

BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM COMPLIANCE

BACKGROUND

School districts are required to show compliance with the Basic Education entitlement requirements (pursuant to WAC 180-16-191 through WAC 180-16-225) and the minimum high school graduation requirements. School districts demonstrate compliance by submitting a completed SPI Form 1497 to the State Board of Education (SBE) by the first Monday in November of each school year.

Evergreen School District

The Evergreen School District in Clark County was one of about 30 districts that missed the due date this year. Each year, SBE staff catalog the received forms and contact the districts that missed the deadline to request the forms. At some point this year, staff did not catalog that Evergreen's form was missing. Staff may have inadvertently credited a fax or email copy from the Evergreen School District in Stevens County as belonging to the Clark County district.

Staff did discover the error but it was after the January 2010 meeting and the Board's certification of all districts compliance with the requirements. Subsequently, SBE staff and counsel have determined that the certification of all school districts' compliance could not have included the Evergreen School District (Clark County) because the district had not provided the required documentation before the Board's action. Therefore, SBE will consider the certification of compliance for the Evergreen School District (Clark) at the May 2010, Regular Board meeting.

Constituent's Concern

Mark Rossmiller provided the State Board of Education with a document entitled "Report of School District Non-Compliance with Basic Education Requirements" in which he expressed concern about the accuracy of the Evergreen School District's (Clark County) affidavit of compliance with the Basic Education requirements outlined in Chapter 28A.150 RCW for the 2009-10 school year.

Review of Evergreen School District's Documentation and Process

During a review of the district's documentation and process, SBE staff discovered that some of the original documents sent to SBE were incomplete or inaccurate. Eight of the thirty-one school schedules initially submitted to SBE were missing values for the beginning or ending of the school day or had values that were inconsistent with values used in the district's calculation of instructional hours. Most of the differences between the documents and the values in the calculations were five minutes per day, which equates to approximately 15 hours of instruction over the course of a school year.

SBE staff requested follow-up documentation from the district for the schedules in question. The follow-up documents provided clear information that coincided with the district's original calculations, except for one instance. One school's schedule had a start time for early-release days that was 30 minutes later than the value used by the district in the calculations. As a part of the review, SBE staff redid the calculations for instructional hours using all of the lower values

that were provided in the original documents. These calculations produced a district-wide annual average of instructional hours that still exceeded the state's minimum requirements.

As a result of the recalculation and the review, SBE staff has determined that the district's affidavit is accurate and that their education program is in compliance with basic education allocation entitlement requirements, pursuant to WAC 180-16-191 through WAC 180-16-225.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

- SBE staff recommends that the Board certify that the Evergreen School District (Clark County) is in compliance with basic education allocation entitlement requirements, pursuant to WAC 180-16-191 through WAC 180-16-225, for the 2009–10 school year. The Evergreen School District has submitted SPI Form 1497 showing compliance with the Basic Education entitlement requirements and staff has validated their process of determining compliance and the accuracy of their affidavit.

- Staff recommends setting up a schedule to review the rules associated with BEA compliance reporting. Due to the passage of ESHB 2261 last session, some of the basic education statutes will be revised on September 1, 2011. These revisions will require SBE to revise some of its rules. For this reason and due to the recent review of Evergreen School District's documentation, staff recommends that the following elements be part of the review:
 - Design of the submission form.
 - Total instructional hours and guidelines for calculating the average hours.
 - Minimum back-up documentation to be provided with form.
 - Cost analysis for implementing "on-site monitoring visits of randomly selected school districts, as needed and subject to funding support" (WAC 180-16-195).

EXPECTED ACTION

SBE certification of the Evergreen School District's (Clark County) compliance with basic education allocation entitlement requirements, pursuant to WAC 180-16-191 through WAC 180-16-225, for the 2009–10 school year.