

The Washington State Board of Education

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

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| Title: | State Board of Education and School Accountability—A Brief History & Context; and, OSPI School Improvement Initiatives and Required Action Update | |
| As Related To: | <input type="checkbox"/> Goal One: Effective and accountable P-13 governance. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Two: Comprehensive statewide K-12 accountability. <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Three: Closing achievement gap. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Four: Strategic oversight of the K-12 system. <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Five: Career and college readiness for all students. <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| Relevant To Board Roles: | <input type="checkbox"/> Policy Leadership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> System Oversight <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Convening and Facilitating |
| Policy Considerations / Key Questions: | <p>No policy decision.</p> <p>A brief history of the State Board of Education’s (SBE) involvement with school accountability is presented to provide a context for discussions and considerations concerning the SBE’s responsibility for the state’s accountability framework.</p> <p>OSPI will report on school improvement initiatives.</p> | |
| Possible Board Action: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt <input type="checkbox"/> Approve <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
| Materials Included in Packet: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Memo <input type="checkbox"/> Graphs / Graphics <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Third-Party Materials <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint | |
| Synopsis: | <p>Prior to SBE involvement, two state commissions were tasked with creating a statewide school accountability system: the Commission on Student Learning, 1993-1999; and, the A+ Commission, 1999-2005. Neither commission resulted in a system that was passed into legislation. ESSB 5732 reconstituted the SBE, and shifted all responsibilities of the A+ Commission to the SBE. The SBE created the System Performance Accountability Advisory (SPA) Committee. Work of the SPA Committee and the SBE resulted in the development of the Washington Achievement Index, and contributed to the 2010 legislation that established a state accountability system including Required Action District designation and distinct, yet collaborative roles for the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the SBE.</p> <p>OSPI will present on how school improvement initiatives can contribute to the development of a state accountability system.</p> | |

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY— A BRIEF HISTORY & CONTEXT

Policy Consideration

A brief history of the State Board of Education's (SBE) involvement with school accountability is presented to provide a context for discussions and considerations concerning the SBE's responsibility for the state's accountability framework.

Summary

Washington established the Commission on Student Learning in 1993 to begin the work of constructing a statewide accountability system. The Commission expired in 1999 without creating a system. In 1999, the Legislature established the Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission (A+ Commission) which was given the responsibility for the same task. The A+ Commission recommended an accountability system to the Legislature, but it was not passed into legislation, although funds were made available for a voluntary assistance and school improvement program. When the SBE was reconstituted in 2005, the A+ Commission was abolished and the responsibility of the A+ Commission was passed onto the SBE.

In 2010, ESSB 6696 created an initial state accountability framework and defined collaborative roles for the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) and the SBE. SBE also created an Accountability Index (now called the Washington Achievement Index) and recognized schools using the Index through the Washington Achievement Awards.

In 2012, the SBE began the work of revising the Index, and held the first Achievement and Accountability Workgroup meeting.

Background

The Commission on Student Learning, 1993-1999

In 1992 the Commission on Student Learning was established (SSB 5953, ESHB 1209).

Responsibilities of the Commission included:

- Presenting to the SBE and the SPI statewide elementary and secondary academic assessment systems
- Recommending a statewide accountability system to evaluate the level of learning occurring in schools
 - Requiring a school, district and statewide reporting system
 - Creating a school assistance program
 - Creating a system to intervene in schools or districts in which significant numbers of students persistently fail to meet standards
 - Creating an awards program to provide incentives to school staff

By 1999 the Commission on Student Learning had made progress on Essential Academic Learning Requirements and the development of assessments, but had not created an accountability system. The Commission on Student Learning expired on June 30, 1999.

The A+ Commission, 1999-2005

In SSB 5418, 1999, the Legislature established the Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission (A+ Commission), and transferred the powers, duties, functions and materials of the Commission on Student Learning to the A+ Commission. Additional goals of the A+ Commission were that by 2001 each district and school should establish a goal to increase the percentage of students who meet or exceed the math standard on the 4th and 7th grade Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) and establish annual increments to meet the goal. The A+ Commission was given the authority to establish and revise statewide goals in additional content areas and grade levels. The A+ Commission's responsibilities included:

- Overseeing the state's k-12 accountability system
- Adopting and revising performance improvement goals in reading, writing, mathematics and science
- Setting school and district improvement goals for high school graduation and dropout reduction
- Setting academic achievement standards that students must achieve on the WASL and that high school students must achieve to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement
- Adopting criteria to identify successful school and districts as well as identify schools and districts in need of assistance, and those in which a significant number of students persistently fail to meet state standards
- Identifying performance incentives that have improved or may improve student achievement

The A+ Commission proposed an accountability system that was not passed into legislation, but funds were made available for voluntary assistance and school improvement programs. The lack of sufficient support by the legislature for the recommendations in part may have been related to federal No Child Left Behind legislation that was being worked on at the time. There was the perception that a state accountability system might be superseded in by new federal requirements.

The 2005 Legislature abolished the A+ Commission and redirected responsibilities to the SBE.

State Board of Education's Work on the State Accountability System, 2005-2010

ESSB 5732 reconstituted the SBE, abolished the A+ Commission, and shifted the responsibilities of the Commission to the SBE. With this legislation, the SBE was directed to set performance improvement goals for schools, districts and groups of students, in consultation with the SPI. Performance improvement goals would focus on improving student learning in reading, writing, mathematics, science, academic and technical skills in secondary CTE, student attendance, and high school graduation.

The System Performance Accountability Advisory (SPA) Committee of the SBE started meeting in February 2007, and continued to meet through June 2010. The committee charge included:

- Setting performance improvement objectives for the system and by sub-groups
- Developing state, district, and school improvement strategies to strengthen school improvement and student performance
- Creating a turnaround model for schools and districts that were chronically under-performing
- Identifying criteria to prioritize schools through a tiered system of support
- Creating ways for the SBE to advocate through an SBE Report Card and public outreach

In January 2009, the SBE adopted a resolution to develop a fair, consistent, and easily understood Achievement Index (AI). The AI would be used to provide feedback to schools to self-assess, recognize schools with exemplary performance and identify schools with poor performance. In addition, the SBE would work to:

- Build capacity of school improvement and a unified system of state assistance, including the Innovation Zone
- Establish an Academic Watch process
- Continue to refine the AI

In the 2009 session, with ESHB 2261, the Legislature amended the State Board's enabling statute, RCW 28A.305.130, to clarify that the agency's purpose is to "implement a standards-based accountability framework that creates a unified system of increasing levels of support for schools in order to improve student academic achievement." The legislation directed the SBE to develop an accountability index based on student growth and using multiple indicators including graduation rates and assessment results, and for the SBE to submit proposals and timelines on voluntary and required intervention to improve the lowest-achieving schools to the Legislature by December 2009.

State Board of Education's Work on the State Accountability System, 2010-present

In December 2009, a draft report *An Excellent and Equitable Education for All Students: A State and Local Partnership for Accountability* was submitted to the Legislature. The report was finalized in April 2010.

E2SSB 6696, passed in the 2010 legislative session, assigned distinct yet closely collaborative roles to the SPI and the SBE in the development and implementation of an accountability system. Much of the system outlined in the SBE report was expressed in the act, with some additional directives including:

- Ongoing collaboration with the Achievement Gap Oversight Committee (now called the Education Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee)
- A Required Action District designation, involving the following:
 - In audit finding, the audit team must also examine school or district uniqueness
 - Race to the Top grant funds are considered as potential funding sources
 - A Legislature and governor-appointed review committee will evaluate appeals by districts if the SBE does not approve a plan
 - A joint-selected committee on education accountability will explore further potential steps to address required action schools that fail to improve

The legislation specified two phases of the accountability system:

- **Phase One**, in which schools that have done an exemplary job raising student achievement and closing the achievement gap will be recognized, and the lowest five percent of persistently lowest-achieving schools will be assisted through federal funds and intervention models through first a voluntary, and then a required action process
- **Phase Two**, in which the state will work toward implementation of SBE's accountability index for identification of schools in need of improvement, and use state and local intervention models and state funds through a required action process beginning in 2013, in addition to the federal program, to raise the achievement of those schools.

In February 2010, the SBE completed a report on the AI, and the SPI and the SBE recognized 174 schools through the 2009 Washington Achievement Awards.

For the 2010 awards, the SBE decided to:

- Add special recognition for improvement
- Not provide an Overall Excellence award to schools that have large achievement or opportunity gaps

- Highlight schools that receive awards for multiple years
- Add recognition for closing gaps

In July 2012, the Achievement and Accountability Workgroup began work revising the AI to include, at minimum, student growth information. The workplan calls for implementation of the revised AI in Fall 2013, and to use the revised AI for designation of schools in 2014-2015.

Action

None