

The Washington State Board of Education

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State Board of Education Spotlight

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The Washington State Board of Education's (SBE) May 8-9 meeting at Educational Service District 105 in Yakima, Washington, will include an exploration of how to effectively incorporate student growth data into a statewide school accountability system.

There are currently multiple ways that statewide school performance is assessed: Adequate Yearly Progress under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (or No Child Left Behind), the persistently lowest-achieving calculations, which creates an eligibility pool for the School Improvement Grant program, and the SBE-created Achievement Index.

The Washington State Legislature has directed the Board to develop a new plan to better align the federal/state accountability systems "for the continuous improvement for all schools and districts" ([RCW 28A.657.005](#)). The existing accountability systems rely on data from multiple statewide assessments: the High School Proficiency Exam and the grades 3-8 Measurement of Student Progress. These tests measure students' ability to meet standards in reading, writing, math, and science (though only reading and math are currently included in federal accountability).

Starting this fall, school-level student growth data for reading and math will be available.

The addition of student growth data will highlight the improvement rate of students from year to year. A student growth tool may provide better insights into school and student achievement (e.g. the data may show that though a school may still have a significant student population below standard, students are making dramatic gains in achievement). Struggling schools and high-achieving schools have, within reason, the same chance to improve.

This is new data territory for Washington State, and we have much work ahead of us. Other states, such as Colorado, have developed student growth models. The implementation of a student growth model brings several

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questions to light: How much capacity do struggling schools reasonably have to improve, and over what time frame? How much room does a high-achieving district have for improvement?

In short, the implementation of an accountability system that effectively incorporates student growth data is a challenging task.

Yet the impetus for moving forward is strong, in light of our current application for a flexibility waiver from the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind). The federal government has explicitly valued the use of student growth data in accountability systems, without discounting the need for the same high standards for all students. All schools, regardless of income, need to demonstrate proficiency.

Of course, the additional metric of student growth to a statewide accountability is reflective of just one necessary change. Any successful statewide accountability model must include "a system of general support, targeted assistance, and if necessary, intervention improvement for all schools and districts" ([RCW 28A.657.005](#)).

The Board will explore issues surrounding a statewide student growth model in May and in the months to come.

On behalf of the Washington State Board of Education,

Ben Rarick
Executive Director

State Board of Education Honored for Achievement Index Tool)

On March 29, the Washington Educational Research Association ([WERA](#)) honored SBE for the development of [the Achievement Index](#), a database that provides an analysis of Washington public schools' performance.

The award presentation took place during the WERA Spring Conference, which focused on the resources available for those seeking to measure student, school, and district achievement.

The Achievement Index is one such resource. Users can look up reading, math, writing, and science performance by

school (as well as performance on extended graduation rates for the state's high schools). The Index also provides data on performance based on ethnicity or household income level, a school's achievement gap, how the school is performing in comparison to schools of similar student demographics, and how much a school has improved over time.

The Achievement Index is also used to identify the state's top-performing schools through the [Washington Achievement Awards](#), a program co-sponsored by the State Board of Education and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

In March, OSPI submitted Washington's application to the U.S. Department of Education for a flexibility waiver from the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act / No Child Left Behind accountability system. That application included a request to use an updated Achievement Index as the primary metric by which to evaluate school performance, identify schools requiring improvement, and recognize schools that are top performers. Representatives from OSPI are anticipating the final evaluation of that application by summer 2012.

ForWard - An Examination of P-13 Success Indicators

At the November 2011 Board meeting, Board Members initiated ForWard, a goals-setting action plan. The ultimate goal of the ForWard project is to provide a quick snapshot of the overall health of the P-13 education system through the identification of several system indicators, or data points, reflective of system performance. The ForWard project will eventually lead SBE to the development of performance improvement goals, aligned with both Lead System Indicators (LSI) and Foundation Indicators (FI).

A further look at Lead System and Foundation Indicators.

SBE is working to identify 4-5 Lead System Indicators. Lead System Indicators will likely mark transition points within P-13 (elementary to high school, for example) and in the entrance and exit of the system (kindergarten readiness, career readiness). The Indicators will also be research-based prerequisites for future success (e.g. the link between 3rd grade reading and future academic

success).

Each Lead System Indicator will contain multiple Foundation Indicators, or data points that lead to the success of the Lead System Indicators or appear to contribute to an environment that is likely to support the Lead System Indicator. Foundation Indicators will provide context for Lead System Indicators' trends.

Together, the LSIs and FIs should tell a story about the education system's efforts to improve student achievement. The ForWARD project will provide a lens into system success and will help SBE better utilize data annually to inform education policy.

Why is SBE pursuing this work?

SBE has a statutory responsibility to provide strategic oversight of public education and to adopt and revise performance improvement goals ([RCW 28A.305.130](#)). Identifying and tracking Lead System and Foundation Indicators will help SBE and others better gauge system performance and develop refined performance improvement objectives.

During the May SBE meeting in Yakima, Washington, Members will continue their work in identifying the 4-5 Lead System Indicators, followed by an initial exploration of potential Foundation Indicators. The discussion of possible Foundation Indicators will continue through July.

Our [May Board packet](#) (posted in the week prior to the meeting) will include an overview of the Board's work thus far with the ForWARD project. We encourage you to look through this information and to [provide feedback](#). If there is something we have not considered, please [notify us](#).

World Language Proficiency Credit

In July 2010, SBE endorsed the dissemination of a model policy and procedure for districts to offer competency-based credits for world languages (i.e. based on a student's demonstrated proficiency in a language). The model policy and procedure were developed by a partnership of SBE, the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA), and OSPI. The OSPI World Languages Program is now working with districts across the state to adopt and

implement the policy and procedure to support students in earning competency-based credits in world languages.

The Peninsula School District is the latest to formally adopt a world language proficiency credit policy, joining four other districts with policies in place (Aberdeen, Mt. Adams, North Thurston, and Seattle).

More information about world language competency-based credits is available at the OSPI website.

If you know of a district other than the five already mentioned that has adopted a world language competency-based credit policy, please [notify us](#).

WaKIDS and 180-Day Waivers

Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, schools receiving state funding for full-day Kindergarten will be required to administer the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developmental Skills (WaKIDS) or an approved alternative (ESHB 2586).

Though SBE is supportive of WaKIDS, significant challenges await.

An immediate concern for many districts is addressing the limited resource of time. WaKIDS is intended to take place at the beginning of the school year. It includes a family/teacher conference component called "Family Connections."

Implementation of Family Connections will require significant time for affected districts. Administrators must now decide how to schedule Family Connections and still provide the state-prescribed minimum number of hours and days of annual instruction.

Under the definition of "school day" for basic education compliance, full-day parent-teacher conferences are not considered a school day toward the required minimum 180-day school year because the statute provides that all pupils enrolled must be engaged in academic and career and technical instruction ([RCW 28A.150.203](#)). This means that a district participating in state-funded full-day Kindergarten and dedicating a full day to the Family Connections component of WaKIDS (when all Kindergarten pupils are

not scheduled to attend) will be required to request a waiver from the 180-day requirement for that day.

SBE anticipates working with the Legislature to clarify the definition of a "school day" to include the implementation of WaKIDS.

Until that time, school districts participating in state-funded full-day Kindergarten that wish to devote a full school day to WaKIDS will need to request a one-year waiver. SBE has developed an expedited process for requests for these waivers. A link to the application can be found on our [website](#). Applications are due by May 8 for action at the May 8-9 SBE meeting. Note that a waiver is not required if a district conducts the Family Connection component over the course of multiple partial school days during which all Kindergarten students are scheduled to attend for at least part of a school day (e.g. late start, early release, half days).

A [WaKIDS FAQ](#) is available on our website. You may also [contact us](#) with any further questions you may have.

The Washington Achievement Awards

State Board of Education members Bunker Frank, Bernal Baca, and Kevin Lavery will join State Superintendent Randy Dorn on April 25 at Mariner High School (Everett) to recognize the 275 schools receiving the Washington Achievement Awards.

Based on the Achievement Index approved by the State Board of Education in 2009 and authorized by the Washington State Legislature ([RCW 28A.305.225\(2\)](#)), the Washington Achievement Awards recognize elementary, middle/junior high, high, and comprehensive schools in several categories:

1. Overall Excellence
2. Language Arts
3. Math
4. Science
5. Extended Graduation Rate
6. Closing Achievement Gaps
7. Improvement

The [Achievement Index](#) assigns schools scores according to outcomes and indicators. There are five measured outcomes:

- Student performance on statewide assessments in reading, writing, math, science,
- The school's extended graduation rate (for high and comprehensive schools only), which includes those students who took longer than four years to graduate.

Those outcomes are measured using four indicators:

1. Achievement of students who are not from low-income families.
2. Achievement of students from low-income families.
3. Achievement of all students when compared to statistical "peers" (similar percentage of students learning English, designated as gifted, in special education, etc.).
4. Improvement in achievement of all students from the previous year.

Schools unable to attend the April 25 ceremony will receive their award through their regional Education Service District.

Third Annual Student Video Contest

The 2012 [SBE Student Video Contest](#), designed for videographers in middle school and high school, will wrap up Tuesday, May 1.

The student video contest is in its third year. This year we have asked participants to create a short documentary or creative film that celebrates learning in language arts, social studies, or other liberal arts courses.

The judges for the contest, led by SBE student members Jared Costanzo and Matthew Spencer, should have the winning teams selected by mid-May. All entries will be available for viewing on our website.

May is Arts Education Month

May is Arts Education Month in Washington State - a time to celebrate and strengthen arts education in our schools.

In 2010, SBE passed a resolution supporting May as arts education month. That resolution was soon followed by the 2010 student video contest supporting arts education. In the fall of 2011, SBE finalized a career and college ready graduation requirements framework that would give students the opportunity to earn two arts credits for graduation.

SBE has been consistent in its support of arts education. The arts are critical to student success, and the Board will continue to support arts education as we move ahead through 2012.

Board Member Highlight - Cindy McMullen (Spokane)- WSSDA Elected

Cindy McMullen joined SBE in 2012. Prior to her successful election, Mrs. McMullen served for 24 years on the Central Valley School District School Board.

During her 24-year tenure on that board, she served as president five times, worked with four superintendents, and saw the construction or remodeling of over one-half of the schools in the district. She was an officer on the WSSDA board, serving as its president in 2007. She is currently a member of WSSDA's cadre of professionals called upon to assist school boards who request some guidance. Cindy was named the Spokane YWCA Woman of Achievement in Education in 1997.

Cindy holds a BA degree in Political Science from Stanford University and a JD degree from Gonzaga School of Law. She and Dennis have three married daughters scattered across the country.

You can learn more about Cindy McMullen and other Board members by visiting our [Board member roster](#).

Upcoming Board Meeting

May 8-9
ESD 105
33 South Second Ave
Yakima, Washington

Meeting materials are available on our [website](#) prior to the meeting. Email your thoughts and questions to SBE at sbe@k12.wa.us.