

The Washington State Board of Education

Accountability | Graduation Requirements | Math | Science

State Board of Education Spotlight

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Greetings!

August has always been a 'think big' month.

Educators are gearing up for the year ahead, reflecting on what worked last year and making plans to improve student achievement. Students, though to see the onset of waning summer days, are also excited to meet their teachers, see friends, and continue to learn (though they may not be quick to admit it). Parents are planning too, checking bus routes, rounding up school supplies, and prepping for the fall schedule.

Summer is proving to be a 'think big' time for the State Board of Education as well. In the last three months, the Board has redefined its goals for K-12 education, objectives that will guide the Board's work in the years to come.

When the fall comes, we dig into the details, delving into policy leadership designed to increase postsecondary and high school preparedness and [postsecondary attainment](#), improve K-12 governance, and promote effective strategies for nationally and internationally competitive math and science curriculum and instruction. The Board will also provide policy leadership for closing the achievement gap and advocating for most highly effective elementary and secondary teacher workforce in the nation.

The daily steps we take, purposeful and goal-oriented, propel us to a promising direction - ensuring all our students have the opportunity to attend excellent public schools.

August has been a great month to provide that sense of purpose.

Cheers!

Stay in the Know!



This e-newsletter is just one of the many ways to make sure you have the latest education news.

Our [website](#) is updated daily, and we also make good use of [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [RSS feeds](#), and our [YouTube channel](#) to ensure you stay abreast of the latest news in P-12 education.

Get connected and stay in-the-know!



The Washington State
Board of Education
[Website](#)

Edie Harding
Executive Director

Board Commentary - Changing the Variables: Another Look at Washington's Math Scores

The [scores of our statewide assessments](#) demonstrate Washington's continued lackluster performance in math. We are not seeing the steady growth we expect or that our society needs. A 2010 Georgetown University Study demonstrates that the majority of jobs in Washington State will soon require some postsecondary education. As we are a tech-heavy state, our graduates should be ready to tackle postsecondary math and STEM careers (science, technology, engineering, math). The last thing we want to see is Washington import the talent while our unprepared graduates sit on the sidelines.

It's a big problem.

So what can we do? What are the variables of success?

At the state / policy level, we continue to address the variables in our control. In my time as State Board of Education member and current Chair, we've offered our reviews and recommendations on elementary / middle school and high school math and standards and curriculum. And we've also added a third credit of math to the graduation requirements for the class of 2013.

In the big picture, I know that all this will help, but it is not enough.

I think a more important change has to happen on a very personal level, something much more profound than the policy the State Board of Education and others work on.

We must collectively change how our students relate

to math personally. So let's talk about variables we can individually control or impact, today, to begin to make a positive difference in our students' ability to understand and excel in math.

1. Take math

Encourage your student to take math. This is especially important for our high school students who often have the option of skipping out on one or two years of math (to meet minimum state and/or district credit graduation requirements). It's tough to gain mastery without exposure and practice. Insist your children stick with mathematics.

2. Practice math

Make math a part of your family conversations. Spend some time talking about math and science and how it relates to the things you do. Ask your elementary students word problems that require addition and subtraction; get your middle school children to figure how much paint to buy for the living room or how many plants are needed to fill a garden row; and have your high school student help you solve for X (and life certainly has a lot of them).

3. Support math

Look for the math that exists in the everyday objects your children use and the activities they enjoy. Talk about how you and other adults important to your children use math to solve issues essential to daily life. Provide time and a space for your student[s] to complete math homework and insist they teach you what they've learned. Most importantly, remind them that math, as with all knowledge, opens doors to the future.

The common denominator here is that we will be modeling that math is important. If we make math a priority in our children's education, providing ample support and practice, we are creating a value in their lives that will return dividends for them for years to come.

I believe that we can address the problems with today's math equation. Teachers and administrators,

Board members and policy makers, all have to do their part. But in the final analysis, no one can replicate or replace the impact on our children of a caring adult at home who teaches by example the role of mathematics in a life well lived.

Jeff Vincent
CEO of Laird Norton and Chair of the Washington
State Board of Education

Graduating College- and Career-Ready Students

What expectations do we hold of our high school graduates?

The question of what graduates should know and be able to do are at the center of every State Board of Education graduate requirements discussion. This has been a focal point for the Board throughout the last two years.

Washington's community- and technical-college remediation rates, in addition to the increasing call from business leaders statewide for more STEM (science, technology, engineering, math), demonstrate we have an 'expectations gap' that must be addressed. Students who graduate without the skills or knowledge necessary to meet the expectations of postsecondary employment, training, or education are faced with increased costs for remediation and limited opportunities for employment.

As the demographics of the U.S. population change, the consequences of that gap mean that our overall educational achievement might slip in the next decade. And as the American economy relies largely on a skilled workforce, importing that workforce (rather than preparing our children to meet those demands) has direct consequences for us all.

We owe it to our children to close this gap by ensuring our graduates leave the K-12 system prepared.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's provisional adoption of the [Common Core Standards](#) is one step in the right direction. The [Common Core Standards](#), a joint effort of the [National Governors Association for Best Practices](#) and the [Council of Chief State School Officers](#), provides states with English / language arts and math standards that, by some accounts, exceed the standards currently in place.

The [Common Core](#), though centered on K-12, is also drawing the attention of colleges, especially in regards to admissions and teacher-preparation programs. According to a [July 19 USA Today article](#), the [Common Core](#) may "open the door to more and more discussion between K-12 and higher education."

Some hope that the [Common Core Standards](#) will alleviate the persistently high rates of remediation in today's colleges. With higher standards in place, more and more students may graduate college-ready, and with multiple states sharing in that definition, colleges will have an easier time distinguishing what prerequisites (such as assessment cut scores) they would like to see from their incoming classes.

The Washington State Board of Education is committed to the development and implementation of a college / career-ready diploma. If Washington strengthens its state diploma, we will join 21 other states that currently have college- and career-ready graduation requirements ([Achieve. "Closing the Expectations Gap,"](#) 2009)

National Board Certified Teachers Study

In June 2010, [The Center for Strengthening the Teacher Profession](#) at the University of Washington completed their report: "[Study of the Incentive Program for Washington's National Board Certified Teachers](#)" for the State Board of Education.

The report examines the relationship of the Washington National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) incentive program and the distribution of NBCT across the state. Washington currently provides a \$5,000 stipend for teachers who earn national certification, with an additional \$5,000 allocated to teachers who work in high-poverty schools. According to the study, the stipend program has resulted in increasing numbers of educators who hold or are pursuing national certification.

Furthermore, NBCT tend to stay in the classroom, including those working in high-poverty schools. The full report is available on our [website](#).

College Tracking - A Cool Internet Resource

If you are interested in tracking the number of college graduates from a specific Washington State high school, be sure to check out BERC's College Tracking [website](#).

The site provides data on graduates' attendance and persistence rates in two- or four-year colleges after high school. Gender and ethnicity data is also available.

[Collegetracking.com](#) complements the [BERC Group's 2008 Graduate Follow-up Study](#). The study examines 2008 graduates' course-taking patterns in relationship to postsecondary pursuits. The report explores how course-taking patterns differ between students pursuing two- or four-year colleges; the math and English course-taking patterns for students who took remedial, college level, or no math or English in the year after high school; and more.

One Story of Success: Crownhill Elementary School

In the spring of 2010, the [State Board of Education](#) joined the [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#) in honoring [174 top-achieving schools](#) through the [Washington Achievement Awards](#).

This month, we are highlighting one such school: [Crownhill Elementary](#) in the [Bremerton School District](#). This spotlight of [Crownhill Elementary](#) is the first in a series of SBE case studies of schools that are beating the odds.

[Crownhill Elementary](#), a school with 59.7% free and reduced-price meals, won three 2009 Washington Achievement Awards: Overall Excellence, Math, and Language Arts. They have nearly closed the academic achievement gap in reading, writing, and math. Crownhill's 4th grade low-income students outperformed non low-income students in the rest of the state.

[Crownhill Elementary's](#) staff and district administration have systematically utilized research about what makes a difference for all students in reading, writing, math, and behavior. The school has strong district support, a principal who is an experienced instructional leader, and dedicated teachers who have participated in research-based professional development.

We encourage you to read more about [Crownhill here](#).

Board Member Highlight: Dr. Steve Dal Porto - Quincy (WSSDA Elected)

The Board's Vice Chair, Dr. Steve Dal Porto, brings extensive educational experience to the group. As a teacher, Dr. Dal Porto taught students from all grades, working in elementary, middle, and high school classrooms. His dedication to students continued through his tenure as an elementary and junior high school principal, assistant superintendent, and

superintendent of schools.

He graduated from the University of Puget Sound with a B.A. in English and history before he entered the U.S. Air Force. After his military service, he entered teaching and subsequently earned his Masters Degree from Eastern Washington University. In 1993, he earned his doctorate from Washington State University. He is a former member of the EWU Principal Professional Education program unit and has served as the Washington Association of School Administrator's representative to Gonzaga University's Professional Educator's Evaluation Board.

In his free time, if he is not training his Labrador retriever in field tests, he studies the fine art of catching trout on the fly. He is an avid fisherman, always ready to join friends on the rivers and lakes of eastern Washington. "There's nothing like watching a fish rise after a fine cast," said Dr. Dal Porto. "I enjoy my time out on the water immensely."

You can learn more about Dr. Dal Porto by visiting our [Board member roster](#).

Upcoming Board Meeting

[Puget Sound ESD](#)
800 Oakesdale Ave SW
Renton, WA 98057
425-917-7600

[Meeting materials](#) are available on our website prior to the meeting.

E-mail your thoughts and questions to SBE at sbe@k12.wa.us.