



Washington State
Board of Education



Working to Raise Student Achievement Dramatically

January 14-15, 2009 Meeting Highlights

On January 14-15, the State Board of Education (SBE) met in Tumwater at the New Market Skills Center to:

- Welcome new Board members Bob Hughes and Superintendent Randy Dorn
- Continue discussion of the Accountability Framework, Work Plan and Index
- Receive a briefing from Representative Ross Hunter on the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance report
- Receive reports on the creation of the CORE 24 Implementation Task Force and findings on the Board's High School Transcript Study
- Receive reports from the commissions and work groups on closing the achievement gaps for students of color
- Listen to presentations from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI) initial recommendations for high school mathematics curriculum best aligned to the new math standards, an update on the State Transitional Bilingual Instructional Program, as well as the Professional Educator Standards Board Report on Math and Science Teacher Supply

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION ACTIONS

The Board approved the following:

- A resolution adopting the Board's Accountability Framework
- A letter supporting the Joint Basic Education Finance Task Force Report to the Legislature
- Amendments to the Board's bylaws draft as of 01-15-09
- Washington school districts' compliance with the basic education compliance requirements
- Application for waiver of the 180 day minimum school year requirement for two districts wishing to enhance professional development

ACCOUNTABILITY UPDATE

The SBE has adopted an accountability framework by a resolution, which will continue to be refined over the next year with input from stakeholders. The legislature has charged the SBE to develop criteria to identify schools and

districts that are successful, as well as schools and districts in need of assistance or whose students persistently fail.

Under the accountability resolution, the SBE believes that all students deserve an 'excellent and equitable' education. The SBE plans to work with OSPI to create a unified system of federal and state accountability. The new state accountability needs to be a part of the revisions made to the basic education funding system, and the legislature will need to provide the appropriate legal authority and resources. The SBE recognizes the critical role of local school boards in addressing student achievement under a new state accountability system. There are three key parts to the accountability framework:

- An index to identify all schools and districts for continuous improvement, including those with exemplary performance as well as those that are struggling.
- A state unified system of voluntary programs to build the capacity of districts to help their schools improve, including a potential new program called Innovation Zone.
- Required action after a time set by the SBE where, if there is no significant improvement in schools based on an accountability index, the district would be placed on Academic Watch, which includes a peer review performance audit; a local school board Academic Watch plan; approval of the plan by the Board as a binding performance contract and implementation by the local school board; OSPI monitoring of implementation; and removal from Academic Watch when improvements have been made.

JOINT TASK FORCE ON BASIC EDUCATION FINANCE REPORT

State Representative Ross Hunter presented an update on the Basic Education Finance Task Force. The Basic Education Finance Task Force defines education as a system where every child is given the opportunity to meet college and work-ready graduation requirements.

The key components of the report include: a definition of basic education, which includes the SBE's CORE 24 high school graduation requirements as well as the SBE's accountability principles. Other components of the report include: the instructional program of basic education, core allocations for funding, early learning provisions, a new school employee compensation model and career ladder, professional development, funding and oversight.

The Board approved a letter to the Governor and Legislature urging them to act this session upon the policy recommendation in the report and to define the revenue sources and phase-in needed.

THE CORE 24 IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE

The Board received 155 applications from applicants interested in serving on the Core 24 Implementation Task Force. A three-member Board committee explained how the applicant pool was narrowed down to a final slate of 20 candidates who will bring a wealth of expertise to the critical implementation issues at hand. Task Force membership will be announced as soon as all of the candidates have been confirmed.

THE TRANSCRIPT STUDY

SBE contracted with the BERC group to get a better assessment of what students are taking in high school and how well Washington's schools are doing in preparing students for success after high school. The study examined course-taking patterns of 2008 graduates. The sample consisted of 14,875 high school seniors from 100 schools in 100 districts.

The full Transcript Study Report is available on the Board's Web site at: <http://sbe.wa.gov>

THE OSPI RECOMMENDATIONS ON A HIGH SCHOOL MATHEMATICS CURRICULAR MENU

OSPI outlined the process of curriculum review for mathematics, as well as some amendments to the process that were recently adopted based on input from a variety of stakeholder groups. OSPI and its stakeholders reviewed at least 10 different secondary curricula in Algebra 1, Algebra 2 and Geometry programs, and provided feedback that supported the strength of those curricula across the scope of offerings. Integrated curricula did not score as well in similar reviews, although they did post competitive scores when courses were compared across the series (years). Based on the data gathered, OSPI offered three initial recommendations for mathematics curricula that best align with the new math standards, being:

1. Holt Mathematics (traditional)
2. Discovering Math (traditional)
3. Core Plus Math (integrated)

As many districts don't have the funds to purchase new curricula at this time, OSPI plans to repeat this study in 24 months. This will also allow publishers to improve their curricula based on the OSPI data.

In the meantime, districts may have to use supplemental materials to compensate for weaknesses in how their current curricula meet math standards. OSPI presented data on 42 different supplemental programs, advising that there was significant discrepancy in the capacity of those programs to meet the math standards. As with the core curricula, OSPI is hopeful that publishing companies will work to better align to their supplemental offerings to Washington state math standards. OSPI further encouraged companies to provide supplementary materials online, at no cost to school districts.

The Board will now review the OSPI recommendations with its consultant and math panel to prepare feedback at the March Board meeting.

STATE TRANSITIONAL BILINGUAL INSTRUCTION PROGRAM

OSPI staff shared data on 2007 WASL reading and writing results, which showed in many grades that former English Language Learners exceeded the state average. However, former ELL students in the 2007 WASL math results do not do as well in all grades compared to the state average.

COMMISSION REPORTS ON ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

The Board received reports detailing the Achievement Gap studies conducted for African American, Native American, Asian American, Pacific Islander and Hispanic students. Five different reports were presented to the SBE.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPROVING GRADUATION RATES

OSPI staff presented information on dropout rates, citing statistics that the dropout rates have remained at an unacceptably high level over the last four years. Ethnic minorities represent a statistically significant portion of the dropout population. Staff also reviewed the Building Bridges legislation intended to increase the number of Washington state students who graduate from high school on time as well as re-engage students who have already dropped out of school. Three priority recommendations have emerged from the work:

1. Establish a statewide goal for reducing dropouts
2. Build the resources and systems needed by districts to develop a comprehensive and culturally relevant dropout prevention system
3. Create a dropout retrieval system for students who have dropped out and are not likely to return to the K-12 school system

The Board then heard a presentation about Shelton's pilot dropout prevention system. This 8th through 12th grade system includes intensive observation of targeted, at-risk groups. The Shelton project has potential and should serve as a data resource for other districts wishing to pursue similar educational programs.

The next State Board of Education meeting will be at the New Market Skills Center in Tumwater on March 12-13, 2009.

For additional information and Board meeting materials, go to: www.sbe.wa.gov or call the Board office at: 360-725-6025.