

Dear partner in education:

Greetings!

Getting things done is always easier with good help.

With your help we are working to ensure all students receive an excellent and equitable education, one that leaves them prepared for the 21st century world of work, education, and citizenship.

That's a pretty tall order, but no other investment of our time and energy holds as much potential consequence or benefit as the education of our children.

It is this understanding that unites and focuses our efforts.

Meaningful, systematic change requires resources beyond time and labor. Significant reform demands sufficient financial commitment as well.

Though our state, like so many others, continues to struggle with staggering lost revenue, we have the opportunity to make further progress with the influx of a variety of [federal grants](#), including [Race to the Top](#). Our education reform efforts now hold the promise of unprecedented financial backing.

Furthermore, the grant monies, coupled with their prerequisites, provide a clear roadmap of where Washington state must go to best create impactful reforms.

And the good news is that our recent work reflects these federal expectations to help our kids.

We've passed significant basic education funding reform with [ESHB 2261](#), and we are beginning to build strategies for its implementation through the [Quality Education Council](#). Our [Systems Performance Accountability](#) Workgroup has developed details for the Board's Accountability Framework that will direct resources to the schools most in need, utilizing the [draft federal school improvement guidelines](#) to turn around our persistently low achieving schools. And our [CORE 24 Task Force](#) has created strategies to aid schools in their transition to the 24 credit graduation requirement.

And that is just the start.

Work continues, from the [State Board of Education](#) to the [Office](#)

## Learn more about our key initiatives

[A Meaningful High School Diploma](#): preparing students for life after high school no matter what path they choose.

[World-class math](#): providing students with the math foundation they need to succeed.

[Exemplary science](#): fostering science education to expand students' minds and broaden horizons.

[Accountability](#): providing assistance to schools and districts so that no student falls through the cracks.

## Quick Links

[Washington State Board of Education](#)

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[of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#), from school district offices to the classrooms where our students learn and grow.

Our representatives, our stakeholders, our parents, our teachers, administrators, and local boards, all are working to improve the capacity of our K-12 system to provide an excellent and equitable education for all children.

There are many helping hands that share a common purpose, and as such, this is a tremendously exciting time to be invested in our paramount duty of education.

Cheers!

Edie Harding

## Federal Funds Energize Education Reforms

California's Governor Schwarzenegger recently signed [a bill that will expand the use of longitudinal data in the state](#), including linking student performance to teacher pay.

This is a significant turnabout, for California's laws have long prohibited any such data connection between student performance and the classroom teacher. (Washington has no such prohibition, although some local collective bargaining contracts do.)

So why the change of heart?

California is just one of a multitude of states that are vying to utilize substantial federal grants to help create meaningful education reform. At stake, according to [U.S. Department of Education](#) Secretary Arne Duncan, is a "unique and powerful opportunity to transform education."

The limited availability of grant monies results in fierce competition. Only states with a clear pathway and plan for reform will be rewarded.

[Three federal grants](#) are fueling much of the reform fire:

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- Phase two funding of the [American Reinvestment and Recovery Act](#).
  - Approximately \$300 million for Washington, in addition to the \$600 million we have already received (if we show progress in meeting the four assurances - see below).
- [Race to the Top](#).
  - \$4.5 billion (a competitive grant that only a select few states/districts will receive).
- [School Improvement Proposed Guidelines](#).
  - \$500 million for Washington (up to \$500,000 for each selected Title 1 school per year for three years).

Washington State's chances of securing federal grant funds largely hinges on our ability to demonstrate a capacity and willingness to meet four federal assurances:

1. **Standards** and assessments.
2. **Data** systems to support instruction and measure student success.
3. **Effective teachers** and principals and an equitable distribution of teachers.
4. **Remedy** for turning around struggling schools.

With applications for two of the three federal grants due in the next few months, is our state poised to win?

We can certainly demonstrate progress and capacity in two assurances: **standards** and **data**.

**Standards:** OSPI and SBE have partnered in the last two years to ensure that our math and science standards are world class. Additionally, Washington has recently joined with 47 other states to explore the potential use of national common core standards.

**Data:** Our data systems are becoming more robust, and an inclusive K-12 (and beyond) data system is set to go online in 2010 (teacher data will be included in this new system). We are working on a P-20 data system as well.

Our capacity to meet the final two assurances isn't as strong and will require a significant change from the status quo for Washington's K-12 system.

**Effective teachers:** We utilize a state salary schedule for our teachers that is not tied to student performance and with limited incentives to place our best teachers in our most needy schools.

**Remedy:** SBE and OSPI will be seeking legislative authority this fall to implement a state/local collaborative model of Required Action for selected, persistently low achieving schools. The Required Action could utilize one of [four federal models of school improvement](#) or a different state and local model.

Beginning in the next few months, states (including Washington) will make their case to the [U.S. Department of Education](#) for why they are among the best potential recipients to win the competitive grants. Local schools and districts are also eligible for fifty percent of the grants.

Though we plan to apply for both round one and two of the [Race to the Top grant](#) and though we could certainly be a contender to win, we aren't there yet. The [Race to the Top team](#) will reach out to all of you to give us your best ideas for projects to include. By early November, the Governor's office will facilitate the collection of your ideas through the site [www.recovery.wa.gov](http://www.recovery.wa.gov). Please be sure to visit this site and include your suggestions.

The race ahead of us is swift and competitive, but with significant work and with the combined effort of all stakeholders, we might follow California's lead in creating a clear legislative pathway for meaningful education reform.

## Brewster School District moves to a 25 Credit Graduation Requirement.

[The Brewster School District](#) recently adopted [new graduation requirements](#) for the class of 2013, utilizing the framework of [CORE 24](#) as a model.

[Brewster High School](#) will require the graduating class of 2013 to earn 25 credits for graduation, a dramatic increase from the school's current graduation requirement of 19 credits.

The new 25 credit framework includes the opportunity for students to earn 4 credits of English, 3 in both math and science, and 2 credits in fine arts.

Don Becker, the [Brewster School Board](#) President, helped lead the charge on this positive change for students. "This is just better for our kids," said Mr. Becker. "We wanted to make sure our students graduated ready to go to the next level in their education."

Linda Dezelle, principal of Brewster High School, credits the [CORE 24 Implementation Task Force](#) for providing many of the implementation strategies for the new graduation requirement.

The Board's [CORE 24 Implementation Task Force](#), comprised of 20 education practitioners, continues its work on pioneering strategies that schools/districts can use in implementing the opportunity for a 24 credit graduation requirement.

The [Task Force](#) will meet again on [November 2, 2009](#), to prepare recommendations on [CORE 24](#) implementation strategies for SBE to review.

## Get to Know Your Board Members: Connie Fletcher (Issaquah)

Connie Fletcher (Issaquah) is the newest SBE Board member.

Connie applied to fill a Board vacancy, and her appointment to the Board is a result of a unanimous vote of approval by the screening committee (composed of four sitting Board members).

[Warren Smith](#), vice chair of the Board, is confident in Connie's ability to contribute to the Board's work. "Connie has all the attributes that we are looking for. She understands the impact of state policy on local districts."

Connie's educational leadership experience includes sixteen years with the [Issaquah School District](#) and three years as president and officer of the [Washington State School Directors Association](#).

Her civic service includes current leadership and chair roles with the [Issaquah Kiwanis](#), the [Eastside Human Service Forum](#), and Swedish Hospital's new Issaquah Hospital Advisory Board.

In her free time, Connie participates in many community volunteer activities, including tutoring each week at a neighborhood reading program for low income children. She also enjoys listening to audio books on her Ipod while gardening or walking.

More information about Connie and the other board members is available on the [SBE website](#).

## Upcoming Board Meeting

November 12-13, 2009  
Evergreen Public Schools District  
Vancouver, Washington

On November 11 at 7:30 p.m., [Sandi Jacobs](#), a member of the [National Council on Teaching Quality](#) (NCTQ), will discuss Seattle's ability to attract, develop, retain, and evaluate teachers (the premise of a recent NCTQ report "[Human Capital in Seattle Public Schools](#)." Ms. Jacobs will also address the report's implications for state policy on teacher quality, as well as her work with other states on [Race to the Top](#).

For meeting agendas, click [here](#).

E-mail your thoughts and questions to SBE at [sbe@k12.wa.us](mailto:sbe@k12.wa.us).