

REQUIRED ACTION DISTRICT APPROVAL PROCESS

BACKGROUND

The State Board of Education's (SBE) work for a new statewide accountability system includes a new Required Action process adopted by the state Legislature in the 2010 session¹ to address the needs for dramatic turnaround in our persistently lowest achieving schools. OSPI will use federal school improvement grants to support these schools. A parallel process is a selective competition from the remaining pool of persistently lowest achieving schools for voluntary school improvement, also known as Models of Equity and Excellence through Rapid Improvement and Turnaround (MERIT).

At the January 2011 Board meeting, the Board designated the following four districts for Required Action:

- Lakeridge Elementary School, Renton School District
- Morton Junior-Senior High School, Morton School District
- Onalaska Middle School, Onalaska School District
- Soap Lake Middle and High School, Soap Lake School District

Approximately \$7 million in federal funds is available for this fiscal year for both the MERIT schools and Required Action Districts.

Requirements of Required Action Districts:

The Required Action plan must be developed in collaboration with administrators, teachers, and other staff, parents, unions, students, and other representatives of the local community. The local school board must conduct a public hearing to allow for comment on the Required Action plan. The Required Action plan must include selection of one of the four federal intervention models (state/local models may be used in subsequent years):

- Turnaround: Replace principal and 50 percent of staff.
- Restart: Open the school under a third party education management organization.
- Closure: Send students to higher-achieving schools in the district.
- Transformation: Replace principal, reform instructional environment, develop teacher and school leader effectiveness, increase community engagement, and extend learning time).

Districts recommended by OSPI for Required Action will participate in an academic performance audit, which will include:

- Student demographics
- Mobility patterns
- School feeder patterns
- Performance of different student groups on assessments
- Effective school leadership

¹ RCW 28A.657 (2ESSB 6696)

- Strategic allocation of resources
- Clear and shared focus on student learning
- High standards and expectations for all students
- High level of collaboration and communication
- Aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment to state standards
- Frequency of monitoring learning and teaching
- Focused professional development
- Supportive learning environment
- High level of family and community involvement
- Alternative secondary schools best practice
- Any unique circumstances or characteristics of the school or district

The intervention model selected by the district must address the concerns raised in the academic performance audit. If necessary, the district must reopen the collective bargaining agreement to address the audit's findings.

As part of the Required Action plan, districts must also submit the following documents to OSPI:

- Collective Bargaining Agreement (Certificated Staff) and Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement.
- Annual District Calendar and School Calendar, if different (2010-11).
- Calendar for Professional Development (2010-11).
- Bell Schedule for Students (2010-11).
- Current School Improvement Plan (2010-11).
- Certificated Staff Roster with Assignments (2010-11).

Required Action Plan Approval

The SBE may approve a plan only if the plan meets the following requirements:

- Implementation of one of the four federal intervention models.
- A budget that provides for adequate resources to implement the federal model selected and any other requirements of the plan.
- A description of the changes in the district's or school's existing policies, structures, agreements, processes, and practices that are intended to attain significant achievement gains for all students enrolled in the school and how the district intends to address the findings of the academic performance audit.
- Identification of the measures that the school district will use in assessing student achievement at a school identified as a persistently lowest-achieving school, which include improving mathematics and reading student achievement and graduation rates that will enable the school to no longer be identified as a persistently lowest-achieving school.

A small workgroup of SBE Board members has agreed to read the plans and academic performance audits in detail and analyze whether the plans meet the above requirements. The workgroup will recommend approval or non-approval to SBE in advance of the March 31, 2011 Special Meeting.

If SBE does not approve a Required Action plan, it will notify the local school board and local district's superintendent in writing with an explicit rationale for why the plan was not approved. With the assistance of OSPI, the district shall either: a) submit a new plan to SBE within 40

days; or b) submit a request for approval to the OSPI convened Required Action plan review panel within ten days.

The Required Action plan review panel may reaffirm the decision of SBE, recommend that SBE reconsider the rejection, or recommend changes to the Required Action plan to be considered by the district and SBE. If the district must submit a new plan to SBE for approval, it must submit the plan within 40 days of the Board’s decision. If SBE does not approve the final Required Action plan or the school district does not submit a final plan, SBE may direct OSPI to redirect the district’s Title I funds, based on the Academic Performance Audits.

Required Action Plan Approval Timeline:

Academic Performance Audits completed by OSPI contractor	By February 10
Districts submit Required Action plans to OSPI	March 4
Required Action plans read/scored by OSPI to ensure they are compliant with federal guidelines	March 8 (as well as 9 and 10 for regular SIG applications)
OSPI interviews Required Action Districts	March 16 – 18
Required Action districts submit plans to OSPI with revisions based on OSPI feedback	Approximately March 18
OSPI provides copies of Required Action plans and summaries of scoring to SBE	Approximately March 18
SBE reads Required Action plans; work group recommends approval or changes	March 18 – 25
SBE small work group recommends approval or non approval of each Required Action plan	March 25
SBE Special Meeting to approve Required Action plans	March 31

Required Action Districts must participate in the Board’s teleconference March 31 Special Meeting to provide a brief summary of their plans and answer any questions Board members have. At the end of the Special Meeting, the Board will vote to approve or not approve each district.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

The SBE is expected to develop local models for turning around persistently lowest achieving schools in future years. The work of both the MERIT and Required Action Districts will be evaluated by an OSPI contractor, Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO), and examined closely to inform development of local models.

EXPECTED ACTION

The Board is expected to vote on March 31, 2011 to consider approval on the proposed Required Action District Plans.