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May 6, 2008

TO: Edie Harding, Executive Director
             State Board of Education

FROM: Kristi England and Sara Jones

RE: **Update to the Board**
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The State Board of Education (SBE) continues to move forward on creating policies to improve student achievement to ensure all students are prepared to succeed in postsecondary education, the 21st century workforce and citizenship. APCO continues to support this work by providing overall communications strategy and implementation support to SBE. This memo provides an update on our recent efforts, on behalf of SBE, and provides a brief overview of the communications strategy for the Meaningful High School Diploma work.

1. Update

- **E-newsletter:** In the next few days, SBE will send out its first-ever e-newsletter – one of the efforts to better communicate with all of SBE's partners in education, from parents, students and educators, to business and community leaders. We expect to distribute these newsletters monthly, with special notifications to partners for key events, such as community meetings. Our first e-newsletter will be distributed to over 2100 individuals around the state, including legislators, school board directors, superintendents, community leaders, and key stakeholders.

- **Media Outreach:** APCO continues to maintain relationships with key media contacts and provide updates on SBE's work, to include distributing press releases on the math and science standards, as well as updating key messages and media materials.

- **Website:** APCO worked closely with SBE staff to make content updates to the Web site, improve usability, and increase opportunities for feedback and communication with the public. APCO will continue to work with SBE to add and update content.

- **Logo:** APCO is continuing to work with SBE to develop a new logo that more accurately reflects the mission and work of the Board.

- **Video:** APCO and Michael Cuddy Productions have been working closely to develop a short compelling video that focuses on students and conveys the following three key concepts: 1) every child, regardless of race or income deserve a high quality education, 2) it is not okay to let any student fall through the cracks, and 3) we are all responsible for ensuring that students get the education they need to succeed. The video will be shown to the Board at the May 14, 2008 Board meeting, and will be used in upcoming community meetings.

- **Community Leader Interviews:** In March, APCO conducted telephone interviews on behalf of SBE with 17 community leaders from across the state representing a number of groups, including minority and low-income communities. The goal of the research was to gain a better understanding of the expectations for schools and the education system, as well as opinions on the work of SBE, among these communities. A full summary report is available for review. (An executive summary is contained in the Board packet.)

2. Communications Strategy for the Meaningful High School Diploma

SBE has released a proposed graduation credit framework, Core 24, to better prepare students for life after high school. The potential change in credit requirements will affect a broad array of stakeholders from students, parents and educators, to employers and institutions of higher education. Getting the word out about potential changes and receiving useful feedback will be important to build the consensus needed to successfully implement a new policy on graduation requirements.

Included below is a brief outline of the communication strategy and tactics to support the Meaningful High School Diploma work.

A. Media outreach

To support the Meaningful High School Diploma (MHSD) work, APCO will focus on the following four key efforts:

- **Opinion Editorials:** APCO will work to leverage existing and developing support for SBE's work on MHSD by reaching out to stakeholders to begin engaging them in media efforts by encouraging them to place op-eds and letters to the editor in key publications across the state.

  Timeline: May to July

- **Media briefings:** Before the finalization of the graduation requirements, APCO will set up media phone or desk side briefings with key reporters to inform them of the proposed graduation requirements and encourage them to cover the draft credit framework.

  Timeline: May to July

- **Press releases:** We will create and distribute press releases and conduct media outreach to print, radio and television outlets statewide highlighting the finalization of the graduation requirements.

  Timeline: July

- **Editorial Boards:** When the graduation credit framework is finalized, APCO will schedule editorial boards for SBE board members and staff to explain the graduation requirements to top-tier papers across the state.

  Timeline: July

B. Community Outreach
Awareness of SBE's role as a catalyst for education reform among stakeholders is growing. To foster support for SBE's work, the Board must be seen as reaching out to stakeholders in a way that is proactive, comprehensive and sincere.

- **Stakeholder Briefings:** APCO will work with SBE to provide one-on-one briefings to key stakeholders/organizations. These briefings will be a way for Board members and SBE staff to explain proposed recommendations and policy changes and encourage collaboration with key education, community, and business leaders. The briefings will provide genuine opportunities for feedback from stakeholders, while ensuring that the feedback is constructive and assists SBE in their work moving forward. APCO will provide lists, briefing and all logistical support for the briefings.

  Timeline: On-going

- **Community Meetings:** SBE plans to hold public meetings on the Meaningful High School Diploma (MHSD) and System Performance Accountability (SPA) draft recommendations in late spring 2008.

  These meetings are intended not only to share information on Core 24 and a proposed accountability system, but also to receive feedback from interested parties. These meetings will be designed to provide an opportunity for SBE to deliver its messages and proposed actions in a compelling way and gather feedback, while building a sense of urgency to implement the proposed solutions.

  Timeline: Meeting Dates - Spokane, June 9; Yakima, June 10; and Tacoma, June 11.

- **Online Survey:** In addition to community meetings, APCO will develop an online survey on the proposed graduation requirements to collect useful feedback for SBE and provide an opportunity for additional public input. A link to the survey will be posted on the Web site, as well as distributed to the e-newsletter list.

  Timeline: Late May – Early June

- **E-newsletter**: APCO will also send out an e-newsletter that highlights the draft graduation requirements proposal and publicizes the community meetings and survey.

  Timeline: Late May

Tier	Assigned to	ORGANIZATION	FIRST	LAST	TITLE	ADDRESS	EMAIL
1	Mary Jean Ryan	Alliance for Education	Patrick	D'Amelio	President/CEO	509 Olive Way, Suite 500; Seattle, WA 98101-2556	patrickd@alliance4ed.org
1	Jeff Vincent	Association of Washington Business	Donna	Steward	Governmental Affairs	PO Box 658, Olympia, WA 98507-0658	donnas@awb.org
1	Jack Schuster / Amy Bragdon	Association of Washington School Principals	Gary	Kipp	Executive Director	1021 8th Ave. S.E.; Olympia, WA 98501	gary@awsp.org
1	Mary Jean Ryan	City of Seattle Office for Education	Holly	Miller	Director	PO Box 94649; Seattle, WA 98124-4649	Holly.Miller@seattle.gov
1	Mary Jean Ryan	College Success Foundation	Susan	Pollack			spollack@waedfoundation.org
1	Mary Jean Ryan	College Success Foundation	Deborah	Wilds	President	1605 NW Sammamish Road; Suite 100; Issaquah, WA 98027	info@collegesuccessfoundation.org
1	Kris Mayer/Edie Harding	Education First Consulting	Mark	Frazer			marc.frazer@comcast.net
1	Amy Bragdon	Greater Spokane Valley Chamber of Commerce	Eldonna	Shaw	President & CEO	9507 E. Sprague; Spokane Valley, WA 99206	eldonna@spokanevalleychamber.org
1	Sheila Fox / Kathe Taylor	Higher Education Coordinating Board	Ann	Daley	Executive Director	917 Lakeridge Way; Olympia, WA 98504-3430	annd@hecb.wa.gov
1	MaryJean Ryan	League of Education Voters	Chris	Korsmo	Executive Director	P.O. Box 1721; Seattle, WA 98111	chris@educationvoters.org
1	Jeff Vincent	Partnership for Learning/College & Work Ready Agenda			Executive Director	500 Union Street, Suite 745 Seattle, WA 98101	info@partnership4learning.org
1	Warren Smith	Stand for Children	Shannon	Campion	State Director	4000 Aurora Avenue, North; Suite 203; Seattle, WA 98103	shannon@stand.org
1	Mary Jean Ryan/Warren Smith	Tabor 100	Kevin	Washington			washinkc@comcast.net
1	Mary Jean Ryan/Warren Smith	Tabor 100	Leon	Rowland	President	5703 S. Fletcher Street; Seattle, WA 98118	skip@bannercross.com
1	Mary Jean Ryan/Warren Smith	Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle	James	Kelly	President/CEO	105 14th Avenue Seattle WA, 98122	
1	Steve Floyd / Phyllis Bunker Frank	Washington Association for Career and Technical Education	Kathleen	Lopp	Executive Director	PO Box 47200, Olympia, WA 98504-7200	
1	Steve Floyd / Phyllis Bunker Frank	Washington Association of Occupational Educators	Darlene	Edwards	Board President		waoe@waoeinfo.org
1	Steve DalPorto/Edie Harding	Washington Association of School Administrators	Paul	Rosier	Executive Director	825 Fifth Avenue SE, Olympia WA 98501	prosier@wasa-oly.org
1	Lorilyn Roller/New Student	Washington Association of Student Councils	Susan	Fortin	Director of Student Leadership	Association of Washington School Principals; 1021 8th Ave. S.E., Olympia, WA 98501-1500	susanf@awsp.org
1	Mary Jean Ryan/Bernal Baca	Washington Education Association	Mary	Lindquist	President	PO Box 9100; Federal Way, WA 98063-9100	mlindquist@washingtonea.org
1	Jack Schuster	Washington Federation of Independent Schools	Judy	Jennings	Executive Director	435 Main Avenue South, Renton, WA 98057	jjennings@wfis.org
1	Jeff Vincent	Washington Roundtable	Stephen	Mullin	President	520 Pike St., Suite 1212; Seattle, WA 98101-4001	
1	Bernal Baca	Washington State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce	Cristobal	Guillen	Executive Director	P.O. Box 21925; Seattle, WA 98111-3925	crisg99@msn.com
1	Linda Lamb	Washington State PTA	Laura	Bay	President	2003 65th Avenue West; Tacoma WA 98466-6215	oatkins@wastatepta.org
1	Steve Floyd	Washington State School Director's Association	Martharose	Laffey	Executive Director	221 College Street NE, Olympia, WA 98516	M.Laffey@wssda.org
1	Steve Floyd / Phyllis Bunker Frank	Washington Workforce Association	Tim	Probst	CEO	601 Main Street ~ Suite 403; Vancouver, WA 98660	timprobst@washingtonworkforce.org
1	Steve Floyd / Phyllis Bunker Frank	Workforce Training Board	Eleni	Papadakis	Executive Direct	128 10th Avenue SW; Olympia, WA 98504-3105	epapadakis@wtb.wa.gov
2	Warren Smith	Communities and Parents for Public Schools	Charles	Rolland	Executive Director	Communities and Parents for Public Schools	charlesr@cppsofseattle.org
2	MaryJean Ryan	Hate Free Zone	Pramila	Jayapal	Executive Director	1227 S. Weller Street, Suite A; Seattle, Washington 98144	info@hatefreezone.org

2	Warren Smith	Northwest Minority Business Council	Kenneth	Jones	President	320 Andover Park East, Suite 205,Tukwila, WA 98188-7635	kjones@nmbc.biz
2	Edie Harding	Paul G. Allen Foundation	Peter	Berliner	Program Director	505 5th Avenue South, Suite 900; Seattle, WA 98104	info@pgafamilyfoundation.org
2	Mary Jean Ryan	Social Venture Partners	Susan	Fairchilde	Grants and Advocacy Manager		susanf@svpseattle.org
2	Mary Jean Ryan	Social Venture Partners	Paul	Shoemaker	Executive Director	1601 2nd Ave., Suite 615; Seattle WA 98101-1539	paulshoe@svpseattle.org
2	Eric Liu	Technology Access Foundation	Trish	Millines Dziko	Executive Director	3803 S. Edmunds St. Suite A, Seattle, WA 98118	trishmi@techaccess.org
2	Edie Harding/Maryjean Ryan	The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation				PO Box 23350; Seattle, WA 98102	info@gatesfoundation.org
2	Jeff Vincent	Washington Biotechnology and Biomedical Association	Patti	McKinnell Davis	Director of Public Affairs	2324 Eastlake Avenue East, Suite 500; Seattle, WA 98102	patti@washbio.org
2	Kris Mayer	Washington Women's Employment & Education	Robin	Lester	CEO	515 West Harrison, Suite 208; Kent, WA 98032	RobinL@wwee.org
1	Jeff Vincent	Battelle Foundation					
2	Mary Jean Ryan	WSA (Washington Software Association) - now Washington Technology Industry Association	Ken	Myer	President & CEO	2200 Alaskan Way, Suite 390, Seattle, WA 98121	info@washingtontechnology.org

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April 16, 2008

TO: Edie Harding, Executive Director
                 State Board of Education

FROM: Kristi England and Sara Jones

RE: **Stakeholder Briefings**

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Awareness of the State Board of Education's (SBE) role as a catalyst for education reform among stakeholders is growing. To foster support for SBE's work, it must be seen as reaching out to stakeholders in a way that is proactive, comprehensive, and sincere.

To further this effort, APCO will work with SBE to provide one-on-one briefings to key stakeholders/organizations. These briefings will be a way for Board members and SBE staff to explain proposed recommendations and policy changes and encourage collaboration with these key education, community, and business leaders.

While it's not feasible to assume that reform can happen without opposition, reaching out to concerned stakeholders prevents SBE from being put on the defensive and will help lay the foundation for the successful implementation of SBE's recommendation.

Briefings

Goal: An open conversation with key stakeholders that allows the Board and SBE staff to provide key updates and solicit input for proposed initiatives.

1. What's expected of Board members?

Along with SBE staff, APCO has developed an initial, prioritized list of stakeholders to be targeted for these briefings. The list is included as an attachment to this document. Board members and SBE staff are being asked to meet with specific organizations based on existing relationships and areas of expertise. During the meetings, Board members will provide details on proposed policy recommendations and solicit input and reaction to SBE's key initiatives.

SBE representatives need to ensure stakeholders are engaged in the conversation and understand that their participation is valued. It is important that the briefings provide genuine opportunities for feedback from stakeholders, while ensuring that the feedback is constructive and assists SBE in their work moving forward.

In the briefings, SBE representatives can inform stakeholders' how their feedback will be considered in the decision making process. Further, these briefings will provide an important opportunity for SBE to deliver its messages and proposed actions in a compelling way and to build a sense of urgency to implement the proposed solutions.

2. What's provided to Board members?

Organization backgrounder: To assist SBE in preparing for these meetings, APCO will develop a brief background document outlining specific organizations' policy positions on key education issues germane to the Board's work. The background document will be provided to the appropriate SBE representative several days in advance of their briefing.

Talking points and fact sheets: Additionally, APCO will provide Board members and SBE staff with updated messages and talking points on key initiatives, as well as fact sheets/handouts for stakeholders at the briefings. APCO will also provide SBE representatives with draft questions that solicit input that can inform SBE's next steps.

Scheduling assistance (as needed): Board members may find it logistically easier to schedule meetings themselves or through their own staff. If requested, APCO will provide Board members and SBE staff with scheduling support as appropriate.

De-brief: After each briefing, APCO will follow up with Board members and SBE staff to discuss the feedback from each meeting and what additional outreach is needed with the organization. This is one of the most important steps, as it allows us to capture feedback and to tailor further communications with the organization.

3. Timeline:

APCO will begin working with Board members to schedule the briefing sessions following the May Board meeting. We anticipate that the first round of briefings will take place during the month of May and ideally conclude in advance of the July board meeting.

Report on Stakeholder Interviews

April 25, 2008

Prepared for the Washington State Board of Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Washington State Board of Education (SBE) is developing major recommendations on several key initiatives, including a third math credit, high school graduation requirements, math standards, science standards and a system of performance accountability. Communicating with and gathering input from all stakeholders, including educators, community, minority and business leaders and parents on these policies is essential.

In fall 2007, SBE conducted community outreach meetings, which were well-attended by a large number of education stakeholders. While the meetings were productive and informative, further outreach was needed to capture the opinions and develop relationships with all the diverse populations served by SBE. To that end, SBE asked APCO to conduct interviews with community leaders from across Washington State to gain a better understanding of the needs and perspectives of their communities.

In March 2008, APCO Worldwide conducted telephone interviews on behalf of SBE with 17 community leaders from across the state representing a number of groups, including minority and low-income communities. The goal of the research was to gain a better understanding of the expectations for schools and the education system, as well as opinions on the work of SBE, among these communities.

The following report details major findings from this research. These findings will be used to inform SBE's communications strategy in order to engage the community and education stakeholders and effectively convey SBE's efforts to ensure a high quality education for all students.

Key Findings

Through targeted stakeholder interviews, APCO was able to solicit thoughtful and candid feedback from a broad base of constituencies served by SBE. A number of key themes emerged through the course of the interviews, several of which relate to the relationship between constrained funding for education and the breadth of challenges districts and schools face in providing a high quality education to a diverse student population. It will be important for SBE to consider these views as they move forward in developing education policy to improve student achievement.

Key themes included:

   o Respondents articulated a clear expectation for the K-12 system to provide all students with a high quality education that equips each student to pursue a path of their choosing after high school, whether that's entering the workforce, going on to an apprenticeship or college.

   o Slightly more than half of the respondents said that to meet this expectation SBE should move to align graduation requirements with admissions requirements for a four-year university. Asserting that by preparing all students for college admission, students would

graduate with the ability to attend college, or would graduate with increased skills and knowledge that would better prepare them for any endeavor following high school.

o Overwhelmingly, respondents stated that schools were not doing enough for students that fell behind, but were quick not to lay the blame on teachers and staff. Respondents commonly identified resource constraints as the main impediment for schools' capacity to do more for failing students.

o Several respondents highlighted the important role communities and community-based organizations can play in supporting struggling students. They discussed the need for the development of partnerships between the schools, the community, and the students to prevent students from falling through the cracks in the system.

o Most respondents felt that schools and districts were making honest and sincere attempts to address their students' needs in a culturally sensitive way. However, it was widely recognized that these attempts were falling short. Respondents acknowledged the lack of appropriate teacher training and other programs focused on teaching in a multicultural environment primarily due to funding constraints. Several respondents cited the lack of diversity within school staff as exacerbating the problem.

o In general respondents were aware of SBE, but not well versed in the role it plays in shaping education policy. Respondents were supportive of SBE's focus on student achievement for all students. Some respondents noted lingering concerns about SBE's ability to help eliminate the achievement gap and to develop policy that supports *all* students.

o There was wide spread support among respondents for the basic concepts for system performance accountability. However, several respondents expressed concerns about the practical implementation of such a system, particularly as it relates to funding and resources available for schools and districts to improve student achievement.

o A number of respondents touched on the issue of creating a sense of relevancy for students, expressing concern that many students did not see their education as relevant to real life in their future.

o Many respondents also discussed the need to set high standards and challenge students, saying that low expectations produce mediocre student achievement. However, a couple of respondents did express concern that setting high standards could discourage some students from completing their education.

o The majority of people interviewed expressed the need for the system to focus on closing the achievement gap and providing a high quality education for all students, not just some students.

Overall, respondents expressed the need for a K-12 system that ensures that all students – regardless of race or income – are prepared with the skills needed to succeed after high school. Across the board, respondents indicated that additional funding and resources were needed in order to assist districts and schools in improving student achievement.