

The Washington State Board of Education

Accountability | Graduation Requirements | Math | Science

State Board of Education Spotlight

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Dear partner in education:

During my time with the Olympia School Board, I had the pleasure of watching many classes walk across the stage to receive their diplomas. Students donned their caps and gowns with the relish of achievement and the exhilaration that comes with youth and the prospect of a nearly limitless future.

An academic graduation is a well-known symbol of academic accomplishment, the successful acquisition of knowledge and skill that comes as young minds navigate years of coursework.

That tradition has remained largely unaltered for decades.

What students are graduating "to" has changed dramatically, however. The 21st century world of work and citizenship is a dynamic, competitive, and increasingly global environment that demands equally complex skills and knowledge from our graduates.

Some districts across our state have responded accordingly, increasing the breadth and depth of coursework to better prepare students for tomorrow's challenges.

Washington State's graduation credit requirements, however, have not undergone a significant nor substantive change since 1985. The time has come to reexamine our high school graduation requirements.

The State Board, which has taken up this work in the last three years, is closing in on much-needed improvements. Of course, the Board's work is not done in isolation. This has always been and will remain a public endeavor.

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
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Parents, students, teachers, administrators, school board members, legislators, business and community leaders, and the general public have all been invaluable contributors to the project. Our collective willingness to make a change for the better is essential, for there is nothing more important than our children. We are all obligated to ensure every child graduates with the opportunity for success.

We never lose sight of this, and our commitment to our children will remain very much at the forefront as the Board's work continues.

Board Commentary - Jeff Vincent, Chair Reversing the Trend of Washington's Persistently Low Math Assessment Scores

On June 16, 2010, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction released the [results of the 10th grade statewide assessment in reading, writing, and math](#). Though reading and writing scores remain relatively strong, students' struggles in math continue. Only [56.7 percent](#) of the class of 2011 passed the math exam, and the class of 2012 only had [42.5 percent](#) of students meet minimum math proficiency.

We have rigorous math standards in this state that all our children can meet - but not without support. We must strengthen that support.

We can put an end to this repetitive cycle of low performance, but not without an extensive commitment of resources on behalf of state leaders, district administrators, classroom teachers, and parents.

The gaps between reading and math can be overcome, as can the achievement gaps. Just as our reading and writing scores have risen dramatically over the last ten years, there's no reason to think we can't do the same in math.

Catching up requires the placement of standards-based curriculum in every district, as well as highly qualified and effective teachers who can deliver

proven, data-driven instruction at every level. We also need the capacity to assess all students for mathematics proficiency early and often, and then use that knowledge to offer personalized interventions designed to help students catch up and keep up.

This is already happening at many of our high-performing schools. It is time to incorporate these same best practices in every school across this state.

We do our children a disservice if they graduate without the skills and knowledge necessary to meet real-world demands. We can no longer just push the problem off for another decade and fail to educate our children.

It's really a matter of basic math. Ignoring the problem is just too costly.

How Does Your School Measure Up? - A New Program for the Washington Achievement Awards

This year, in partnership with OSPI, we gave out 174 [Washington Achievement Awards](#).

Award recipients were selected based on the [Washington State accountability index](#). The index contains extensive data on each school in the state. In our effort to create a more user-friendly data system, we have created the [2010 school look up tool](#). This excel program empowers users to get clear and comprehensive school performance data in reading, writing, math, science, and in the case of secondary schools, the extended graduation rate. That data also shows how low-income and non-low income students are performing, how a school has or has not improved over time, and how a school compares to peer schools with similar demographics.

This is a great tool for anyone looking for a clear window into a school's academic performance.

We encourage you to download the file ([excel](#)) and give it a try. We would also greatly appreciate your time in filling out a [very short survey](#). The data you provide will greatly help us continue to create a product that will meet the needs of our most important audience - you!

State Boards of Education Comparison - A National Study

The [National Association of State Boards of Education](#) released an [overview](#) of the composition and authority of 47 State Boards. Here's a synopsis:

States' Boards Composition

- 60 percent are comprised solely of Governor-appointed members.
- 25 percent are comprised of members seated solely by election.
- 11 percent (Washington included) are comprised of elected and appointed members.
- 4 percent are comprised by legislature-appointed members.

Student Members

- Of the four states with student members, Washington leads the pack with two non-voting student representatives.
- California, Tennessee, and Vermont each allow one student member on the Board.

Representative Term Length

- Term lengths range from two years (Guam) to nine years (West Virginia & Tennessee).
- Washington Board members have four-year terms, which is also the national average.

Chief Education Officer

- Washington joins 11 other states in selecting the chief education officer through general election.
- In the remaining 36 states, the chief education officer is appointed by either the Governor or the State Board.

Authority for Teacher Licensure

- Nearly 62 percent of the nation's state boards are the sole-governing authority for teacher licensure.
- In Washington, that authority resides with the [Professional Educator Standards Board](#).

Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

President Obama's [reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#) (ESEA) blueprint aims to keep what was positive about No Child Left Behind (NCLB), as ESEA is currently known, including requirements to disaggregate assessment data to measure achievement gaps, while addressing the major criticisms of the existing law. The proposal intends to eliminate the 'perverse incentives' in NCLB, which at worst encouraged states to lower standards and focus on test preparation. Specific elements of the blueprint include:

- Replacing the goal of all students proficient by 2014 with a focus on career and college-ready students with a soft 2020 deadline. States would adopt new standards and standards-aligned performance targets aligned. The focus would be on improvement and growth, not just overall performance.

- Retaining requirements to test annually in reading and math, but allowing states to assess academic performance in additional subjects and measure additional factors such as school climate. Data will continue to be transparent and public.
- Intervening in struggling schools: The bottom five percent of schools must choose one of four turnaround models. The next five percent would be on a warning list and the state would have flexibility in determining research-based interventions. States would need to take aggressive action in schools with the highest achievement gaps. States would also take over Title I spending in schools that do not make adequate performance gains within three years.
- Subjecting both states and districts to consequences and rewards.
- Allowing states flexibility in intervening with schools that do not meet achievement targets. State would be able to differentiate support for schools that, under old Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) rules, missed AYP in one area versus schools that did not meet the bar in multiple areas. Specifically, it would eliminate the mandate that struggling schools offer school choice and supplemental educational services, which drain resources from already struggling schools.
- Recognizing and rewarding high-poverty schools that show success in closing achievement gaps with additional funding.
- Ensuring states equitably distribute highly qualified teachers among high and low-poverty schools.
- Requiring states to develop a definition of effective teachers and principals using student performance as a major factor, and overhaul teacher and principal evaluation.

2010 Student Video Contest

- The Winners

The Washington State Board of Education is proud to announce the [winning videos](#) from the recently completed 2010 student video contest. This year's contest asked middle and high school students to create a short work supporting the importance of arts education.

For the high school category, Leah Andrews, Corrine Pruett, and Conrad Pearson from [Vashon High School](#) provided the highest-scoring video. The judges were impressed by its professionalism and ample student voice.

Our first place finishers in the middle school category are [Oakland Bay Junior High School's](#) Coreless Fletcher, Colby Fuller, and Priscilla Ramirez. In addition to the outstanding choir and perspective, the judges were especially pleased with the insight into the importance of the arts.

Our [YouTube Channel](#) features these two winning videos, several honorable mentions, and a host of other submissions. Be sure to take a look - you'll be glad you did!

Board Member Highlight

- Jared Costanzo - Student (Pasco)

For our newest Board member, May and June have been exciting months. Jared Costanzo, a soon-to-be junior at [Chiawana High School](#), has wrapped up a year of tough coursework, sealed up his reelection to Chiawana ASB, finished a strong high school soccer season, earned a spot on the Washington State Board of Education, and attended his first of several Board meetings.

Jared's Board membership puts him in very elite company, as students must be nominated and then apply to fill one of only two student spots, with one

representative from Western Washington and one from Eastern Washington. Jared's term, which began in May 2010, will run through the end of his senior year. He joins Anna Laura Kastama, a senior at the [Tacoma School of the Arts](#) and the sole Western Washington Representative.

"This whole experience has really been thrilling," said Jared. "I understand how valuable education can be, and for me to have the experience of potentially shaping education for kids across the state is really cool. I knew I wanted to get involved in education, and joining the Washington State Board of Education is an ideal place to start."

Edie Harding, the Executive Director of the Board, is a firm advocate of student participation. "Our student Board members are a vital component of our work. Both Anna Laura and Jared provide insights that can only come through a student's perspective. They are both outstanding Board members whom we are very fortunate to have."

Jared is approaching his time with the Board as an advocate for all students. "I definitely feel that I have a lot to learn," said Jared, "but I also want to do everything I can to make a positive difference for students in Washington. I know this experience will give me that opportunity."

Jared will have to balance school, extracurricular activities, friends, and teenage life with his commitment to the Board, which entails bimonthly meetings, a decent amount of research and reading, as well as an occasional plane ride from Pasco to Board events.

Jared is thrilled to take on the task, except for the turbulence that is so often a part of commuter flights. "That is something I can do without," said Jared.

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

Upcoming Board Meeting

[Northwest ESD 189](#)

1601 R. Avenue
Anacortes, Washington 98221-2276
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[Meeting materials](#) are available on our website prior to the meeting.

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