WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Statewide Indicators of Education System Health

2018 SUMMARY REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS

Photo courtesy of Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP): Lopez Island Farm Education Program

Photo courtesy of Sherman STEAM

Summary and Background Information

The State Board of Education (SBE), with assistance from other state education agencies,[1] reports on the statewide indicators of educational system health established in RCW 28A.150.550 and recommends evidence-based reforms to improve the status of the indicators. The legislation was meant to help the legislature understand whether reform efforts and investments are making positive progress in the overall education of students and whether adjustments are necessary.

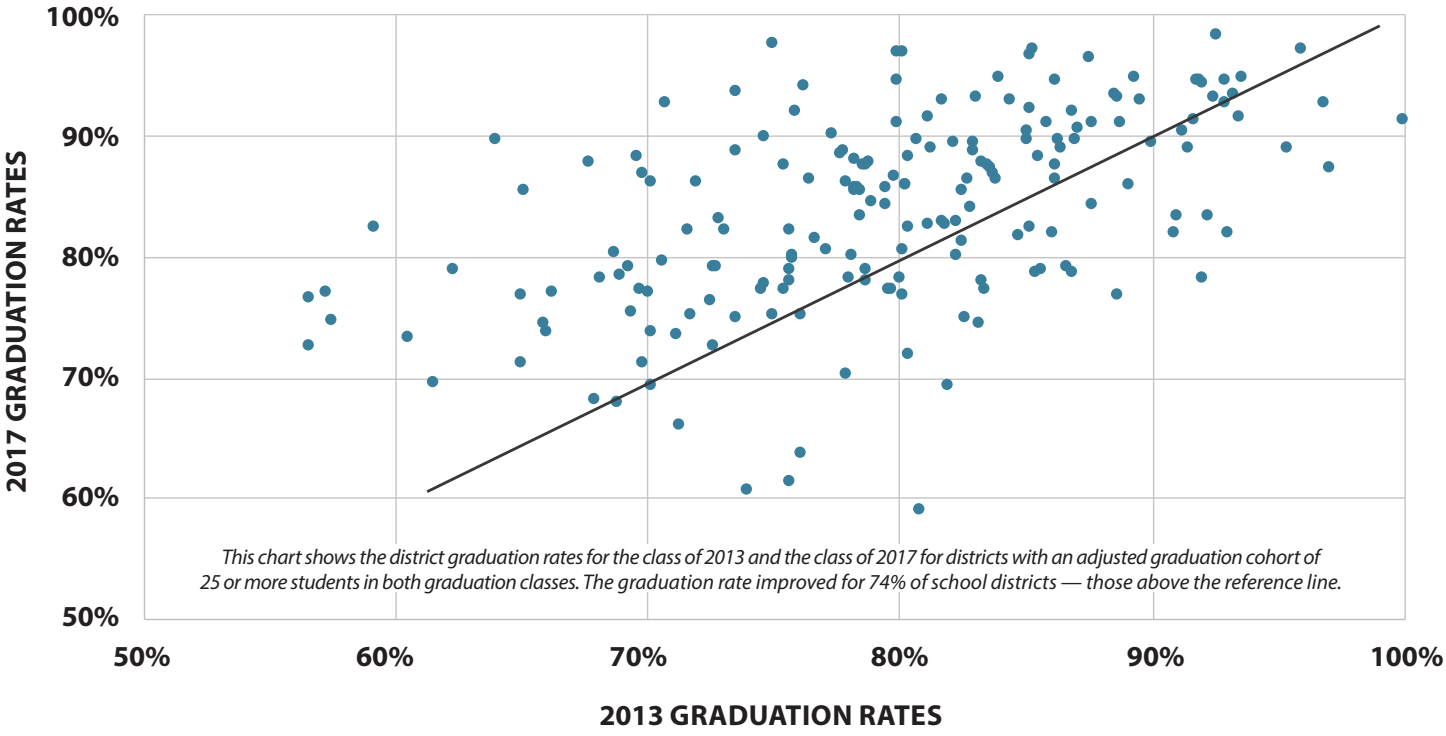
This is the fourth report on the Indicators of Educational System Health. As you read this report and the supplemental data tables and figures, be mindful that this process is not merely to report on the results of each indicator, but to make recommendations about appropriate reforms in the system. The Board has intentionally aligned the recommendations of this report with the 2019–23 Strategic Plan.

At the fall 2016 SBE meetings, members spoke of the importance of aligning the performance goals of the statewide indicators to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) long-term goals. Also at that time and during discussions at prior meetings, members suggested that the peer states utilized in the comparisons be updated periodically to reflect the changing characteristics of Washington. Finally, members expressed the desire for staff to engage with partner agencies earlier in the reporting year to ensure that the partner agencies have ample time to provide input and to guide the development of the report. In response to member discussions and in consultation with partner agencies, the following changes were implemented for December 2018.

- **The SBE convened a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to advance the work on the Statewide Indicators of the Educational System Health report.**
- **Performance goals were revised and reset in a manner that aligns each with the ESSA goalsetting methodology.**

[1] Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, Education Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee, Washington Student Achievement Council, Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, Department of Children, Youth, and Families, Education Research and Data Center, Professional Educator Standards Board, and Office of the Governor.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES



- **The annual targets and long-term goals for students with a disability were recalculated following guidance from the OSPI that eliminates the reporting of Level-2 Basic proficiency.**
- **The list of peer states has been revised to better match the characteristics and structure of Washington's economy.**
- **This report proposes five evidence-based reforms or recommendations put forth for the purpose of improving Washington's educational system, each of which are explicitly aligned with the SBE strategic plan for 2019–23.**

In the 2017 and 2018 legislative sessions, the legislature passed and the Governor signed into law legislation that increased funding for education and made other important changes to our K–12 system. Evidence of the system improvement will not be borne out in educational outcomes for years because institutional change requires time. The supplemental data tables and figures show that the overall performance on nearly all of the indicators is incrementally improving, but like many other states, large performance gaps based on race, poverty, and other characteristics persist.

For example, the four-year high school graduation rate increased a modest 3.3 percentage points from the class of 2013 to the class of 2017. A small annual change, but three of every four school districts granting high school diplomas posted gains on the high school graduation rate. On the image above, each school district's graduation rate for 2013 is plotted against its graduation rate for 2017. Dots above the diagonal line represent a district with an increase in the graduation rate from 2013 to 2017, and a greater distance from the diagonal line indicates a larger increase. While it is appropriate to acknowledge the incremental successes we have experienced, it is also important not to lose a sense of urgency about the size and scope of our achievement and opportunity gaps, which present as early as age five, and persist in the data to age 25 and beyond. We can and must do better for Washington's children.

The authorizing legislation requires that the performance on the indicators be reported on for the All Students group, and disaggregated into the seven race and ethnicity student groups, and the special programs student groups (English learner, low income, and special education). For any given indicator, the aspirational goal is the same, which means that student groups performing below the state average must make larger annual gains to remain on track to meet the goal. Student groups performing above the state average are able to remain on

STATUS OF THE SIX REQUIRED INDICATORS OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM HEALTH

	Change Over 3 Years*	Met Annual Target	Comparable to Peer States**	Top 10 % Nationally**
Kindergarten Readiness	+ 2.5	NO	NO	NO
4th-Grade Reading	+ 0.3	NO	YES	YES
8th-Grade Math	- 0.3	NO	YES	YES
High School Graduation	+ 1.2	NO	NO	NO
Readiness for College Coursework	+ 1.1	NO	YES	YES
Post-secondary Attainment & Workforce	+ 0.5	NO	*N/A*	*N/A*

**Change shown as percentage points.*

***The peer state and national comparisons utilize a combination of measures comprised of the recommended measures, nationwide administered assessments, and other publicly available information.*

track to meet the goal by making smaller annual gains. For the English learner student group and the students with a disability group, meeting the annual improvement targets becomes a real challenge as the most successful students are removed from the group when they achieve the academic level of their peers.

Status of the Statutorily Required Indicators

Statewide, we are seeing overall progress on the six required indicators of system health when the All Students group is considered (see above). However, progress by some student groups is mixed and the degree to which some indicators are improving is less than desired.

The overall performance on Kindergarten Readiness via the WaKIDS whole-child assessment is up 2.5 percentage points (pp) over three administrations, but the readiness of Native American and Pacific Islander children declined by approximately 4.7 and 4.8 percentage points, respectively.

- **On the 4th-grade reading indicator, the students with a disability group improved 3.5 percentage points from 2017, but the English learner group's performance declined by 4.0 percentage points from 2016.**
- **On the 8th-grade math indicator, the All Students' group performance increased by 0.9 percentage points from 2017, but the American Indian, Asian, and Black student groups' performance declined by 0.4 to 2.6 percentage points (pp) from 2017.**
- **The performance on the measure of High School Graduation for the class of 2017 is up fractionally for the All Students group, up for the Native American (3.9 pp), Black (2.7 pp), and Hispanic (3.1 pp) student groups, but is down fractionally for the Asian and Pacific Islander student groups.**

MOST RECENT PERFORMANCE FOR THE "ALL STUDENTS" GROUP ON THE STATEWIDE INDICATORS

Indicator	3-Year Trend	2018 Actual	2018 Target
Kindergarten Readiness	IMPROVING	46.7%	51.7%
4th-Grade Reading	UNCHANGED	57.3%	58.7%
8th-Grade Math	UNCHANGED	47.5%	50.9%
High School Graduation	IMPROVING	79.3%*	80.4%
Readiness for College Coursework	IMPROVING & TO BE UPDATED	73.9%*	75.5%
Post-secondary Attainment & Workforce	IMPROVING & TO BE UPDATED	42%*	44%

**Represents the most recent year of data.*

The separate supplemental data tables document provides a great deal of information on the educational system performance through the disaggregation of the indicator performance by race/ethnicity student groups, low income status, and participation in special education or bilingual education. The figures comprising the bulk of the supplemental report show that students of certain race ethnicities (e.g. Asian) perform higher than other groups and are closer to meeting long-term goals. Previous SBE work disaggregating groups to the sub-ethnic level clearly demonstrates that some Asian student groups (e.g. Korean) perform at a high level but other Asian student groups (e.g. Thai and Vietnamese) perform considerably lower. Inequitable outcomes are not always obvious as there are no model or exceptional student groups, rather, the inequities are sometimes concealed in the educational system.

The Washington educational system is improving but not to the degree where most student groups are meeting annual targets (see above). In other words, many student groups are not on track to meet the long-term goals aligned with Washington's ESSA state plan.

Language in the legislation provides a clear picture of the legislature's aspirational goals for Washington: an education system ranked in the top ten percent nationally and comparable to the education systems of other high performing states. In selecting and defining the indicators to be monitored and reported upon, the legislature sent a clear message about what are the important measures for the educational system and what milestones are important for students to meet. The indicators are reasonably well suited to address three overarching questions about Washington's education system.

1. **Are young children prepared to learn as they transition into the K–12 system?**
2. **Do students have access to quality schools and programs?**
3. **Are students provided an opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge to be prepared for civic engagement, careers, postsecondary education, and lifelong learning?**

What evidence do we have showing that young children are prepared to learn as they transition into the K–12 system?

The legislature directed the SBE to annually monitor the percentage of kindergarten students who meet the benchmarks on all six domains of the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developmental Skills (WaKIDS). To provide additional information on this question, the SBE recommended that the state monitor the early childhood education enrollment patterns for young children before entering the K–12 education system.

For a number of years, the percentage of Washington three- and four-year olds enrolling in early childhood education has hovered around 40 percent, but that number is inching higher, as the state has been expanding the number of Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) full day and part day slots annually. Approximately one-half of all incoming kindergarten students are kindergarten-ready as measured by the WaKIDS.

- **In the fall 2018, approximately 53 percent of White kindergartners were kindergarten-ready but only 31 percent of Hispanic kindergartners were kindergarten-ready, a performance gap of 22 percentage points at the time of transitioning into the K–12 education system.**

The percentage of young children who are kindergarten-ready is substantially lower for Native American, Black, Hispanic, and Pacific Islander young children, who are less likely to enroll in a private early childhood education and must compete for state funded ECEAP slots. The percentage of young children who are kindergarten-ready is expected to increase as Washington's ECEAP continues to expand and as program quality improves under solid funding in the coming years.

RECOMMENDATION:

Expand access to affordable, high-quality early childhood education for all of Washington's children, particularly children of color and children in poverty.

Do Washington students have access to quality schools and programs?

The statutorily required indicators are not particularly well suited to address a qualitative question such as this, but the SBE monitors some measures that shed light on the question. It would be safe to say that a "quality school" is one in which students feel safe, valued, listened to, and take control of their learning. Also, that every student has access to an effective and qualified teacher or role model at the school that each student can relate to or connect with.

RECOMMENDATION:

Improve early learning and transitions within the K–12 continuum. Expand the availability of graduation specialists and career specialists in high school. Increase equity in access to accelerated learning opportunities, including dual credit programs.

RECOMMENDATION:

Promote programs and policies that enable and encourage meaningful family and community engagement at every level of the education system to ensure schools are responsive to the needs of communities. Expand use of personalized learning strategies and project-based and career-connected learning opportunities, including credit for competencies acquired in the workplace, through volunteer work, or other extracurricular activities. Implement emerging and effective practices in the teaching and learning of math. Scale these efforts and share effective practices to implement continual curriculum improvement using research-based models to improve teaching and learning. Ensuring relevancy and personalization for students is valued.

The SBE made the recommendation to monitor disproportionate exclusionary discipline because access to education is greatly diminished when a student is excluded from day-to-day learning opportunities. Students of color are subjected to exclusionary discipline interventions at a disproportionately high rate, most often for "other inappropriate behavior" which is ill-defined.

- **Native American students and Black students are more than twice as likely to experience an exclusionary discipline intervention as a White student.**

A large number of schools in Washington administer school climate and culture surveys, parent surveys, and educator surveys as a means to quantify the otherwise qualitative measures of school climate and culture. Analyses are showing that positive school climate/culture has a positive impact on student well-being, student educational outcomes, and teacher and parent/guardian satisfaction. Notwithstanding the demonstrable benefits, Washington has yet to implement a statewide school climate/culture survey for the purpose of improving climate and culture in school buildings and to help quantify school quality across the state.

RECOMMENDATION:

Develop a statewide framework for school safety and mental health to provide all schools with access to mental health professionals in schools with links to community-based mental health and other healthcare providers, wrap-around supports for students,[2] professional development to support mental health, social emotional learning, trauma-informed instruction, positive behavioral interventions and support (PBIS), and emergency preparedness for all educators and other school staff. Shift the focus of discipline to an integrated student supports system that keeps youth engaged in school and out of the juvenile justice system. Strengthen current high school health learning standards to include information on mental health relevant to students and improve mental health instruction in K–12. Expand efforts to support the emotional well-being of our teachers. Expand efforts to ensure students have agency and input in their learning environments.

Which students are provided an opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge to be prepared for civic engagement, careers, postsecondary education, and lifelong learning?

Like many educational systems across the country, Washington's educational system is quite effective for the White middle/upper class and is much less effective for students of color, students from low income households, students with a disability, and students whose home language is something other than English. The inequities of the educational system are evident from the educational outcome measures included in the statewide indicators.

- **On the 4th-grade reading assessment, approximately 65 percent of White students meet the proficiency benchmark but only 40 percent of Hispanic students meet the benchmark, a performance gap of 25 percentage points.**
- **On the 8th-grade math assessment, approximately 54 percent of White students meet the proficiency benchmark but only 25 percent of Black students meet the benchmark, a performance gap of 34 percentage points.**
- **On the high school graduation measure, approximately 82 percent of White students graduate in four years but only 60 percent of Native American students graduate from high school in four years, a performance gap of 22 percentage points.**

[2] For example: Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol (WISSP)

RECOMMENDATION:

Increase investments to expand high quality, publicly funded learning opportunities including extended day, summer learning opportunities and extracurricular activities as well as transportation and other supports necessary to ensure equitable access. Increase investments and professional development to address the needs of diverse learners including expansion of dual language and immersion programs beginning in elementary school and continuing through high school. Encourage intentional consideration of culturally responsive, flexible calendars and scheduling and alternatives to the traditional 180-day calendar. Recruit and retain educators and administrators who represent the diversity of the students served, and innovative educational leaders who are committed to eliminating biases, barriers, and opportunity gaps. Provide additional professional development opportunities for educators and administrators.

RECOMMENDATION:

Provide targeted funding to schools and students who need it most, including support for increased access to mental health services, wrap-around supports, Special Education, and English Language Learners. Fully fund dual credit programs in all subject areas to eliminate disparities related to cost. Revise the prototypical school funding model to better reflect needs of the students schools serve; to include a specific student to mental health professional ratio, and to increase the ratio of instructional staff to students (reduce class size). Increase funding for professional development to strengthen, develop, and retain strong, sustainable, diverse school leadership at every level. Provide funding to recruit and retain teachers, staff, and school leaders to reflect the diversity of the school and community. Provide adequate state funding for school and district facilities and change the capital funding threshold to require a simple majority for passage of bonds.

Conclusion

Washington failed to meet the annual targets for the statewide indicators of the educational system health and the reader is directed to the supplemental data tables and other information to learn more about the educational system health. The SBE strategic plan for 2019–23, adopted at the November Board meeting, provides a more complete set of recommended system reforms.

More: http://sbe.wa.gov/education-system-health

Photo courtesy of AWSP: Larchmont Elementary