

June 19, 2013 Special Board Meeting

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Olympia, Washington

State Board of Education (SBE) Board Meeting Minutes

Members Attending: Ms. Connie Fletcher ,Ms. Phyllis Frank (via K20), Mr. Bob Hughes, Ms. Judy Jennings, Mr. Kevin Laverty, Mr. Tre' Maxie (via telephone), Ms. Kristina Mayer (via telephone), Ms.Cynthia McMullen (via K20), Ms. Mary Jean Ryan (via telephone), Ms. Deborah Wilds (via telephone), Mr. Peter Maier (11)

Members Excused: Chair Jeff Vincent, Mr. Randy Dorn, Ms. Mara Childs, Mr. Eli Ulmer (4)

Staff Attending: Mr. Ben Rarick, Ms. Sarah Rich, Ms. Sarah Lane, Mr. Jack Archer
Ms. Denise Ross (5)

The meeting was called to order at 1:07 p.m. by Connie Fletcher.

Ms. Fletcher made note that the Board is accepting input and public feedback only for the Revised Achievement Index at today's meeting and that it would not be an action item until the July SBE board meeting. The only action item for today's meeting will be the finalization of the rubrics for evaluation of charter authorizer applications.

Mr. Rarick gave a personnel update to the Board, which included the resignation of SBE's Policy Director, Ms. Sarah Rich. Ms. Rich, who has accepted a promotional opportunity with North Thurston Public Schools, was recognized and thanked for her work on the Achievement Index and various other programs during her employment.

Mr. Rarick introduced Ms. Sarah Lane as SBE's new Communications Manager.

CONSIDERATION OF REVISED RUBRICS FOR REVIEW OF CHARTER AUTHORIZER APPLICATIONS

Mr. Jack Archer, Director of Basic Education Oversight

In May 2013, staff and consultant, William Haft, presented to the Board a review and discussion of proposed rubrics for charter school authorizer applications. The rubrics are a tool used by evaluators in reviewing the applications and a source of information to districts on how the applications will be measured. The source of the rubrics is the charter school statute RCW 28A.710, the SBE adopted rules and NASCA Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing. After the Board discussion on May 9, members asked SBE staff to make revisions of the draft rubrics along the following directions:

- Strengthen the rubric in Section 1, regarding the district's strategic vision, on how propriety will be made to proposals serving at-risk students.

- Make the rubric when possible less compliance-focused and more evaluative in nature. When appropriate, require applicants to provide evidence of meeting criteria for approval.
- Make rubrics clearer and more specific for applicant evaluators and the Board. The definition of at-risk students, for example, should be incorporated into the rubric for the applicants and evaluators.

Mr. Archer presented the proposed revised rubrics, as requested by the Board, with revisions made from the original document presented to the Board in May. The changes made to the revised rubric were illustrated with comparisons to the original rubrics.

Members felt the revised rubric was much stronger in addressing at-risk students, more objective and clearer.

CONSIDERATION OF REVISED ACHIEVEMENT INDEX, AND ACHIEVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY WORKGROUP (AAW) INPUT

Mr. Ben Rarick, Executive Director

Ms. Sarah Rich, Policy Director

As described in the Washington State ESEA Flexibility Request, the State Board of Education (SBE) and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) have been working through a process to revise an existing state metric, the Achievement Index, to meet ESEA flexibility requirements. The original timeline included submission to the US Department of Education by June 30, 2013, but due to pending legislation in our state legislature, the Board postponed submission in order to ensure that an immediate revision is not necessary.

At the May 8-9, 2013 SBE meeting, the Board approved a model revised Index for final review by the Achievement and Accountability Workgroup (AAW) on June 12. AAW members reviewed and voted on whether they supported the Index: 12 total votes were in favor, four votes were pro with concerns, and one vote was opposed. The four votes of concern were generally in favor of to the Index, but believed that any Index should include a new way of measuring English language learners achievement. These members recommended the addition of an “Ever ELL” cell in the Index.

Public Comment

Location: Olympia , OSPI

Jim Kowalkowski–Davenport School District.

Thanked SBE for their commitment to not using the Index to grade schools. A sixth tier for the Index that would prevent people from using the grades A-F system to label schools is needed. When grading schools, there should be other factors based on more than just tests. The phasing-in of grade 11 assessment data for the 2015 Index is too soon, especially for smaller districts. School districts are not currently using it yet and the test is rigorous. A three year average would be better because it’s been used before. The Revised Index will penalize districts that have a high graduation rate, but experience a decline. Suggestions made are for a rate to be set so districts that have a decline in graduation rates would not be penalized unless they declined to a specific rate. There needs to be more support from the Legislature for dual credit and certification.

Peter Bysma – Renton School District

The Revised Index has several positive features, such as the creation of one system of accountability ending the flawed AYP system that generate the current Priority, Focus and Emerging schools designations. Federal requirements of adding student growth, all subgroups and college and career readiness to the Revised Index makes it relatively easy to understand in the Revised Index. Some concerns are that the process used to develop the Index lacks technical analysis that should take place to see if the details of the Index would create a system that identifies high and low performing schools. The measure of the SGP growth model is difficult to understand and is based on a specific type of norm-referenced ranking that can be misleading.

Ramona Hattendorf–Washington State PTA

Ms. Hattendorf read a statement from the Bellevue PTA supporting the work of the AAW. There is concern of how accurate the data in the Index is around English language learners and special education students. What will be done with special education who take alternative assessment and ensuring they reach their potential is vital. The state must have awareness and strategies in place to ensure that the quality of a child's IEP and that the implementation of the IEP is appropriate. The alternative assessment system in place is not providing that same protection for special education children.

Jack Monpas-Huber – Shoreline School District

Mr. Monpas thanked the SBE for their work on the Revised Achievement Index for recognizing excellence in schools. There is concern with student growth percentile, which is the metric the proposed Index will use for measuring growth. Student growth percentiles are not a clear and transparent methodology. There is no benefit to adopting a difficult Index when a simple one already exists. Mr. Monpas-Huber encouraged consideration of another method to review growth and improvement .

Location: K20, Spokane ESD 101

Dr. Gene Sementi - West Valley School District

The current Index has been a good, useful tool. The Revised Index is an improvement and will also be valuable tool, but there is potential for misuse. The A-F legislation will use the Revised Index as a tool for identifying schools based on the A-F scale. This scale will be paramount to a stack ranking comparison that will end collaboration and innovation. The Washington Policy Center has published an A-F scale ranking schools using the Revised Index tool. The Revised Index has potential for further misuse as leverage for some anti-public education groups and SBE should proceed cautiously.

Elissa Dyson–Onion Creek School District Board

Ms. Dyson appreciates the SBE for their efforts in restricting the grading of schools. The majority of small districts have fallen in the D and F category based on the A-F scale ranking released by the Washington Policy Center. The new Index includes all testing scores other than the ones in school districts groups with less than 10 students and that number has increased to 20, but it's not clear if that includes total population of the school or actual grade level testing. The application of the metrics being used for small school districts being tested provide unreliable results and gives perception that schools are not succeeding at the level they truly are. Improvement cannot be described with groups of three or six students.

Location: K20, Yakima ESD 105

Kevin Chase – Grandview School Districts

Mr. Chase supports a clear accountability system for districts and believes they help drive the effort forward. The purpose of the Index needs to be more clearly defined. The conflict SBE is facing is attempting to solve problems using one solution. Mr. Chase recommended SBE to consider the facts that success builds confidence and changes of academic performance without labeling schools as struggling and low performance.

Kevin McCabe – Zillah School District

The term struggling gives the message that a district is doing poorly. The Index does not have an A-F ranking scale, but the term “struggling” will be perceived as a school in the F ranking category. The automatic placement of a school in the struggling category that is determined to be a focus school is concerning. There are schools considered struggling because of their special education population even though the rest of the population is doing well. There is a perception from the community that the school is failing when in fact that is not accurate. Mr. McCabe supports the idea of having an Index and accountability system, but does not support an Index that has the wrong intention.

Becky Imler – Wapato School District

Ms. Imler is concerned with aspects of the proposed changes for the Achievement Index. The draft suggests that the Struggling category will include the bottom 15 percent of schools in Washington including both Priority and Focus schools compared to 5 percent of schools in the Exemplary category. This lack of balance sends a concerning message and there should be a review of this change with a larger percentage being designated to the top category.

Location: K20, Wenatchee ESD 171

Erin Qu – Orchard Middle School

Ms. Qu believes in school accountability. The Colorado Growth Model used as a metric tool for accountability is a concern. It measures absolute score gains as opposed to measuring individual growth in students. Students who are significantly below grade level in reading struggle to reach proficiency in one school year. School with such students will have low scores or percentiles using the Colorado Growth Model regardless of the efforts of the school. The Colorado Growth Model will not reflect improvement of a student’s learning in one school year. Ms. Qu encouraged the Board to consider other models.

Business Items

Consideration of Revised Rubrics for Review of Charter Authorizer Applications

Motion made to approve the rubrics for evaluation of charter authorizer applications, as revised at the direction of the Board.

The motion to approve the rubrics for evaluation of charter authorizer applications as revised at the direction of the Board passed on a roll call vote. Those voting yes: Fletcher, Maxie, Ryan, Wilds, Frank, Hughes, Jennings, Laverty, Mayer, McMullen, and Maier .

Seconded

Motion was adopted.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:06 p.m..