



# THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Governance | Accountability | Achievement | Oversight | Career & College Readiness

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Roundtable Discussion with PESB — Working Lunch Session</b>	
<b>As Related To:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Goal One: Effective and accountable P-13 governance. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Two: Comprehensive statewide K-12 accountability. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Three: Closing achievement gap.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Four: Strategic oversight of the K-12 system. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Five: Career and college readiness for all students. <input type="checkbox"/> Other
<b>Relevant To Board Roles:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy Leadership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> System Oversight <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Convening and Facilitating
<b>Policy Considerations / Key Questions:</b>	How can the state's accountability framework support the development and implementation of best practices in attracting, retaining, and support high quality educators in struggling schools?	
<b>Possible Board Action:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt <input type="checkbox"/> Approve <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
<b>Materials Included in Packet:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Memo <input type="checkbox"/> Graphs / Graphics <input type="checkbox"/> Third-Party Materials <input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint	
<b>Synopsis:</b>	<p>The State Board of Education (SBE) continues to work toward the development of a school and district accountability framework for the state. In particular, the Board is providing guidance to OSPI in its development of specific delivery models to support struggling schools identified through the process established in Senate Bill 5329.</p> <p>Essential to any school improvement plan are strategies to attract, retain, and support high quality teachers. This lunch discussion will focus on efforts underway within OSPI to support effective teaching in struggling schools. Andy Kelly and Jeanne Harmon, both from OSPI, will offer thoughts to structure a joint discussion between the SBE and the PSEB on this topic. Ms. Kim Mead, the new president of the Washington Education Association, has been invited to participate in the discussion as well.</p> <p>A PESB report on Educator Workforce Regional Meetings is available in the online board packet materials at <a href="http://www.sbe.wa.gov/materials.php">www.sbe.wa.gov/materials.php</a></p>	



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- What: Joint Working Lunch Session – Roundtable Discussion Between the Professional Educator Standards Board and the State Board of Education
- Panelists: Andy Kelly, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Student and School Success
- Jeanne Harmon, Teacher/Principal Evaluation (TPEP) Project Manager - OSPI
- Invited Guest: Kim Mead, President, Washington Education Association
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## Abstract:

Last year, the two boards had a discussion about educator workforce development practices, and, in particular, how data on teacher assignment, hiring practices, out-of-endorsement teaching, and other factors can help inform policy on educator workforce development across the state.

The Boards discussed strategies individually and collaboratively for moving the needle on improving district staffing and workforce development practices, including:

- Secure better predictive data for districts to project enrollment and hiring need and incentives to use them;
- Address real and perceived barriers to recruitment and earlier hiring, including enrollment uncertainty that makes early hiring a financial risk;
- Consider the role of training and technical assistance in staffing and workforce development for low performing schools
- Consider staffing and workforce development in the criteria to be addressed in improvement plans by required action districts.
- Consider out-of-field assignment data and its role in school and district accountability.

Since last year, the legislature enacted Senate Bill 5329, a bill that strengthens the required action district process and gives the superintendent of public instruction a direct role in helping struggling school districts succeed. For our panel discussion, the two Boards will explore how the state could employ innovative solutions to the challenges of workforce development and retention in struggling schools and districts.

**Andy Kelly**, from OSPI's Office of Student and School Success, and **Jeanne Harmon**, Teacher/Principal Evaluation Project Manager at OSPI, will offer reflections to begin a discussion among the Boards on the question: "how can the state's accountability framework for schools incorporate innovative workforce development strategies to ensure the highest quality educators for our struggling schools?"



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In particular, Mr. Kelly will speak to OSPI's work on operationalizing the federal 'turnaround principles' to diagnose and address the teaching needs of struggling schools as part of OSPI accountability system design required in Senate Bill 5329. He will touch on the data indicators that are used to diagnose these challenges, and strategies district and building leaders can use to address them.

Jeanne Harmon will discuss how a variety of initiatives currently underway in our state – including enhanced compensation for national board certified teachers, TPEP evaluation system implementation, and others – relate to and can support efforts to support our most struggling schools.

A PESB report on Educator Workforce Regional Meetings is available in the online board packet materials at [www.sbe.wa.gov/materials.php](http://www.sbe.wa.gov/materials.php)

## Structure:

Ben Rarick & Jennifer Wallace: Introduction and Discussion (10 minutes combined)

Andy Kelly & Jeanne Harmon: Opening Remarks (40 minutes combined)

Open Discussion w/ Panelists  
& Invited Guest: Discussion and Next Steps (40 minutes)

## Potential outcomes:

- Modifications to the state accountability system design to support struggling schools and/or districts.
- Modifications to the data that is collected and analyzed on workforce recruitment and retention, particularly in working with required action districts and schools being served by the Office of Student and School Success.
- Modifications to state statute or policy on workforce development practices

## Educator Workforce Regional Meetings

### A Report to the Governor and Washington State Legislature on the Status of Requirements in SB 6696, 2010 Legislative Session

*“Beginning with the 2010 school year and annually thereafter, each educational service district, in cooperation with the professional educator standards board, must convene representatives from school districts within that region and professional educator standards board-approved educator preparation programs to review district and regional educator workforce data, make biennial projections of certificated staff needs, and identify how recruitment and enrollment plans in educator preparation programs reflect projected need.” - E2SB 6696, 2010 Legislative Session*

#### Background

Critical to the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) successfully meeting its responsibility of maintaining a high quality system of educator preparation and certification is ensuring we are producing an educator workforce responsive to school and district needs. This requires a clear picture of their needs today and well into the future in order to inform and influence the pipeline of future educators with recruitment and enrollment strategies. In recent years, PESB data have demonstrated the need to strengthen the connection between supply and demand, requiring a more strategic approach rooted in better projections of district hiring needs and practices. In addition, a growing body of research points to the advantages of tighter connections between educator preparation programs and school districts as highly beneficial not only to development of a district's future workforce, but to their current school and student learning improvement efforts as well.<sup>1</sup>

The PESB convened a planning and oversight committee for this project consisting of representatives from Educational Service Districts (ESDs), the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB), Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA), Washington School Personnel Administrators Association (WSPA), and the Office of Financial Management's Education Research and Data Center (ERDC). In addition, the committee engaged the expertise of University of Washington's Center for Study of Teaching and Policy for their focus on developing human capital in schools and districts and the reallocation of staffing and other resource to support learning improvement.

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<sup>1</sup> Barry, B.; Montgomery, D., Curtis, R., Hernandez, M., Wurtzel, J., & Snyder, J. (2008). *Creating and Sustaining Urban Teacher Residencies: A New Way to Recruit, Prepare and Retain Effective Teachers in High-Needs Districts*. Carrboro, NC: Center for Teaching Quality.

Goldhaber, D., & Liddle S. (2011). *The Gateway to the Profession: Assessing Teacher Preparation Programs Based on Student Achievement*. Bothell, WA: Center for Education Data and Research, University of Washington Bothell.

Humphrey, D., Wechsler, M., Hough, H. (2008). Characteristics of Effective Alternative Certification Programs. *Teachers College Record*. Vol. 110, No. 4. New York, NY: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Darling-Hammond, L., Sykes, G. (2003). Wanted: A National Teacher Supply Policy for Education: The Right Way to Meet the “Highly Qualified Teacher” Challenge. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*. Vol. 11, No. 33. Retrieved 12/27/11 from <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v11n33/>.

The oversight committee prepared a strategy for convening districts regionally to examine and confirm challenges districts encounter in hiring and determine next steps in meeting the requirements of SB 6696. The PESB assumed responsibility for developing content for, and facilitation of, the regional meetings, while ESDs assumed responsibility for inviting and convening school districts in their region.

## Regional Meetings

Beginning in May of 2011, each ESD selected a date to host the first of the legislatively-mandated annual meetings of their districts at the ESD. Appendix A contains a sample invitation letter and agenda for the 2-4 hour workshops, each an opportunity to learn more about recruitment and hiring processes, challenges and potential solutions. Scheduling meetings posed considerable difficulty; ESDs indicated hesitancy in pressing on district attendance given the current economic challenges faced by school districts. Even with considerable effort, turnout at regional meetings was extremely low in most regions and was the first indication that the project would not result in the desired outcome of the legislation. Appendix B contains the list of districts in attendance at each regional meeting.

Attendance by representatives from educator preparation programs at the regional meetings was significant, indicating a strong interest in creating partnerships with districts to address the production of educators that are best prepared to meet district demand.

Despite low district turnout, the facilitated discussions did yield important results. Districts shared, and PESB and preparation programs in attendance gained insights about, typical hiring practices and barriers to early recruitment and hiring. It was apparent that most districts still conduct late hiring<sup>2</sup>, lack reliable projections of their need, have uncertainty about the potential pool and /or sources of their future employees, and have minimal focus on workforce development. The literature on workforce development notes that careful approaches to hiring reduce training costs, increases retention, and improves productivity<sup>3</sup>. This is supported in the literature for most industries; the literature on education workforce development is less robust, but also points to the need to plan long-term, select workers that “fit” in the scheme of the hiring authority, and reflect that values and skills that contribute to the goals of the hiring authority.

Because of low district turnout at the regional meetings, PESB determined that a state-wide survey of districts would be required to confirm the information provided by those that attended. The PESB also determined that, even though not required, this report to the Legislature would be prepared and that the projects first year deliverable of district hiring projections be delayed. Although the PESB was not charged with collection of district or regional reports on workforce projections, we recognized that district compliance would be minimal. Therefore, the PESB determined that it would submit a report

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<sup>2</sup> For purpose of this report, late hiring is defined as candidate selection that occurs within 30-days of the beginning of a school year

<sup>3</sup> The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2005). *Things to remember during the teacher hiring season*. Washington, DC: Author.

Liu, E. (2005). *Hiring, job satisfaction, and the fit between new teachers and their schools*. Cambridge, MA: The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

Liue, E. & Johnson, S.M. (2006). New teachers' experiences of hiring: Late, rushed, and information-poor. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42(3), 324-360.

Plecki, M; Alejano,C; Knapp, M; & Lochmiller, C. (2006). *Allocating Resrouces and Creating Incentives to Improve Teaching and Learning*. Seattle, WA: Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy.

Wellins, R.S. & Schweyer, A. (nd) *Talent management in motion – Keeping up with an evolving workforce*. Washington, DC: Human Capital Institute / Development Dimensions International.

outlining findings from the first-year regional dialogues and follow-up survey, with implications for legislative and PESB response and the future of this legislative charge.

## Survey

The survey to districts was developed in a web environment for ease of completion and automated submission. The survey consisted of two parts. In the first part, respondents were asked 16 questions that confirmed the findings of the regional meetings on the status of hiring practices at the district level. The statements were crafted from the information discussed in the regional meetings, asking survey respondents to confirm what was heard. Most survey statements were confirmed. Respondents were also given the opportunity to comment on the statement, in particular if their response was to disagree with the statement.

In the second part of the survey, districts were provided the option of projecting hires for the upcoming school year by teacher endorsement area. The PESB only asked about teacher hiring; not administrator, Educational Staff Associate, or classified staff. Since it had been determined that projections of staff (teacher) need were not commonly done and created significant challenges, the PESB decided to make the projections optional. SB 6696 calls for these projections to be reported through Educational Service Districts, but district compliance is expected to be low.

## Survey Results

District response rate to the survey was low; less than 30% provided response. Coupled with non-duplicated count of 50 districts in attendance, the meetings and survey provided input from just over 40% of districts. However, the survey did provide response and commentary that confirmed the information shared at the regional meetings. Key findings include:

1. Although early hiring is best practice, the current system includes financial risks that create a disincentive for early hiring.
2. Districts would benefit from greater state-level assistance in estimating enrollment and employment trends.
3. Districts would like strong partnerships with teacher preparation programs, but relatively few have pursued this or view it as among their priorities;
4. Districts would like to see more qualified candidates per opening, especially in the fields of STEM, Special Education, English Language Learners, and health-related Educational Staff Associates roles, such as Speech-Language Pathologists and School Psychologists.
5. The “highly-qualified” requirements of the Federal No Child Left Behind Act are a primary driver in screening teaching applicants.
6. Districts agree that there is room for improvement in their workforce development strategies, but are uncertain as to specific steps and resources.

These findings are discussed in greater detail below, followed by implications and recommendations for state policymakers. Overall, the combined results of the district meetings (51 districts) and the responses to the survey (69 districts) paint a picture of a system that meets the demands of the workforce needs in a varied, inconsistent manner and often lacks a comprehensive strategy.

## Hiring Challenges

Hiring is an annual challenge for most districts. This is true even in small districts with low turnover and current statewide reductions in hiring due to economic conditions, and it is driven by uncertainty

that most districts feel unable to address. Highest on the list of uncertainty is enrollment. Enrollment drives apportionment, which in turn funds positions. So in a medium to small district in particular, uncertainty results in high risk to hire. It should be noted that small school provisions are made in the operating budget each year setting a base of instructional staff for small schools with graduated increases until a threshold is reached. Schools of over 300 students are treated the same in the apportionment model. Those allotments can change in each fiscal year by legislation.

Since teacher contracts are binding requirements for expenditure, there is a disincentive to hire early for fear of letting more contracts than can be supported in enrollment. Some districts contract for consultant time to construct projections based on available local data to arrive at some comfort level with hiring, but even with reduced risk and some certainty about a minimum level of workforce need, most districts still finalize contracts for new hires in August or September when they “see the whites of their eyes.”

The survey confirmed what was heard in regional meetings; that although 85% would prefer to hire earlier, the current budget allocations tied to enrollment figures that are unavailable/unpredictable until school opens is problematic. Two survey questions addressing the relationship between enrollment, fiscal risk and hiring were all strongly supported in responses. The questions were varied in the description of the funding challenge; one framed the challenge as financial risk, the other described late hiring as a result of enrollment uncertainty.

*We lose quality candidates because of how late we need to hire due to layoff/recall and funding uncertainties.*  
- District representative

Responses to both survey statements strongly concur that enrollment/funding was a barrier to early hiring. Comments at the regional gatherings and 79% of district survey responses confirmed the tendency of districts to view early hiring as risky. Few statements

spoke of viable means for risk mitigation, however, rather accepting it as the reality of the system. As expressed in one superintendent’s written comment, “. . . but there’s nothing we can do about it.” We found little district reference or discussion of past patterns of hiring as a consideration in assuming risk. The PESB found numerous examples of districts with long-standing stable patterns of hiring in certain endorsement areas that were still unwilling to hire prior to annual enrollment and funding certainty.

The other uncertainty districts face is aligning the “master schedule” of courses offered to the incoming class of students that requires assignment of specifically qualified and endorsed teachers. While most districts reported significantly more applicants per position than are needed, federal “highly qualified” (HQ) requirements, and state requirements for endorsement and assignment requires district human resource staff spend considerable time and energy screening large pools for those with qualifications that match positions the district anticipates will be required, even while recognizing that the size and configuration of the newly enrolled student body may change. Most districts reported that they first sort applicants by HQ requirements and endorsement, then forward eligible candidates to principals for consideration. Time consuming and costly, the process may unintentionally screen out teachers that might be a better fit, but without the credentials that are being immediately sought within the late, and time-constrained hiring process.

By August, districts are scrambling to finalize a master schedule, confirm actual enrollment and bring new teachers on board; what a representative from the state superintendents association refers to as “the tyranny of the immediate”. Teacher candidates are not always available by the time the district makes contact with them, either because they’ve signed on with another district or they had to take other employment. Preparation programs reported their perception that when hiring is pushed until late summer, quality candidates that completed their preparation program in the spring, anxious about employment security, have taken positions out-of-state with districts willing to sign an early contract.

District comments regarding the relationship between late hiring and the quality of the applicant pool were mixed, with some acknowledging they “lose quality candidates because of how late we hire” and others perceiving the quality of the pool unaffected by late hiring and that earlier “doesn’t necessarily mean the cream of the crop”. Studies of districts both in Washington State and nationally affirm a relationship between late hiring and teacher quality, and that districts that hire late tend to hire a greater proportion of the applicant pool, indicating selectivity decreases.<sup>4</sup>

Districts told us they struggle to avoid, but not uncommonly do begin the school year with unfilled positions. One district reported starting the current school year with 29 positions open, and filled them with substitute teachers for the first month of class. The opposite, undesirable scenario for districts is having teachers on contract with enrollment too low to support the expense. While this occurs less often because districts would rather underestimate, the PESB heard from one district where a major employer shut down and the student population dropped precipitously. Even in the current fiscal environment with dramatic reductions in statewide hiring, an unpredicted spike in enrollment this year resulted in one large district hiring over 100 additional first-year teachers close to the start of the school year, which created a major challenge and unanticipated expense in terms of mentoring and induction.

The PESB did hear from a small number of districts that routinely engage in proactive and early hiring. Some school districts reported they hire teachers for the upcoming school year no later than April. Their recruitment activities are extensive and screening is concerned more with teacher/district match than with specific qualifications, confident that matching qualifications to the course requirements can occur as the school year approaches. Human resource staff are given more authority in determining hiring because the recruitment process employs principals at the beginning and candidates are well vetted and known by principals, giving them confidence that hiring decisions can be made by HR. The ability to hire early or promise contingency contracts has increased the ability of some districts to bring preferred teachers into their systems, and they report they believe this has led to increased retention.

## Difficulty Forecasting

Although the feedback from districts in the survey tended to defend their local forecasting efforts, only 41% responded that they do not have a difficult time forecasting hiring need, only a few districts provided projections of their anticipated hires. PESB data and various reports suggest that districts could benefit from forecasting tools to assist them in their efforts<sup>5</sup>.

Forecasting is a mega-analytics challenge. Large data sets across multiple variables provide useful information on demographic and economic variability. Districts lack the capacity and technical expertise to make sense of these large data points. Slight shifts in demographics or economic indicators can have significant impact on teacher hiring. A small district may have some relief in the small school base funding provided in the operating budget, but schools larger than 300 students all experience those same challenges. A middle sized school district can manage a change in enrollment of 20 or 30 students, district-wide, without significant workforce implications, but an enrollment shift of

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<sup>4</sup> Jones, N., Maier, A., & Grogan, E. (2011) *The extent of late hiring and its relationship with teacher turnover: evidence from Michigan*. Evanston, IL: Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness.

The New Teacher Project. (2008) *The Impact of State and Local Human Capital Policies on Chicago Public Schools*. New York: Author.

The New Teacher Project. (2010). *Boosting the Supply and Effectiveness of Washington’s STEM Teachers*. New York: Author.

<sup>5</sup> Levin, J., & Quinn, M. (2003). *Missed opportunities: How we keep high quality teachers out of urban classrooms*. New York: The New Teacher Project.

Darling-Hammond, L. & Sykes, G. (2003). Wanted: A National Teacher Supply Policy for Education: The Right Way to Meet the “Highly Qualified Teacher” Challenge. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*. Vol. 11, No. 33.



100 students or more may mean workforce changes that are not only numerically significant (five new teachers) but across elementary, middle-school and high school class structures, mean significant re-alignment of existing workforce and new workforce need. To compress the decision making process in the human services department to less than 30 days with an expectation of a reasonable outcome is to tax a system that is already functionally at the whim of financing variability.

### **Lack of Clarity About and Capacity to Improve Workforce Development Practices**

Removing funding and policy barriers and providing reliable forecasting tools can only yield improvement in workforce development if accompanied by changes in practice. At the regional meetings, districts discussed the statewide variability in the human resource staffing and expertise districts are able to employ or access. Larger districts may employ individuals with significant human resource experience, credentialing, and expertise, while in smaller districts this may fall within the myriad of responsibilities of the Superintendent, who may rely on clerical support for job postings, compliance paperwork, and other responsibilities typical of a human resource division. When asked if they would be interested in “resources and consultation on improved data-drive human resource strategies in support of school and student learning improvement”, 79% indicated interest, but several commented it was a notion with which they were unfamiliar but wanted to know more.

In a number of other large states where range of district size yields varying capacity, regional collaboration in recruitment and screening applicants for hiring has had positive results<sup>6</sup>. 66% of Washington districts

surveyed indicated that they do not pool resources by engaging in cross-district recruitment or hiring, primarily because of time and competing priorities. At the regional meetings districts joked amicably about competing with

*Never heard of this practice.*

*Haven't done this yet, but might be a good idea.*

*I am not clear on what "data-driven human resource strategies" are.*

*Not sure what this will entail and mean.*

*We would be interested in learning more about this concept.*

- Comments from district representatives when asked if they had considered cross-district collaborative recruitment and hiring, or data-driven HR strategies.

one another for the same pool of applicants. Examples of collaboration among districts tended to center on a given district sharing information on candidates they are no longer considering for employment.

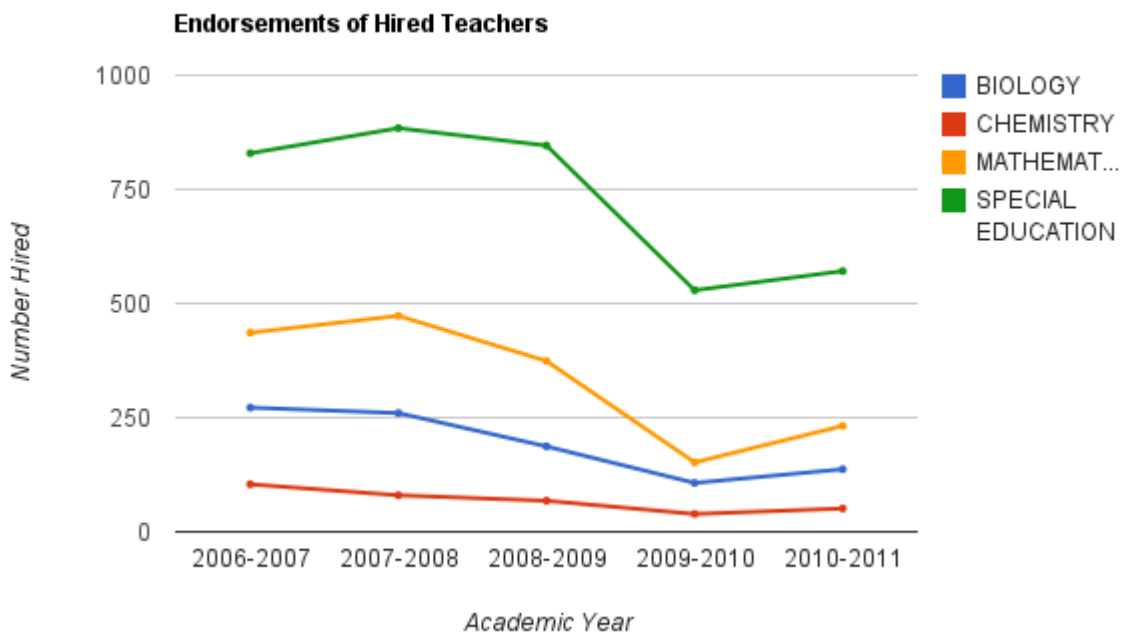
### **Desire for Strong Applicant Pool in Specific Credentials**

Most districts commented and reported on the survey that they overall had plenty of applicants per position, particularly in the current economic climate. At the same time, 82% reported they continue to have difficulty finding enough qualified candidates in particular areas. Comments suggest districts perceive this as a lack of available candidates, but this again also likely a factor of tight hiring timelines, limited recruiting and need for tighter connections with preparation programs as suppliers, not just overall production.

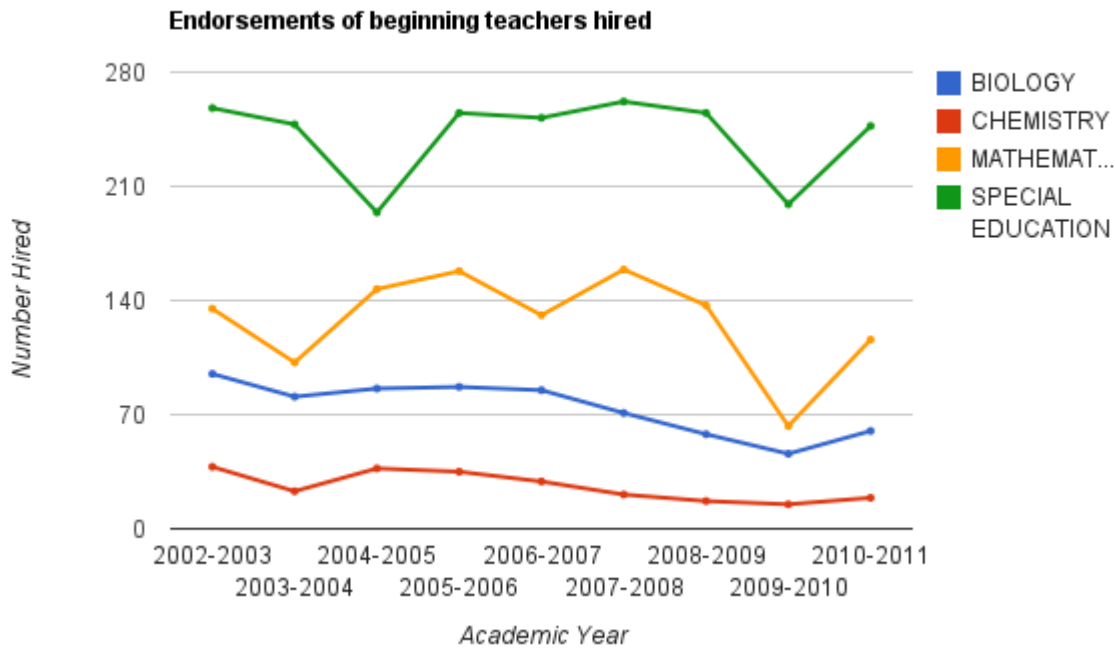
<sup>6</sup> The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning. (2002). *A Kern County Initiative for Recruiting, Preparing and Retaining Highly Qualified and Effective Teachers*. Santa Cruz, CA: Author.  
Kansas Educational Employment Board - <http://www.kansasteachingjobs.com/>

Before looking to instate production of beginning teachers as a solution for shortages, we need to consider two important trends. First, over the past few years fewer experienced teachers are leaving their position, which means Washington districts have been hiring fewer new teachers. Second, of the new teachers districts hire, only a fraction of those hires are beginning teachers. Take for example, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Special Education, subjects usually considered to be shortage areas.

Below, when we look at endorsements hired, we see districts hiring fewer Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Special Education teachers. If we expect this trend of lower hiring to return to pre-2009-10 averages we would expect districts to hire about 800 teachers with Special Education credentials, 400 with Mathematics, 250 with Biology, and about 75 people with teaching credentials for Chemistry.



When considering new hiring it is important to remember that only a portion of new teachers hired are actually beginning teachers. Most are experienced teachers transferring from other districts or other states. Below, we see the number of teachers hired who who are considered “Beginning” (less than .5 years of experience and has not previously worked in a Washington school district). We would expect in a typical year that districts would hire about 250 *beginning* teachers with Special Education credentials, 140 with Mathematics, 75 with Biology, and about 40 *beginning* teachers with teaching credentials for Chemistry. This is the pool of beginning teachers is fed by Washington teacher preparation programs as well as beginning teachers prepared by programs outside of Washington.



Especially considering the latest downtrends, Washington’s in-state production of beginning teachers is adequate to provide for Washington’s hiring needs of beginning teachers. Below we can see WA teacher preparation programs responding to the demand to increase production, especially in the fields of Special Education and Mathematics, but we don’t necessarily see more for these newly minted teachers finding employment. In fact, there are enough new Special Education credentials to meet the demand of all districts hiring, including experience and new teachers.

We are not ready to recommend WA teacher preparation programs to decrease production, but we are not hopeful that increasing in-state production of newly minted teachers will improve the district identified shortage issue, where they are unable to find a qualified teacher to fill an open position. However it does beg the question, why are some districts unable to find qualified people? More importantly, are there hiring and human resource practices that would alleviate this issue without attempting to flood the market with new unemployed teachers?

71% of districts surveyed indicated interest in stronger, sustained partnerships with educator preparation programs as an integral part of the development of their future and current workforce, with 56% acknowledging the need for regular conversation with preparation programs related to district needs. District comments at the regional forums and in the survey varied in terms of how they define partnership; whether as largely a recipient of preparation program production or a collaborator in key decisions related to enrollment and program design. Others commented seeing great advantage to strong partnerships, but feel time limitations and competing priorities prevent further pursuit. “We are too busy dealing with everyday emergencies to plan too far ahead”. Research indicates that with early and effective recruitment, even “at-risk” and under-performing districts and schools can generate a large applicant pool<sup>7</sup>.

## **Implications**

What PESB discovered in these regional meetings and subsequent survey is that while most district focus on developing the workforce once teachers are hired, projecting future workforce needs and development of longer-term, strategic recruitment and hiring practices, including strong partnerships with preparation programs, is a practice new to most Washington districts.

Risk aversion is the most significant determinate. Enrollment projection is imprecise unless districts commit resources to consultant services. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and state endorsement/assignment policies further complicate a difficult hiring environment, but given their important contribution to effective delivery of instruction, the risk aversion issue overrides any need to address highly qualified or assignment policy. Contrary to workforce development studies across many industries, including education, districts attribute policy and financial barriers, as well as lack of time and resources, as cause for pursuing improvements to their workforce development practices.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATE POLICYMAKERS**

### **Provide Districts Forecasting Tools**

The state currently engages in economic forecasting for budgeting purposes. Discussions with the Office of Financial Management suggest that a simple online tool might be developed that could provide districts with the ability to reduce the margin of risk and creating a willingness to look at earlier hiring approaches. With school districts as their business user, this might be an appropriate role for the Education Research and Data Center (ERDC). Consistent with district comments, of particular utility would be tools they could access without cost, created in open-architecture models that permit local level “tweaking” to account for local knowledge that would influence results. In this way, even

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<sup>7</sup> Liue, E. & Johnson, S.M. (2006). New teachers’ experiences of hiring: Late, rushed, and information-poor. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42(3), 324-360.

Levin, J., & Quinn, M. (2003). *Missed opportunities: How we keep high quality teachers out of urban classrooms*. New York: The New Teacher Project.

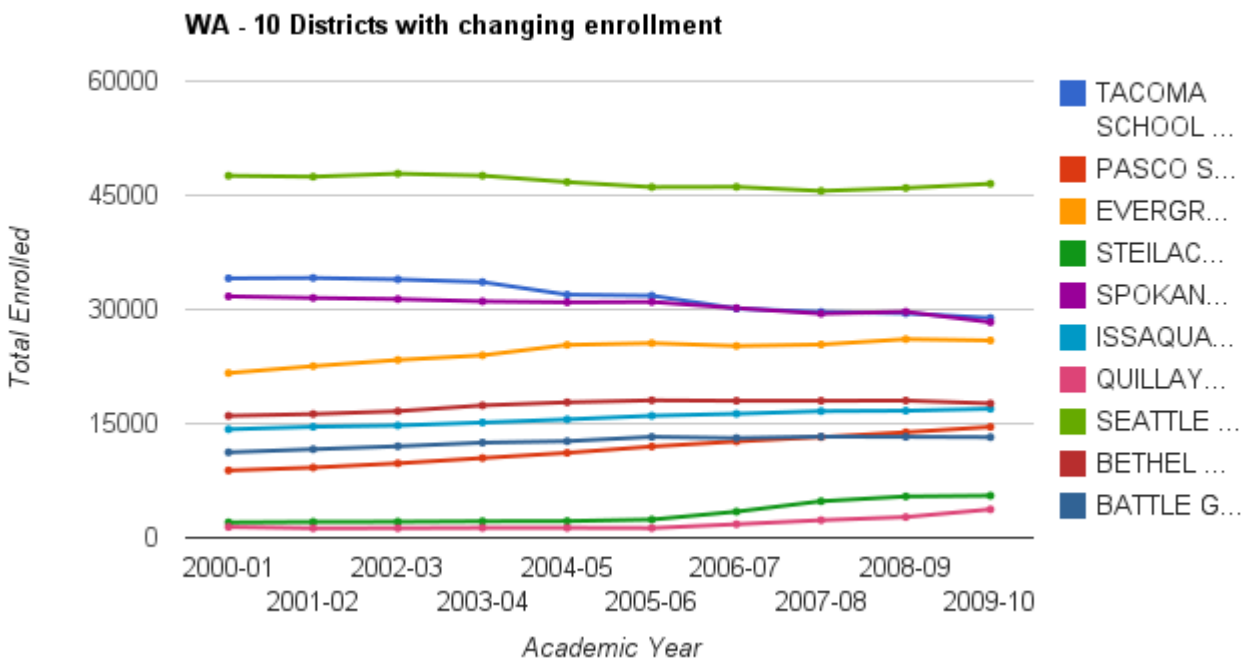
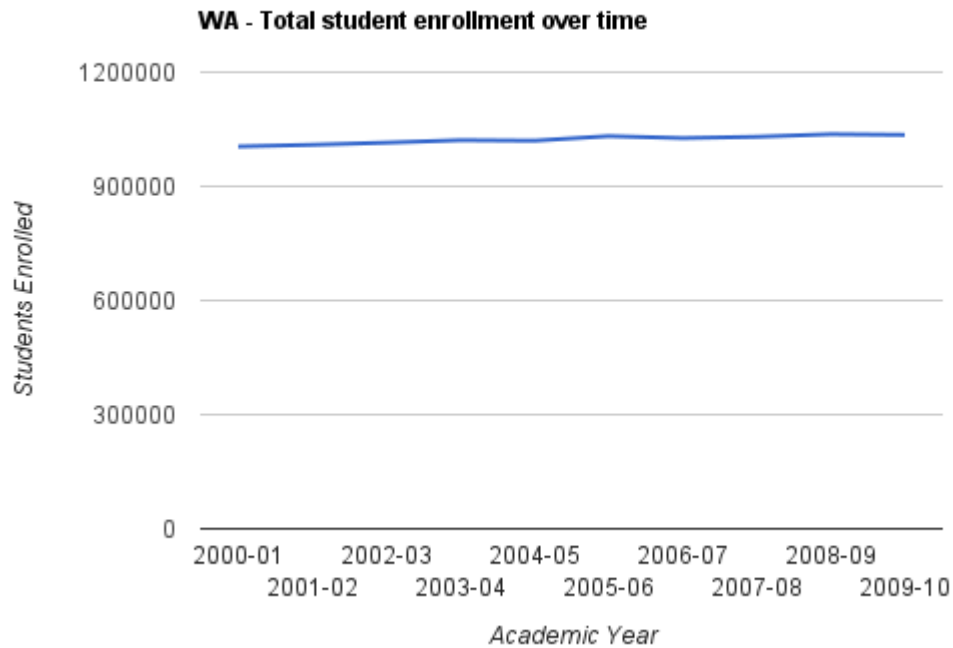
Campbell, C., DeArmond, M., & Schumwinger, A. (2004). *From bystander to ally: Transforming the district human resources department*. Seattle, WA: Center on Reinventing Public Education, University of Washington.

small districts that commented that their demographics were too small to be helped by state-level data work, could use tools that were flexible enough to respond to local input on key indicators such as small business closure, new business growth or unanticipated demographic influences that a state-level forecast model might miss.

### **Improve Funding Predictability and Minimize Risk**

Policy to change the allocation approach that penalizes districts that over-commit teacher contracts could help immensely. The legislature in the past has considered policy that would base allocations on rolling averages or fixed rate increases that are predictable. Given the size of the state-wide risk pool (a million K-12 students) it is conceivable that the state could design a model that would hold harmless those districts that over-extend while supporting districts' best estimates. Policy could design adjusted allocations, correcting over-payments over time. The risk pool size might well mitigate any significant increased costs, since the student population state-wide grows at a small and highly predictable rate, and all students are entitled and thus funded.

The PESB is not recommending that allotments disconnect from actual student enrollment. However, PESB is proposing that the state look at the entire student population as a "risk pool" and approach the problem of district uncertainty from the perspective of a managed service model. One million students attend public education programs. The growth/change in this service population is relatively stable in terms of predictable growth. Within the state, there is significantly greater variability at the districts (disaggregated) level. However, the "winners" and "losers" in population variability are minor impacts to the overall "risk pool" of students needing public education. The state should devise policy that targeted the state-level anticipated growth of the K-12 population and a distribution formula that provided a projected and stable base and adjusted that allotment over time so that no individual district faced penalty for over or under projecting staffing needs. In this manner, districts could proceed with a cogent, well designed approach to workforce development with confidence that over-staffing or under-staffing would be addressed financially without penalty. Adjustments with a risk pool of one million are minimal and reasonable for our state. The Figure below demonstrates that state-wide population enrollment is steady and reasonably predictable. The second Figure shows that some communities within the state experience quite different population trends that the state as a whole. The PESB believes that this opportunity for mitigating local risk in hiring should be closely examined.



Data provided by National Center for Education Statistics - Common Core of Data (CCD)  
 See interactive charts at <http://data.pesb.wa.gov/regionalworkforce>

## **Provide Workforce Development Resources and Support**

Research across industries suggests that attention to workforce development, while a commitment of time and resources, pays significant long-term dividends. In education, a recent report from University of Washington stated, “The ability of school leaders to take advantage of what local talent pools offer, or even to assemble those pools in the first place, reflects in large measure how the district has arranged its human resource function”<sup>8</sup>. The challenge is particularly great for rural and remote districts, whose recruiting and hiring challenges may be further complicated by the need for multi-endorsed teachers and/or partial FTEs as well as inadequate access to preparation programs with whom to partner to meet their needs.

With district capacity and access to human resource professionals greatly varied, Washington may benefit from pursuit of regional recruiting and hiring collaborative models, which exist in several other states. Kern County and several other rural regions in California have for over a decade operated highly successful regional collaborative to build their collective capacity and realize economies of scale. The initiative has included maintaining clear and accurate understanding of their projected workforce needs; design and implementation of recruiting and hiring strategies that meet their collective needs, rather than competing with one another; and leveraged collective dialogue and planning with preparation programs resulting in “grow your own” preparation programs located in the region.

Development of a statewide online system for recruitment may also provide more equitable access for districts. The State of Kansas was recently recognized for development of an online system for application and recruitment; one that applies virtual tools to aid applicants and districts, bridges the gap of accessibility for remote districts, and supports HR professionals and other district personnel across the state with technical assistance. The system has been effective in helping districts to fill shortages and to streamline the application process. They also believe the system has supported greater coordination between remote districts and preparation programs.

## **Incentivize District Participation in Partnerships**

Recent University of Washington research focusing on Washington State preparation programs suggests a relationship between proximity of student teaching / residency school or district with location of first teaching job and teaching effectiveness as measured by student learning gains<sup>9</sup>. Residency-model preparation programs that represent strong partnerships between preparation programs and districts provide direct opportunities for districts to shape their future employees and their current school and student learning improvement efforts. Western Washington University’s Science, Mathematics and Technology Education (SMATE) program has demonstrated gains in student learning attributed to their strong field-based partnership well. At Nooksack Elementary school, for example, 5th grade science scores on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) rose from 36% passing to 90% passing in two years of the program. Beyond the positive implications for student learning and teacher effectiveness, a recent report on Urban Teacher Residencies may have broader implications for other field-based preparation models as well. As is the case in other states, many of the prospective teachers in our higher education preparation programs, in whom we invest public dollars, do not go on to become teachers. 2005-06 placement rates for Washington’s approved preparation programs was 57%. Advocates for strong partnerships

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<sup>8</sup> Plecki, M.; Knapp, M; Castaneda, R.; Haliverson, T.; LaSota, R; & Lochmiller, C. (200?). *How Leaders Invest Staffing Resources for Learning Improvement*. Seattle, WA: Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy.

<sup>9</sup> Goldhaber, D., & Liddle S. (2011). *The Gateway to the Profession: Assessing Teacher Preparation Programs Based on Student Achievement*. Bothell, WA: Center for Education Data and Research, University of Washington Bothell.

between school districts and preparation programs, like Urban Teacher Residencies, argue that higher placement and retention rates make them both better tailored to local need and a better state-level investment. They suggest another potential funding mechanism for state policymakers is to consider directing enrollment slots to established partnerships, rather than putting the full burden of funding for planning, recruitment, program design and operation with institutions.

### **PESB Efforts and Next Steps**

Preparation programs are interested in preventing the loss of quality candidates, in dialogue on partnerships, and to being responsive to P-12 needs. It is in their interest to advise candidates as to what districts are looking for and to prepare them in the skills to be successful. Without projections on both the endorsement needs and dialogue on the specific qualities of educators a district or region needs, the current dynamics of over-production in some areas, shortages in others, and late hiring are likely to continue. Making changes to preparation program enrollment, faculty configuration, curriculum and program design can take a couple years or more. The need for long-range planning that is responsive to district needs conflicts with the predominant year-by-year, risk-averse focus of Washington districts waiting for budget and enrollment to lock in. While the short-term focus around hiring projections may feel logical at the local level in a time of strained budgets, the costs over time are significant.

Although the PESB dialogue and survey focused primarily on the teaching workforce, districts repeatedly expressed particular challenges in finding school psychologists and health service providers (occupational therapists, physical therapist, speech-language pathologists, and school nurses), and are often forced to pay high contractual rates to meet the needs of children with special needs. The PESB has undertaken an analysis to understand the production, shortages, and assignment issues, with an anticipated report to the Board in May of 2012.

In addition, the PESB is examining several mechanisms to address the issues we heard around the “highly qualified” (HQ) federal requirements reported in the regional dialogue and in the survey as fraught with confusion and challenges to hiring, assignment, and effective advising of candidates. This issue could potentially be resolved with development of a statewide recruiting system as described above. The PESB will advance an initiative to focus higher education preparation programs on the need that districts have to ascertain and confirm the HQ status of new teacher candidates, separate from and in addition to state certification and endorsement credentials. Preparation programs participating in the regional meetings agreed that analysis of candidate coursework and test results should allow them to provide districts with verification assurance of new teacher qualifications related to HQ requirements, thus removing that step for districts in the recruitment of new teacher candidates.

With hiring in dramatic decline, districts are challenged with more strategic development of their existing teacher workforce; often needing educators to be qualified for a broader range of subject area assignments. In the 2007 the PESB created and the Legislature funded the Educator Retooling program; providing funding support for certified teachers to add “shortage area” endorsements, including Bilingual Education, English Language Learner, Mathematics, Middle Level Math, Middle Level Science, Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Earth and Space Science, or Special Education. Until FY ‘11, up to \$3,000 per year in loan forgiveness was available to teachers to pay for tuition for coursework, WEST-E exams and supervision for the pedagogy assessment or other observation instruments if required by the candidate’s university or college program. Approximately 800 teachers from 175 school districts in Washington have added or are in the process of adding shortage area endorsements to their certificates with support of the Educator Retooling Program. The PESB continues to work with districts and preparation programs to consider retooling in the context of equipping their existing staff to meet a broader range of assignment needs, rather than just filling vacancies. In addition, the Retooling program has taken on another purpose by strengthening



content area knowledge of veteran teachers to address student achievement. Several school districts and endorsement programs have formed partnerships to offer new subject area endorsements for large numbers of teachers. These “endorsement academies” employ a professional learning community model to build capacity in content knowledge as a school improvement strategy. Districts like Renton have employed this model to retool a critical number of their elementary teachers to gain middle-level math endorsements. Kent school district has retooled a significant number of elementary educators to gain ELL endorsements.

The PESB has learned of a number of other efforts at the district and regional level. In one remote area a small district in anticipation of an upcoming retirement is working directly with a teacher preparation program to “grow their own” multiple-endorsed candidate with ties to their community. We also learned of a few cases of districts coordinating with neighboring districts or the ESD to fill a position. In one region of the state, four higher education institutions and a growing number of districts meet regularly on issues of preparation, induction, training, and assessment of interns, new teachers, and mentors. There are examples of districts that involve the partner preparation programs at higher education institutions in several stages of hiring and in dialogue on the educators they want in the future. There are others examples where the vision of a building leader and a higher education colleague have led to notable results in coordinated workforce preparation and professional development (<http://www.youtube.com/user/WAPESB>; <http://www.pesb.wa.gov/regional-workforce/a/partnerships>). The comprehensive, strategic, and partnered approaches we’ve observed suggest that workforce development is a goal that is both possible and fruitful in spite of the challenges of policy, budgets, and risk.

The PESB has been actively engaging IHEs and districts in regional dialogue in diversifying the educator workforce and on effective partnering. Again, the variability of practice is perhaps the most significant learning from the regional dialogue and survey. It is encouraging to hear that even when a district representative asks, “what would a partnership look like?”, our survey and interviews confirm that there is interest.

The PESB will convene the oversight group during the spring of 2012 and determine next steps. Among options to be considered will be working with those districts with strong workforce development approaches, as identified in this first round of meetings, and prepare guidance and materials for other districts to consider. PESB will also consult the oversight group on strategies for assisting districts.

## **Conclusion**

With the exception of a handful of districts that submitted best-guess estimates through the survey, PESB believes that too few districts are prepared or willing to advance improvements in workforce development at the current time. PESB further believes that these improvements are critical in addressing an educator workforce that delivers on the promise of public education. The board looks forward to working with the Legislature to further this important initiative.