
Hispanic	3	4	4	1	4	4	1	4	4	3.22	-0.11
Pacific Islander	4	4	4	1	5	4	1	4	4	3.44	0.22
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.17</b>	<b>-0.17</b>
White	5	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	3.78	-0.22
Asian	6	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	6	4.78	0.56
<b>Average</b>	<b>5.50</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>4.50</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>4.28</b>	<b>0.17</b>

Compare these

***Give recognition to any school that has less than a .50 difference between the row averages in two consecutive years.***

Results for the racial/ethnic subgroups have not yet been computed, so the number of schools that would have been recognized using these criteria is not yet known. In the above example, the school would not receive recognition because (a) some of the row averages fall below 3.5 and (b) the difference between the average ratings for the two groups is more than .50 (the difference in this year was 1.11, or 4.28 – 3.17). Although this type of recognition is more complicated, it has the advantage of focusing on the achievement gap that has historically existed between the various racial/ethnic groups.

### Using Achievement Gap Criteria for Other Awards

Another way to reinforce the importance of closing the achievement gap is to apply an additional criterion for the other types of recognition. For example, for a school to be recognized for *Overall Outstanding Performance* because it has an Accountability Index in the top 5%, the size of the gap between the two socioeconomic groups could not be larger than 2. Of the 108 schools that were recognized this year for *Overall Outstanding Performance*, 25 had a gap between their non-low income and low income group averages that was larger than 2.

<sup>3</sup> Looking at the results of the special education or ELL groups is not recommended because students in these groups are included in the other groups.

<sup>4</sup> For example, both use the same minimum N, benchmarks, and ratings, the results are combined across grades, and no margin of error is used.

<sup>5</sup> This example reflects at least 10 students in each subgroup. In reality, no school has at least 10 students in every group.

## APPENDIX A – CURRENT RECOGNITION SYSTEM

In March 2010 OSPI and State Board of Education announced the winners in the new recognition system based on the Accountability Index. Recognition was given to schools in six areas.

- The Outstanding Overall Performance award was given to schools whose 2-year Accountability Index average put them in the top 5%, based on the number of schools in each of the four grade levels: elementary, middle/junior, high and comprehensive.<sup>6</sup> Each year schools had to have at least 10 cells of the 20-cell matrix rated and fewer than 10% students designated as gifted to be considered.
- Special Recognition awards were given to schools for high performance in **language arts** (reading and writing combined), **math**, **science**, and **extended graduation rate**. To receive this award, a school's overall (column) 2-year average was at least 6.00, at least 2 of the 4 cells in the column were rated each year, and there were fewer than 10% students designated as gifted each year.<sup>7</sup>
- The above awards required fewer than 10% of the students to be gifted each year. To ensure schools with gifted program would not be excluded, special recognition for a separate award was established.<sup>8</sup> **Schools with a gifted program** (i.e., those with at least 10% gifted each year) received recognition when their 2-year average peer (row) ratings was at least 6.00.<sup>9</sup>

The table below shows how many schools received recognition in 2009. A total of 108 schools received the Outstanding Overall Performance award. Different index scores were required at each grade level because this award was given to the top 5%. A total of 125 awards were given for meeting the Special Recognition criteria. A total of 174 different schools received recognition in 233 areas, and 48 schools received recognition in more than one category.

Grade Band	# in top 5%	Index cut-off	Total awards
Elementary	53	5.280	70
Middle	19	4.875	26
High	20	4.910	52
Multiple	16	4.735	26
Total	108		174

Focus	Total awards
Lang. Arts	36
Math	10
Science	24
Grad rate	35
Gifted	20
Total	125

<sup>6</sup> The "2-year average" refers to the average of data from 2008 and 2009. The top 5% is based on the total schools at that level in the 2009 index (this includes schools that did not receive an index).

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> Statewide, roughly 3% of all students receive this designation, so schools with 10% or more gifted students have much higher concentrations of highly capable students. The exclusion criterion prevents a school from receiving recognition simply because of its student composition.

<sup>9</sup> Results for the peer indicators control for the types of students attending the school (the percent gifted, low income, ELL, special education, and mobile).