

The Washington State Board of Education

Accountability | Graduation Requirements | Math | Science

State Board of Education Spotlight

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Dear partner in education:

Greetings!

The hard work of the last three years to create a state system of performance accountability through work [sessions](#), Board [meetings](#), research reports, and a multitude of outreach sessions with educational stakeholders and the public has resulted in the Board's "culminating project" of accountability legislation. The legislation is designed to turnaround our lowest achieving schools through a joint state and local partnership called Required Action. This bill is also part of the Governor's [Race to the Top](#) package.

So why this legislation? Why now?

Our vision of educational equality throughout the state is not yet realized. We have schools that are persistently low achieving - in some cases for ten years or more with little or no improvement. That equates to almost a generation of students passing in and out of a school's doors ill-equipped with a subpar education.

Our students deserve better.

In the past, districts could seek voluntary assistance to help turnaround their lowest achieving schools. The driving force of the proposed accountability legislation is the power of the state to partner with local districts to turn around persistently low achieving schools.

Under both the House and the Senate proposed legislation, selected schools in the bottom five percent of performance in both math and reading would be required under the direction of the district and its community to take action, with significant federal resources to implement a three-year plan for dramatic improvement.

An easy to read [overview of required action](#) is also available on our website.

What's next?

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](#)

The work ahead now lies with our legislators.

The Senate recently passed [SB 6696](#) containing the Board's language for required action in districts with the lowest achieving schools. Now the House is considering that bill. We believe all kids deserve the opportunity to obtain an excellent and equitable education. This legislation will help make it a reality.

Cheers!

Edie Harding

Race to the Top Update

The [Race to the Top grant](#) provides an unprecedented opportunity for our state to compete for a portion of over \$4 billion in federal funds. The grant, facilitated by the [U.S. Department of Education](#), will be awarded to states with a clear pathway and plan for reform.

The reforms promoted by the grant can help Washington build momentum in its education reform efforts and maximize our public/private partnerships through a P-20 approach.

In order to best compete for the grant, many states are taking action now to put the prerequisite reforms in place. Washington is following suit, as evidenced in the omnibus [education reform legislation](#) introduced this session. Washington will apply for Round 2 of the grant (application due June 1), with the winning states announced September 30.

Some examples of areas for state and local districts to explore in developing Washington's grant:

1. Grow Advanced Placement, Career and Technical Programs, Principles of Technology, and STEM school development.
2. Use data coaches to guide the use of formative assessments and other student growth measures to better shape instruction.
3. Build early Navigation 101, enlisting early

learning providers, parents, and enhanced community involvement in education.

The Changing Job Market

We all have our antennas tuned to the economy. It's hard not to, especially as we watch our friends, family, and coworkers try to make do with wage loss, job loss, and displacement.

Like the generations before us, we are hopeful that the next generation will fare better.

But how can the next generation compete and thrive in this turbulent 21st century job market?

Concerned advocates argue for the infusion of 21st century skills into our K-12 curriculum. Many people would agree that skills such as the ability to think both critically and creatively, to work cooperatively, and to master and apply knowledge can only benefit our graduates.

For most of us reading this, those skills may seem similar to what we were taught in school. Andrew J. Rotherham, in his [2009 Educational Leadership article "21st Century Skills: The Challenges Ahead,"](#) concurs, arguing that what's missing in the debate about 21st century skills is not the skills themselves, but rather the extent that those skills will be needed for a growing portion of our student-graduates.

This runs parallel to the premise of David Autor's 2003 American Economic Review [Report](#): "The Polarization of the U.S. Job Market."

Autor contends that the rise of technology and the disappearance of many manual labor jobs account for the change in job skills prerequisites. In his [report](#), Autor charts the dramatic and growing discrepancy of wages to job ratios from 1973-2004. The trend is clear: the demand for critical, abstract, and creative thinkers is growing.

So are we doing enough to prepare today's students for tomorrow's challenges? Do we require the abstract, critical, and creative thinking necessary to equip all

students for the 21st century workforce?

Though Washington educators are working hard to make sure their students graduate prepared, we can do better. Our efforts to improve the high school diploma continue through the work of the [Meaningful High School Diploma Workgroup](#) and the [Core 24 Implementation Task Force](#).

More information about 21st century graduation requirements is available on our [website](#).

2010 Student Video Contest Underway

The [2010 State Board of Education Video Contest](#), designed for students in middle school and high school, has begun.

The contest asks students to create a short Youtube video that addresses the following question: Why are the arts important?

Working in teams of three, students are encouraged to fully express their creativity with varied examples of student art to help convey the message.

The video contest will end in May, so there is plenty of time to encourage the students in your life to participate!

More information is available on the State Board of Education [website](#).

Get to Know Your Board Members: Eric Liu (Governor Appointed)

Eric Liu, a Governor appointee to the Board, has been instrumental in shaping the Board's work on developing a 21st century diploma.

As chair of the Meaningful High School Diploma Workgroup, Eric has guided a group of education leaders and practitioners through an initial exploration of 21st century graduation requirements - work that provides an

essential starting point as we continue to improve K-12 education and ensure our graduates have every opportunity for success after high school. (Note: [ESHB 2261](#) calls for the opportunity for students to earn 24 credits for high school graduation.)

Outside of his work with the State Board, Eric teaches at the University of Washington and is the author of several books, including his most recent: [Imagination First: Unlocking the Power of Possibility](#).

More information about Eric and the other Board members is available on the State Board of Education [website](#).

Upcoming Board Meeting

[Highline Community College](#)

2400 S. 240th St
Des Moines, WA 98198
(206) 878-3710

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

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