

**SYSTEM PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM:  
PROVISIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY INDEX AND RECOGNITION PROGRAM****April 27, 2009****SUMMARY OF POLICY ISSUE / STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION (SBE) STRATEGIC PLAN  
GOAL**

In 2005, the Washington State Legislature directed the Washington State Board of Education (SBE) to create a statewide system of accountability and support that would identify the state's most successful schools and schools in need of improvement. This directive aligns with the Board's goal to improve student achievement.

**BACKGROUND**

At its January 2009 meeting, the Board passed a resolution outlining its accountability framework (see Attachment A). There are three components to the accountability framework: 1) an Accountability Index to recognize schools that are successful and those that need additional assistance; 2) targeted state programs to assist districts; and 3) required action if there are no improvements. SBE and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) will seek approval of the proposed system to replace the current No Child Left Behind (NCLB) system and provide a unified system of accountability.

The 2009 Legislature approved the Board's direction as outlined in the SBE Accountability Resolution. The core concepts of that resolution are reflected in sections 501-503 of ESHB 2261 as part of the new basic education funding system. The Legislature asked the SBE to report to the legislature by December 1, 2009 (see Attachment B).

At the March 2009 meeting, the Board's consultant, Pete Bylsma, provided initial recommendations on how the Accountability Index could be used to: recognize schools and districts as well as to treat English Language Learner (ELL) and alternative schools fairly.

Staff has revised the work plan for 2009 based on HB 2261. See Attachment C. As part of the initial work plan, the Board's consultant, Pete Bylsma, and Edie have met OSPI staff, board members of Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) leadership group, and with over 225 superintendents at the nine Educational Service Districts (ESD) across the state to present the accountability framework. See Attachment D for feedback from these stakeholders. Two System Performance Accountability (SPA) work sessions with the Board's policy advisers were held on February 17 and April 21. See Attachment E for a summary of the SPA April 21 meeting notes.

**POLICY CONSIDERATION****A. Provisional Accountability Index "Plan A" Approval**

The Board will be asked for approval of the provisional Accountability Index "Plan A" to go forward and work with OSPI to begin a discussion with the Federal government to create a unified system of accountability.

Why is the Board proposing a new accountability system? As the Board indicated in its Accountability Resolution, it believes that all students deserve an excellent and equitable education and that there is an urgent need to strengthen a system of continuous improvement in student achievement for all schools and districts.

At the May Board meeting the Board will look at the first leg of its accountability system “stool”: the Accountability Index.<sup>1</sup>

The current Federal accountability system under NCLB is deemed unfair, too complicated, and punitive. Schools and districts are placed under graduated steps of improvement with graduated sanctions if they do not make annual yearly progress (AYP) in any category. Under the current Federal system to identify schools and districts for improvement, students in nine categories must reach annual proficiency as measured through the state assessment on the state’s standards in the following areas: reading and math for grades 3-8, unexcused absence rates, a one year assessment in high school, plus graduation. The nine categories are “all students” combined together, the 5 racial/ethnic groups, students with disabilities, ELL students, and students from low income families. The “uniform bar” is the level of proficiency goal for reading and math and a graduation rate which is increased every few years, ultimately reaching a 100% success rate for all students by 2014. Note: results for ELL students are exempted in their first year of enrollment.

Under the Board’s proposed system, a new Accountability Index is created which will have fair, consistent, transparent, and easily understood criteria. It will identify exemplary schools as well as “challenged” (legislative language) or “struggling” schools. In addition, it will provide feedback to schools and districts to self-assess their progress in improving student achievement. The provisional SBE Accountability Index would increase accountability by including more students, more content areas, and by adding two new categories of school and district performance: a peer comparison and a measure of improvement from the previous year. See Pete Bylsma’s Executive Summary of the Accountability Index (paper behind this memo) or his Full Report (on the SBE Web site: [www.sbe.wa.gov](http://www.sbe.wa.gov)).

The proposed Accountability Index criteria form a 20-cell matrix that measures five outcomes in four ways, as shown in Table 1. The results for each cell are rated on a scale of 1 to 7. The ratings are then averaged to create one final number that averages the rating of all the cells: an Accountability Index. Averages for the outcomes and indicators are also computed to provide more feedback to educators. See Table 1.

**Table 1: Matrix of Accountability Measures for Index**

INDICATORS	OUTCOMES					Average
	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Ext. Grad. Rate	
Achievement of non-low income						
Achievement of low income						
Achievement vs. peers						
Improvement from previous year						
<i>Average</i>						<i>INDEX</i>

<sup>1</sup> Later this summer and fall the Board will examine the other two legs of this accountability system stool: 2) the state system of assistance program and 3) Academic Watch for challenged schools.

Several principles guide the development of the recognition system. The system should (1) be transparent and simple to understand, (2) rely mainly on criterion-referenced measures, and (3) provide multiple ways to demonstrate success and earn recognition. Table 2 compares and contrasts the current Federal and SBE Proposed Index.

**Table 2: Federal and Proposed State Accountability Index Comparison**

	<b>Current Federal Index</b>	<b>Proposed State Index</b>
<b>Number of Cells</b>	37 cells, up to 119 cells for a district	20 cells plus the index for each school and district (fewer if not a high school)
<b>Outcomes Measured</b>	Reading, math, unexcused absences, and high school extended graduation rate*	Reading, math, science, writing and high school extended graduation rate
<b>Indicators Measured</b>	Achievement on uniform bar for nine categories of students: all students, five racial/ethnic groups, ELL students, low income students, and students with disabilities	Achievement of low income and non-low income students (achievement gap), achievement vs. peers, and improvement from the previous year
<b>Unit of Measurement</b>	Each grade	Combine grades and look at whole school (elementary, middle, high school or other school configuration)
<b>Students Measured</b>	Continuously enrolled  At least 30 per grade band	All students  At least 10 per school
<b>ELL Students</b>	Test results included after one year	Test results included after three years or when reaching advanced English ability , with additional accountability using the WLPT data
<b>Model</b>	Non Compensatory – not meeting one cell generates negative consequences	Compensatory – all the cells will be accounted for in determining results and consequences based on deeper analysis
<b>Results</b>	Used for allocating Title I resources	Used for recognition and school assistance. Once schools are identified as struggling, a variety of factors will be weighed in the deeper analysis, including: teaching qualifications, curriculum alignment, professional learning communities, current community and state support, parent and student surveys, and other factors could be examined prior to allocation of federal and state resources for graduated assistance
<b>Total Number of Estimated Schools and Districts Eligible for AYP</b>	More than 1,000 schools and 100 districts will likely be in “improvement” status and undergo sanctions in Fall 2009	Initially 228 schools and 17 districts would undergo additional analysis before determining improvement status as a Priority School.

\* Washington is the only state with an exemption to use the extended graduation rate.

## **B. Recognition of School Performance**

At the May Board meeting the Board will review several possible programs for Recognition using the provisional Accountability Index. The Legislature has requested the Board to develop objective criteria to recognize exemplary schools. The criteria for recognition should be transparent and easy to understand, rely on criterion-referenced measures,<sup>2</sup> and provide multiple measures of success.

The Board will be asked for approval of potential recognition programs using the provisional Accountability Index. Furthermore, the Board will work with OSPI to develop the details of those programs.

Why is the Board considering recognition programs using its provisional Accountability Index? The Board wants to recognize schools whose students have made extraordinary progress and reached a high level of achievement in all state-assessed subject areas, often exceeding state standards and maintaining above the bar extended graduation rates. In addition, the Board wants to recognize schools that have made significant improvements in closing the achievement gap between low income and non-low income students, as well as schools that do better than average in comparison to their peers with similar demographics. Some stakeholders believe that other forms of recognition should occur to motivate staff and students in schools that have done particularly well in one or more areas.

OSPI currently has two recognition programs: the Schools of Distinction and Academic Improvement Awards. It makes sense to use the Board’s Accountability Index as a uniformed recognition program supported jointly by both OSPI and the Board.

Table 3 below compares the two programs. See Pete Bylsma’s paper on Recognition Recommendations for a full description of the proposed recognition programs behind this memo.

**Table 3: Comparison of Current Recognition OSPI Program for Schools of Distinction and Proposed SBE Outstanding Overall Performance**

	<b>Current OSPI Program Schools of Distinction</b>	<b>SBE Proposed Option 1 Outstanding Overall Performance (8 Types of Awards)</b>
<b>Criteria</b>	Average Improvement Learning Index in reading and math -- Normative Based	<p>New Accountability Index using results from five outcomes to determine high levels of performance:</p> <p>Achievement of non-low income and low income, peer comparison, and improvement from previous year in reading, writing, math and science and the extended graduation rate (plus one for gifted)</p> <p>Criterion Based</p> <p><u>Specific Awards (2-year average):</u>  <b>1) Average Overall Index Rate: 5.5</b></p>

<sup>2</sup> Criterion-referenced criteria measure how well students are doing relative to a pre-determined performance level on a specified set of educational goals or outcomes included in the school, district, or state curriculum. Norm-referenced criteria measure the rank of students by high to low achievement performance irrespective of a specified performance level.

	<b>Current OSPI Program Schools of Distinction</b>	<b>SBE Proposed Option 1 Outstanding Overall Performance (8 Types of Awards)</b>
		<b>2) Reading Average: 6.0</b> <b>3) Writing Average: 6.0</b> <b>4) Math Average: 6.0</b> <b>5) Science Average: 6.0</b> <b>6) Extended Graduation Rate Average: 6.0</b> <b>7) Close Achievement Gap: No more than 1 point difference in each subject area</b> <b>8) Gifted: Peer rating from all four subjects</b>
<b>Level of Award</b>	Elementary, Middle or High School	Elementary, Middle, High School or Other Whole School Configuration
<b>% /#</b>	Top 5% of schools by grade band – 99 schools (can receive multiple awards)	9% of schools - 191 schools (can receive multiple awards)
<b># of Awards</b>	101 (duplicated count)	277 total (duplicated count)  <u>Specific Awards:</u> Average Index: 33 Reading: 44 Writing: 118 Math: 16 Science: 21 Extended Graduation Rate: 20 Achievement Gap: 14 Gifted: 11
<b>Type of Recognition</b>	Ceremony with recognition in Seattle area by Supt, presented simultaneously at ESDs for those who cannot travel	TBD
<b>Length of Time for Performance</b>	Improvement based on 2 year average from 5-6 years ago compared to current year	2 year average
<b>% with Award that did not make AYP</b>	41%	Eventually we would use our new index (if/when Feds agree) for AYP so that schools that did not make AYP would not receive awards
<b>How long have awards been made?</b>	Began in 2007	

A second type of OSPI award—the Academic Improvement Award—recognizes schools that make a 10% reduction in the percent not meeting the reading and math standards from the previous year. SBE’s proposed Option 2 for Noteworthy Recognition would provide recognition to schools and districts for each of the 20 cells of the Accountability Index matrix when the 2-year average for a cell is at least 5.50, and for the index when the 2-year average is at least 5.00. Table 4 below compares

the two programs. See Pete Bylsma’s paper on Recognition Recommendations for a full description of the proposed recognition programs behind this memo.

**Table 4: Comparison of Current Recognition OSPI Program for Academic Improvement Awards and Proposed SBE Noteworthy Recognition**

	<b>Current OSPI Academic Improvement Awards</b>	<b>SBE Proposed Option 2 Noteworthy Recognition</b>
<b>Criteria</b>	Make a 10% reduction in percent of students not meeting standard in previous year in reading, writing and math (the AYP “safe harbor” level).	New Accountability Index for: achievement of non-low income and low income, peer comparison, and improvement from the previous year in reading, writing, math, science, and the extended graduation rate.  Cell must have a 2-year average of 5.50; the index average must be at least 5.0
<b>Level of Award</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> or 10 <sup>th</sup> grade	Based on all grades in a school
<b>% / (#) of Schools</b>	60% of schools (1,255 schools)	80% of schools (1,618 schools)
<b># of Awards</b>	2,190 awards	6,090 awards
<b>Type of Recognition</b>	Wall Plaques	Letter
<b>Length of Time for Performance</b>	One year change	2 year average
<b>% with Award that did not make AYP</b>		
<b>How long have awards been made?</b>	2004	

An executive summary of Pete Bylsma’s Updated Recommendations to the State Board of Education for a State Accountability Index dated April 27, 2009 and his Summary of Accountability Recommendations for ELL, Alternative Schools and Recognition paper are provided after this memo. For the full longer versions of all of these papers, you will find them on our Web site [www.sbe.wa.gov](http://www.sbe.wa.gov) or request that we bring you a hard copy for the May meeting.

**EXPECTED ACTION**

**A. Provisional Accountability Index “Plan A” Approval**

SBE staff recommends approving the Provisional Accountability Index “Plan A” as described in Pete Bylsma’s Executive Summary. This Plan A represents our very best proposal for an index that we think is fair, transparent, and simple to understand. In addition to this index, there would be a deeper analysis on the Struggling Schools identified to determine which became Priority Schools and what type of targeted voluntary state assistance should be available to these schools and districts. Eventually, if there was no improvement, these Priority Schools would be placed on Academic Watch with required state and local actions.

Staff will also work with its SPA work group, OSPI, and Board members on the following components over the next several months:

- A strategy for federal agreement that we can use the new Accountability Index to replace the current federal AYP identification system.
- A Plan B to address potential concerns the Federal Government may have (especially around the subgroup issue).
- Criteria for a deeper analysis of Struggling or “Challenged” Schools.
- The additional components of the Accountability System- State Programs of Assistance and Required Action.

## **B. Recognition Programs**

SBE Staff recommends approving Option 1 for Outstanding Overall Performance as described in Pete Bylsma’s recognition paper.

- Recognizing relatively few schools (277 may still seem too high to some, in which case we can look at other options such as a school must meet two of the awards for recognition) in high priority areas demonstrates a commitment to these areas and provides more incentive to improve where the greatest improvement needs to occur.
- A more limited system ensures that any recognition that occurs is truly special. Having too many schools getting many awards reduces the significance of the recognition.
- The strongest predictor of the achievement gap is the difference between the two socioeconomic groups (non-low income and low income). The gap is measured in terms of the cells in the matrix rather than other gaps outside the matrix (e.g., the differences between race/ethnic groups).
- Outstanding sustained performance in schools with a “regular” student composition deserves recognition. Restricting the percentage of gifted students that are assessed provides a more accurate picture of school performance. High concentrations of gifted students generally inflate the results, making it easier for schools with special programs to receive recognition. A separate type of recognition is created for schools with high concentrations of gifted students.

SBE staff is also offering for Board consideration (at the request of our SPA work group members), but not recommending, Option 2 Noteworthy Recognition as described in Pete Bylsma’s recognition paper. While there are reasons staff can understand for recognizing schools for their hard work, having over 6000 awards (because all grades 3-8 and high school are included), diminishes the importance of this award. Reasons for providing such awards include:

- Giving recognition for all five outcomes and four indicators conveys the belief that all parts of the system are important. Recognizing fewer cells of the matrix could generate extra focus in some areas and not others.
- Requiring the low income reading and writing cells to have at least a 4.00 average ensures that cells that have high levels of performance do not get recognized if there is a significant achievement gap.
- There is no restriction on schools receiving recognition if they have 10% or more of their students designated as gifted. This allows all schools to be eligible for this type of recognition.
- Research has found that “small victories” support continuous improvement efforts. Education stakeholders viewed even minor forms of state recognition as a way to support improvement.

## **Attachment A**

### **STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY RESOLUTION JANUARY 15, 2009**

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education believes that all students deserve an excellent and equitable education and that there is an urgent need to strengthen a system of continuous improvement in student achievement for all schools and districts; and

WHEREAS, the legislature charged the State Board of Education to develop criteria to identify schools and districts that are successful, in need of assistance, and those where students persistently fail, as well as to identify a range of intervention strategies and performance incentive systems; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education affirms the call for stronger accountability must be reciprocal between the state and local school district and accompanied by comprehensive funding reform for basic education that demonstrates “taxpayer money at work” in improving student achievement; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education will work with its education partners to create a unified system of federal and state accountability to improve student achievement; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education recognizes the need for a proactive, collaborative accountability system with support from the local school board, parents, students, staff in the schools and districts, regional educational service districts, business partners, and state officials to improve student achievement; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education believes that schools and districts should be recognized for best practices and exemplary work in improving student achievement; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education recognizes the critical role of local school boards in addressing student achievement in developing a new state accountability system as well as the need to create a new collaborative mechanism to require certain school district actions if student achievement does not improve;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the State Board of Education will develop an Accountability Index to identify schools and districts, based on student achievement using criteria that are fair, consistent, transparent, and easily understood for the purposes of providing feedback to schools and districts to self-assess their progress as well as to identify schools with exemplary performance and those with poor performance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Board of Education will work with its education partners to build the capacity of districts to help their schools improve student achievement. Programs will be tailored to the magnitude of need. As part of this system of assistance, the Board will ensure that all efforts are administered as part of one unified system of state assistance including the Innovation Zone – a new effort to help districts dramatically improve achievement levels; and



BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that after a time set by the State Board of Education where there is no significant improvement based on an Accountability Index and other measures as defined by the Board, the district will be placed on Academic Watch and the State Board of Education will:

- Direct the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to conduct an academic performance audit using a peer review team.
- Request the local school board, in collaboration with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, to develop an Academic Watch Plan based on the review findings, which would include an annual progress report to the local community.
- Review, approve, or send back for modification the local board Academic Watch plan, which once approved becomes a binding performance contract between the state and district.
- Ensure that the local school board will remain responsible for implementation.
- Request the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to monitor implementation of the plan and provide updates to the State Board of Education, which may require additional actions be taken until performance improvement is realized.
- Declare a district is no longer on Academic Watch when the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction reports to the State Board of Education that the district school or schools are no longer in Priority status; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Board of Education believes this accountability framework needs to be a part of the revisions made to the basic education funding system and that the legislature will provide the State Board of Education, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the local school boards with the appropriate legal authority and resources to implement the new system; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board will continue to refine the details of the accountability system by working with its education, parent, business and community partners over the next year.

Adopted: January 15, 2009

Attest:

Mary Jean Ryan, Chair



**Attachment B**  
**ESHB 2261 Accountability Language**  
**April 20, 2009**

**Summary:**

Legislative intent is to create a proactive, collaborative system of accountability based on progressive levels of support and with a goal of continuous improvement in student achievement. Directs the State Board of Education and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to seek approval for use of the system for federal accountability purposes.

Requires the SBE to continue refining an accountability framework that includes:

- An accountability index to identify successful schools and those in need of assistance.
- A proposal and timeline for a comprehensive system of voluntary support and assistance to be submitted to the Legislature before being implemented.
- A proposal and timeline for a system targeted to those that have not demonstrated improvement that takes effect only if authorized by the Legislature and that includes an academic performance audit, a school board-developed corrective action plan, which would be subject to SBE approval and become binding; and progress monitoring by SPI.
- Report due to Legislature December 1, 2009.

**ESHB 2261 Language**

**SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT**

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 501.** (1)(a) The legislature intends to develop a system in which the state and school districts share accountability for achieving state educational standards and supporting continuous school improvement. The legislature recognizes that comprehensive education finance reform and the increased investment of public resources necessary to implement that reform must be accompanied by a new mechanism for clearly defining the relationships and expectations for the state, school districts, and schools. It is the legislature's intent that this be accomplished through the development of a proactive, collaborative accountability system that focuses on a school improvement system that engages and serves the local school board, parents, students, staff in the schools and districts, and the community. The improvement system shall be based on progressive levels of support, with a goal of continuous improvement in student achievement and alignment with the federal system of accountability.

1 (b) The legislature further recognizes that it is the state's responsibility to provide schools and districts with the tools and resources necessary to improve student achievement. These tools include the necessary accounting and data reporting systems, assessment systems to monitor student achievement, and a system of general support, targeted assistance, recognition, and, if necessary, state intervention.

(2) The legislature has already charged the state board of education to develop criteria to identify schools and districts that are successful, in need of assistance, and those where students persistently fail, as well as to identify a range of intervention strategies and a performance incentive system. The legislature finds that the state board of education should build on the work that the board has already begun in these areas. As development of these formulas, processes, and systems progresses, the legislature should monitor the progress.

**Sec. 502.** RCW 28A.305.130 and 2008 c 27 s 1 are each amended to read as follows: The purpose of the state board of education is to provide advocacy and strategic oversight of public education;

implement a standards- based accountability framework that creates a unified system of increasing levels of support for schools in order to improve student academic achievement; provide leadership in the creation of a system that personalizes education for each student and respects diverse cultures, abilities, and learning styles; and promote achievement of the goals of RCW 28A.150.210. In addition to any other powers and duties as provided by law, the state board of education shall ... (language continues from current law)

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 503.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.305 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The state board of education shall continue to refine the development of an accountability framework that creates a unified system of support for challenged schools that aligns with basic education, increases the level of support based upon the magnitude of need, and uses data for decisions.

(2) The state board of education shall develop an accountability index to identify schools and districts for recognition and for additional state support. The index shall be based on criteria that are fair, consistent, and transparent. Performance shall be measured using multiple outcomes and indicators including, but not limited to, graduation rates and results from statewide assessments. The index shall be developed in such a way as to be easily understood by both employees within the schools and districts, as well as parents and community members. It is the legislature's intent that the index provide feedback to schools and districts to self-assess their progress, and enable the identification of schools with exemplary student performance and those that need assistance to overcome challenges in order to achieve exemplary student performance.

Once the accountability index has identified schools that need additional help, a more thorough analysis will be done to analyze specific conditions in the district including but not limited to the level of state resources a school or school district receives in support of the basic education system, achievement gaps for different groups of students, and community support.

(3) Based on the accountability index and in consultation with the superintendent of public instruction, the state board of education shall develop a proposal and timeline for implementation of a comprehensive system of voluntary support and assistance for schools and districts. The timeline must take into account and accommodate capacity limitations of the K-12 educational system. Changes that have a fiscal impact on school districts, as identified by a fiscal analysis prepared by the office of the superintendent of public instruction, shall take effect only if formally authorized by the legislature through the omnibus appropriations act or other enacted legislation.

4)(a) The state board of education shall develop a proposal and implementation timeline for a more formalized comprehensive system improvement targeted to challenged schools and districts that have not demonstrated sufficient improvement through the voluntary system. The timeline must take into account and accommodate capacity limitations of the K-12 educational system. The proposal and timeline shall be submitted to the education committees of the legislature by December 1, 2009, and shall include recommended legislation and recommended resources to implement the system according to the timeline developed.

(b) The proposal shall outline a process for addressing performance challenges that will include the following features:

(i) An academic performance audit using peer review teams of educators that considers school and community factors in addition to other factors in developing recommended specific corrective actions that should be undertaken to improve student learning;

- (ii) A requirement for the local school board plan to develop and be responsible for implementation of corrective action plan taking into account the audit findings, which plan must be approved by the state board of education at which time the plan becomes binding upon the school district to implement; and
- (iii) Monitoring of local district progress by the office of the superintendent of public instruction. The proposal shall take effect only if formally authorized by the legislature through the omnibus appropriations act or other enacted legislation.

(5) In coordination with the superintendent of public instruction, the state board of education shall seek approval from the United States department of education for use of the accountability index and the state system of support, assistance, and intervention, to replace the federal accountability system under P.L. 107-110, the no child left 31 behind act of 2001.

(6) The state board of education shall work with the education data center established within the office of financial management and the technical working group established in section 112 of this act to determine the feasibility of using the prototypical funding allocation model as not only a tool for allocating resources to schools and districts but also as a tool for schools and districts to report to the state legislature and the state board of education on how the state resources received are being used.

**Attachment C  
SPA Work Plan  
April 30, 2009 Revised**

**Objectives:**

- Approve the provisional state Accountability Index and proposed recognition system by May 2009.
- Finalize OSPI-SBE recognition program(s) by July 2009 for 2009-2010 school year based on provisional Accountability Index.
- Work with OSPI and stakeholders to refine continuous improvement model processes, which includes OSPI voluntary support programs (and the Innovation Zone) and Academic Watch for Challenged Schools June-November 2009.
- Develop proposed new rule on school improvement planning by November 2009.
- Work with OSPI (and national groups) to request U.S. Education Department to use the provisional state Accountability Index when making AYP decisions, beginning with results generated in the 2010-2011 school year (we realize we may need to adapt our Accountability Index to meet Federal expectations).
- Submit report to legislature by December 1, 2009.

**Revised Timeline for System Performance Accountability (SPA)  
Work 2009**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Activities</b>
January 14-15	Board meeting to review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft resolution for action.</li> <li>• Feedback on Accountability Index and Pete Bylsma’s revisions</li> <li>• Work Plan for 2009.</li> <li>• Achievement Gap Data Overview for Commissions’ Work.</li> <li>• ELL Issues for state oversight by Howard DeLeeuw, OSPI.</li> </ul>
January- March	Edie and Pete will meet with superintendents at nine ESD meetings across state to review the Accountability Index, Innovation Zone and Academic Watch proposals. Pete will meet with technical advisers from school districts and OSPI at least twice regarding refinements to the index.
February 17	SPA Work session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kris and Edie will frame our work for year.</li> <li>• OSPI will give brief update on NCLB status and Fed funding.</li> <li>• OSPI will present lessons learned from Summit Districts and Sustainability and thoughts on programs to serve continuous improvement for schools and districts.</li> <li>• SBE Consultant will discuss refinements to Accountability Index, as presented to Board in January Meeting.</li> <li>• SBE Consultant will discuss recognition program using Accountability Index.</li> </ul>
March 12-13	Board meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hear update from SPA work session.</li> </ul> Pete will seek input from several national experts from OSPI’s National Technical Advisory Committee on March 13 to review the SBE proposed Accountability Index.

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Activities</b>
April 21	SPA Work session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review continued refinements on Accountability Index (focus on alternative education, ELL), deeper analysis for struggling schools and recognition program.</li> </ul>
May 14-15	Board meeting to review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update from SPA work session.</li> <li>Approve Provisional Accountability Index Plan A (we will also work on a Plan B) and SBE and OSPI recognition program(s).</li> </ul>
May-July	Develop strategy and outreach to different stakeholder groups and work with OSPI and the U.S. Education Department on Accountability Index for improved (and unified) system for determining AYP.  Work with OSPI on recognition program(s).
June 16	SPA work session on OSPI voluntary state programs of continuous improvement for all schools as well as deeper analysis of struggling schools. Discuss ways to incorporate dropout data and achievement gap recommendations into our work for overall report card tracking.
July 15-17	Board meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin discussion on OSPI voluntary state programs of continuous improvement and key indicators for deeper analysis.</li> </ul>
September 17-18	Board meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue discussion on provisions for OSPI voluntary school for continuous improvement and Academic Watch process.</li> </ul>
October 14	SPA work session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion of recommendations and timeline on state voluntary support programs and Academic Watch process.</li> <li>Draft rule language on school improvement plans.</li> <li>Feasibility of using prototypical funding allocation model to report on how state resources are being used.</li> <li>Discuss draft overall accountability report card.</li> </ul>
October - November	OSPI/SBE recognition of schools under new program. Discussions with U.S. Department of Education on proposed unified accountability system.
November 12-13	Board meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review draft school improvement plan rule revisions (look at nine effective school characteristics) and approval of proposals and timeline for OSPI voluntary state support programs for struggling schools under Academic Watch.</li> <li>Present overall accountability report card.</li> </ul>
December 1	Report to Legislature December 1 on proposal and implementation for 1) recommendations for state voluntary program, 2) "Academic Watch" for challenged schools and districts that have not have not demonstrated sufficient improvement through the voluntary system-- Legislature must approve this in statute or appropriations bill, and 3) use of prototypical school model to report on how state resources are used (this last provision does not have a December 1 date).

**Attachment D**  
**Summary of ESD visits on Accountability**  
**And Discussions with OSPI Staff and WSSDA Leadership Team**  
**April 30, 2009**

**OSPI Overall Comments**

The Feds will not support an accountability index that does not include the subgroups by race, ethnicity, special education, and ELL. While we support the options you propose under ELL, we have proposed these to the Feds and they have rejected them. You will need to have a Plan B.

In terms of recognition, OSPI would like to use the SBE accountability index, but may want to run some different scenarios than the ones SBE provided. OSPI would also like to honor a small number of schools similar to those honored under Schools of Distinction, which were the top 100 schools or 5% of the schools that improved in reading and math. OSPI wants to align its recognition with schools that are doing some very unique work. What are some of our challenged schools doing that makes them so good? In reviewing the SBE recognition data for the outstanding overall performance, OSPI staff expressed concerned that SBE may have a communications challenge trying to explain why so few schools received math and science recognition but many schools receive recognition in writing. OSPI thinks SBE may want to consider adjusting some of the index scores for schools to be recognized in math and science.

**WSSDA Leadership Team Overall Comments**

This index is better than the Federal system. We have concerns about not reflecting the subgroups up front even if the low income is a "proxy". The scale score from 1-7 will be difficult to explain to our community. We are used to explaining WASL scores based on the four levels of proficiency. The averages in the index are not weighted and thus should not be called true averages. Some school districts may have much larger populations in either the low income or non low income categories and when the two are averaged together that is not taken into account.

**ESD Summary Comments**

Visits with over 225 superintendents at the following ESDs:

- Vancouver ESD 112
- Wenatchee ESD 171
- Pasco ESD 123
- Yakima ESD 105
- Olympia ESD 113
- Bremerton ESD 114
- Puget Sound ESD
- Anacortes ESD 189
- Spokane ESD 101

Summary Comments:

- SBE has listened and made changes based on our feedback.

- Like what we have done a lot better- no state takeover, modifications to index in terms of low income and non low income so that low income are not “double” counted, using 21 cells rather than 100+ cells of Fed system although more high school measures would be nice.
- Like showing improvement and achievement versus peers rather than lock step uniform bar of federal system.
- Appreciate us coming directly to them.
- Our budget issues are overwhelming right now- this work on accountability while it makes sense is just not that important to us.
- What happens if feds accept this system but we are not fully funded?
- What happens if feds do NOT accept our proposal? How likely is it that they will approve this system?
- What happens if the legislature likes this system and requires us to have 2 systems?
- What will happen to OSPI award system?
- How will this system be used? For AYP to drive resources rather than to do diagnostic work—need deeper dive for this and SBE has some ideas.
- This new system still will not get kids ready for college.
- Think about training for local school board members.

### **Accountability Index**

- Very important to have one system to identify schools.
- Questions about equal weighting for rows with small “n”s or science/math.
- Can we find a better term than struggling?
- What will you do about schools that do not have free and reduced lunch programs? What about high school where they under count?
- How will you evaluate alternative schools?
- How long should we exclude ELL students from test results?
- What happens when we change assessments?
- Interested in deeper dive to evaluate struggling schools -- Some districts/ESDs are coming up with their own report cards that look at achievement gap by race, college ready factors, school support and fiscal support.
- Why are you including science and writing on this accountability index since the feds only test on reading and math?
- We like this better because under NCLB we get hammered for just one cell being out.
- How will you deal with the NCLB uniform bar?
- Can you look at teacher quality?
- Have you thought about individual student growth?

### **Support Programs**

- How do we get fed or state money to help few schools where kids are poor and not doing well even though we are a wealthy district?
- District level focus rather than school focus makes sense.

### **Academic Watch**

- We would recommend a planning grant for a district that needs to develop an Academic Watch.
- What happens to a district if it does not improve and go off Academic Watch?
- How will Academic Watch work with our school improvement plans?



## Attachment E

### Systems Performance Accountability (SPA) Notes April 21, 2009 Meeting

Attendees: Kris Mayer, Steve Dal Porto, Jack Schuster, Bunker Frank, Amy Bragdon, Bob Hughes, Sheila Fox, Caroline King, Bill Williams, Mack Armstrong, Gary Kipp, Bob Harmon, George Juarez, Mary Alice Heuschel, Mike Bernard, Lile Holland, Gayle Pauley, Martharose Laffey, Karen Davis, Roger Erskine, Martha Rice, Caroline King, Phil Brockman, Pete Bylsma and Edie Harding

#### Overview of Work For 2009

Edie Harding presented a revised work plan based on the recently passed HB 2261 legislation, which affirmed the Board's direction under its accountability principles. The major work will center on the following objectives and time frame:

- Approve the provisional state accountability index and proposed joint SBE/OSPI recognition system by May 2009.
- Finalize a joint OSPI-SBE recognition program by July 2009 for the 2009-2010 school year, using the new Accountability Index.
- Work with OSPI and stakeholders to refine continuous improvement model processes, which include OSPI voluntary support programs and Academic Watch June-November 2009.
- Develop proposed new rule on school improvement planning by November 2009.
- Work with OSPI to request the U.S. Department of Education to substitute our state accountability index in place of current federal AYP system for the 2011-2012 school year.
- Submit proposals and timeline to legislature on the state voluntary system and required action by December 1, 2009.

There will be two additional SPA work group meetings this year: June 16, and October 14. Edie and Pete Bylsma, SBE Consultant, have met with over 200 superintendents across the state January – April to discuss the accountability framework and have received their feedback.

#### Additional Considerations for the Accountability Index

##### 1) English Language Learners (ELL) Options

Currently, English Language Learners under NCLB are required to take the WASL in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year of school enrollment even though they may not have gained sufficient proficiency to understand English. These results are counted as part of NCLB. SBE and OSPI believe that this is an unfair policy because it does not reflect the research that students need at least three years to achieve academic proficiency in English, the testing is inappropriate for some students and the scores make for invalid results in the NCLB accountability measures.

Pete Bylsma shared two options for addressing ELL students in the index:

**Option A “Extended Exclusion for 3 Years”** would exclude WASL/WAAS results from the accountability calculations for ELLs who are in the first three calendar years of U.S. public school enrollment or until Level 3 is reached on the Washington Language Proficiency Test (WLPT), whichever comes first.

**Option B “Sliding Scale”** would count as proficient for the ELLs who are in their second year of U.S. public school enrollment who meet a lower scale score, which is determined by their WLPT level.

Although Washington has requested both of the options before and the U.S. Department of Education has denied these options (each year for Option A), the SPA work group believed that both were viable options to continue to request. There was more support for Option A because of its simplicity, but many thought both options should be considered.

In addition WLPT results should be published on the OSPI Web site as a measure of accountability.

The following suggestions were also made: build a coalition with other states through national organizations to request these changes, consider an Option C that looks at student growth on the WLPT, share our proposal with advocacy groups such as LEAP- Latino Educational Achievement Project, and inform our Congressional delegation. We also need to determine what constitutes a school year.

## **2) Alternative Schools**

Under the Board’s new accountability index, approximately 4% of the students are in alternative schools and many of these schools (98) are in the struggling tier (228 total schools) of the SBE accountability index because of the types of students they serve. Currently 240 districts have alternative education schools (a total of 342 schools) which are self identified. We do not want to punish schools that take on some of these difficult student populations that are very mobile. We want to ensure there are incentives so that they do not “cream” their student population, but that hold schools accountable for their students’ learning.

### **Two-step Review Process would be used for alternative schools**

1. Accountability for alternative schools should begin using the approach used for all schools. Each would receive an index score using the normal process (assignment of ratings using the same benchmarks, averaging the rating). Those not making AYP two years in a row, and those already in “school improvement,” would undergo a deeper analysis, just like other schools with the same status.
2. For alternative schools not making AYP or in school improvement, the deeper analysis would examine additional factors once these are finalized.

Additional factors for the deeper analysis could include factors identified by the Washington Association for Learning Alternatives such as: student learning in the real world, school atmosphere and support, student re-engagement, community partnerships, staff quality and support for each other and students, shared leadership and district supports.

The SPA work group supported Option A and felt many of these WALA areas could be used for other schools that are reviewed in depth too. One challenge will be how we could measure these. There would be no peer analysis in the index as these alternative schools are very diverse and cannot be compared.

### **Recognition Program**

The legislature requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to “adopt objective, systematic criteria” to identify schools and districts for recognition and for receiving additional state support. The proposed criteria are in the form of a 20-cell matrix that measures five outcomes in four ways, as

shown in the table below. The results for the cells are rated on a scale of 1 to 7. The ratings are averaged to create an accountability index. Averages for the outcomes and indicators are also computed to provide more feedback to educators. The Board and OSPI want to be sure exemplary performance by schools and districts is recognized based on the Accountability Index for their efforts on student achievement. There is some debate on whether to recognize a limited number of schools who are exemplary in some overall categories or whether to recognize a wider group of schools that are exemplary in one or more categories of the index. Some people thought that schools that work hard or make extraordinary progress should also be recognized – the more the better. Currently OSPI recognizes both kinds.

**Table 1: Matrix of Accountability Measures**

Indicators	OUTCOMES					Average
	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Ext. Grad. Rate	
Achievement of non-low income						
Achievement of low income						
Achievement vs. peers						
Improvement from previous year						
Average						INDEX

Several principles guide the development of the recognition system. The system should (1) be transparent and simple to understand, (2) rely mainly on criterion-referenced measures, and (3) provide multiple ways to demonstrate success and earn recognition.

Two recognition options are proposed below.

**Option A: Recognition for Outstanding Performance** would provide recognition based on high levels of performance in priority areas: the overall index; for math, science, and the extended graduation rate; and for having closed achievement gaps (i.e., only a small difference between non-low income and low income ratings in all subjects). To receive recognition under this option, schools and districts must meet the following conditions. This ensures only truly outstanding performance is recognized for approximately 145 schools.

(a) For the index, the 2-year average must be at least 5.00, no rating below 5 can occur in either year, at least 10 cells must be rated each year, and there must be fewer than 10% of students designated as gifted in each year.

(b) For math, science, and the extended graduation rate, the overall 2-year average (column average) must be at least 6.00, at least two of the four possible cells in the column must be rated each year, and there must be fewer than 10% of students designated as gifted in each year.

(c) For the achievement gap, there must be at least 10 students in at least two of the five outcomes (columns) in both of the income-related cells (non-low income and low income), there can be no rating of 1 in any income-related cell, there can be no more than a 1-point difference in the rating between the two income-related cells (e.g., if the reading non-low income cell is rated 5, the reading low-income cell could be rated no lower than 4 and no higher than 6), and there must be fewer than 10% of students designated as gifted in each of the past two years.

**Option B: Recognition for Broader Range of Achievement** would provide recognition to schools and districts for each of the 20 cells of the matrix when the 2-year average for a cell is at least 5.50,

and provide recognition when the index average is at least 5.00. Schools could earn multiple awards. Approximately 1,680 schools would receive awards.

To receive recognition under this option, schools and districts must also meet the following conditions.

- (a) No rating below 5 can occur in either year for recognition in the 20 cells.
- (b) Recognition for non-low income cells in reading and writing should require a minimum 2-year average of the low income group of 4.00.

Most of SPA work group felt both options should be accepted. Option A provides recognition for those that are truly outstanding and Option B allows many schools to celebrate their progress. It was recommended that Option A should also include reading and writing as well as possibly something more on improvement. There was discussion about whether to limit the awards under either option to schools that currently make AYP for all students based on the uniform state bar of achievement for math and reading. There was also discussion on whether it would be simpler just to use the Tiers for recognition.

### **In-Depth Analysis for Struggling Schools**

After the Accountability Index identifies the struggling schools, a more in depth analysis would be done by OSPI to determine who truly needs to be identified for AYP based on additional factors. Greg Lobdell from the Center for Educational Effectiveness shared the work he has done on perception surveys—student, parent and staff. These surveys are not used to evaluate schools but to serve as a catalyst for discussions on how to improve schools. These surveys are an example of the kind of additional information OSPI may want to examine when they do a deeper analysis. Pete also shared some other types of information to examine. The SPA work group will look at these more closely in June. Some additional ideas offered were to look at professional learning communities, whether schools used extended learning time for struggling students, more information on teaching and learning, the nine characteristics of effective schools and the WALA areas of student re-engagement, etc.

### **Next Steps**

The Board will receive an update on the work session at its May Board meeting. The Board will act upon the provisional accountability index and draft joint OSPI and SBE recognition program. SPA members are encouraged to send Edie and Pete additional information for the review of in-depth analysis. SPA members are encouraged to present their ideas in June as well. Edie and Pete will work on reformatting some of the categories for a discussion at the June 16 SPA work session.

# *Executive Summary*

## Updated Recommendations to the State Board of Education for a State Accountability Index

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April 27, 2009

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*The full document is available on the  
State Board of Education Web site at  
<http://www.sbe.wa.gov/spa.htm>.*

## CREATING THE ACCOUNTABILITY INDEX

The Legislature requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to develop a statewide accountability system to help improve academic performance among all students. SBE is required to “adopt objective, systematic criteria” to identify schools and districts for recognition and for receiving additional state support. To meet this requirement, the Board is developing an Accountability Index to sort schools and districts into different “tiers” based on multiple measures. The Board believes the index plays a key role in providing feedback about the status of education reform in schools and districts and in supporting continuous improvement efforts. Schools and districts in most need are given “Priority” status, making them eligible to receive more significant state support. These Priority schools and districts will be required to participate in a state system of support if initial offers of more support are not accepted and substantial improvement does not occur after several years. The creation of the index comes at a time when changes in the state’s assessment and data systems and at the U.S. Education Department provide an opportunity to consider new accountability ideas.

Various principles guided the development of the index. The index needs to (1) be transparent and simple to understand, (2) use existing data, (3) rely on multiple measures, (4) include assessment results from all grades and subjects tested statewide, (5) use concepts of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and its Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) system when appropriate, (6) be fair, reasonable, and consistent, (7) be valid and accurate, (8) apply to both schools and district, (9) apply to as many schools and districts as possible, (10) use familiar concepts when possible, (11) rely mainly on criterion-referenced measures instead of norm-referenced measures, (12) provide multiple ways to reward success, and (13) be flexible enough to accommodate future changes.

The proposed index is based on how schools and districts perform on a set of five outcomes and four indicators. The five outcomes are the results of state assessments in four subjects (reading, writing, mathematics, science) and the “extended” graduation rate (for high schools and districts). These five outcomes are examined using four indicators: achievement of (1) non-low income students, (2) low-income students, (3) all students compared to those in similar schools/districts (controlling for the percentage of students who are learning English, have a disability, live in a low-income home, are mobile, and are designated at gifted), and (4) the level of improvement from the previous year. The results of the 20 measures form the 5x4 matrix shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Matrix of Accountability Measures**

INDICATORS	OUTCOMES				
	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Ext. Grad. Rate
Achievement of non-low income students					
Achievement of low income students					
Achievement vs. peers					
Improvement from the previous year					

Each cell of the matrix is rated on a 7-point scale (from 1 to 7) using fixed benchmarks. Each of the four subjects is rated using the same set of benchmarks across the entire school (i.e., all subjects have the same set of benchmarks, and the assessment results are the aggregate totals for students in all the

tested grades). **The index is the simple average of all the ratings** and ranges from 1.0 to 7.0. High schools and districts have 20 measures, while elementary and middle/junior high schools have only 16 measures because they do not have graduates. Table 2 shows how each of the five outcomes are measured using the four indicators and the benchmarks that produce the ratings.

**Table 2: Benchmarks and Ratings for Outcomes and Indicators**

	READING	WRITING	MATH	SCIENCE	EXT. GRAD. RATE <sup>1</sup>
<b>ACHIEVEMENT (NON-LOW INCOME)</b>	<u>% MET STANDARD</u>				<u>RATE</u>
	<u>RATING</u>				<u>RATING</u>
<b>ACHIEVEMENT (LOW INCOME)</b>	90 - 100% .....				> 95.....
	80 - 89.9% .....				90 - 95% .....
	70 - 79.9% .....				85 - 89.9% .....
	60 - 69.9% .....				80 - 84.9% .....
	50 - 59.9% .....				75 - 79.9% .....
	40 - 49.9% .....				70 - 74.9% .....
< 40% .....				< 70%.....	
<b>ACHIEVEMENT VS. PEERS<sup>2</sup></b>	DIFFERENCE IN				DIFFERENCE
	<u>LEARNING INDEX</u>				<u>IN RATE</u>
	<u>RATING</u>				<u>RATING</u>
	> .20.....				> 12.....
	.151 to .20.....				6.1 to 12.....
	.051 to .15 .....				3.1 to 6.....
	-.05 to .05 .....				-3 to 3.....
	-.051 to -.15 .....				-3.1 to -6.....
-.151 to -.20 .....				-6.1 to -12.....	
< -.20 .....				< -12.....	
<b>IMPROVEMENT<sup>3</sup></b>	CHANGE IN				CHANGE
	<u>LEARNING INDEX</u>				<u>IN RATE</u>
	<u>RATING</u>				<u>RATING</u>
	> .15.....				> 6.....
	.101 to .15.....				4.1 to 6.....
	.051 to .10.....				2.1 to 4.....
	-.05 to .05 .....				-2 to 2.....
	-.051 to -.10 .....				-2.1 to -4.....
-.101 to -.15 .....				-4.1 to -6.....	
< -.15 .....				< -6.....	

Note: Assessment results are the combined results from both the WASL and WAAS (assessments for students with disabilities) from all grades.

<sup>1</sup> This outcome only applies to schools and districts that are authorized to graduate students.

<sup>2</sup> This indicator adjusts the outcomes using statistical methods (multiple regression) to control for five student characteristics beyond a school’s control: the percentage of low-income, ELL, special education, gifted, and mobile students. (Mobile students are those who are not continuously enrolled from October 1 through the entire testing period.) Scores are the difference between the actual level and the predicted level of the Learning Index. Scores above 0 are “beating the odds” and negative scores are below the predicted level. Separate analyses are conducted for schools for each of the four assessments for each type of school (elementary, middle, high, multiple grade levels). District calculations also control for the level of current expenditures per pupil (adjusted for student need).

<sup>3</sup> Measured in terms of the change in the Learning Index from the previous year.

The proposed system holds *districts* accountable using the same indicators, outcomes, and criteria that are used for schools. The results are based on districtwide data for all grades rather than being disaggregated by grade bands (elementary, middle, high). In addition, financial data are used in the “peers” analysis to control for the amount of total operating expenditures per pupil (adjusted for student need).

**PRELIMINARY RESULTS**

Schools and districts fall into five tiers based on the index score. In-depth analyses of the data and conditions occurs for schools and districts that do not make AYP two years in a row to see if they merit further support. Those with the greatest need are eventually placed in a 6th (Priority) tier.

Table 3 shows the ranges for the tier assignments and the number of schools and districts that would have been placed in each tier in 2007 using the above criteria. Schools show a greater range than districts—far fewer districts were in the top and bottom tiers compared to the school results. The 228 schools in the Struggling tier enrolled 74,000 students (1 in 14 students statewide). Of the schools in this tier, 98 (43%) were alternative schools or served other special populations, and enrolled a total of 12,400 students. The 130 “regular” schools in the Struggling tier enrolled 61,600 students. Over the 2-year period, 149 schools (7.4%) had an average index below 2.50, and 89 were regular schools that enrolled approximately 39,000 students (roughly 4% of statewide enrollment). The 17 districts in the Struggling tier in 2007 tended to be rather small, averaging roughly 1,000 students. However, some larger districts had many schools in a struggling tier—17 districts had at least two regular schools and four districts had at least five regular schools with a 2-year index average below 2.50.

**Table 3: Tier Ranges and Preliminary Results (2007)**

Tier	Index Range	# of Schools	% of Schools	# of Students <sup>1</sup>	# of Districts	% of Districts	# of Students <sup>1</sup>
Exemplary	5.50 – 7.00	81	4.0%	28,650	1	.3%	360
Very Good	5.00 – 5.49	131	6.5%	64,500	9	3.1%	31,500
Good	4.00 – 4.99	591	29.4%	314,700	87	29.9%	278,500
Acceptable	2.50 – 3.99	980	48.7%	523,000	177	60.8%	692,500
Struggling	1.00 – 2.49	228	11.3%	74,000	17	5.8%	17,500
Priority <sup>2</sup>		TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

<sup>1</sup>Approximate number (some schools did not provide enrollment data).

<sup>2</sup>To be determined after in-depth analyses of those not making AYP in at least two consecutive years.

Table 4 provides an example of the ratings for an actual high school and how the average of the individual ratings generates the index/tier assignment. The school’s average rating of 3.40 is the index score, which puts the school in the middle of the Acceptable tier. The average ratings have been color-coded so the overall results can be seen at a glance. These types of results should be made public on the state Web site (the format for presenting the results must be determined). Results presented in this “dashboard” give policymakers, educators, and the public a quick snapshot of where a school is strong and weak, and it provides transparency about how the index is determined.

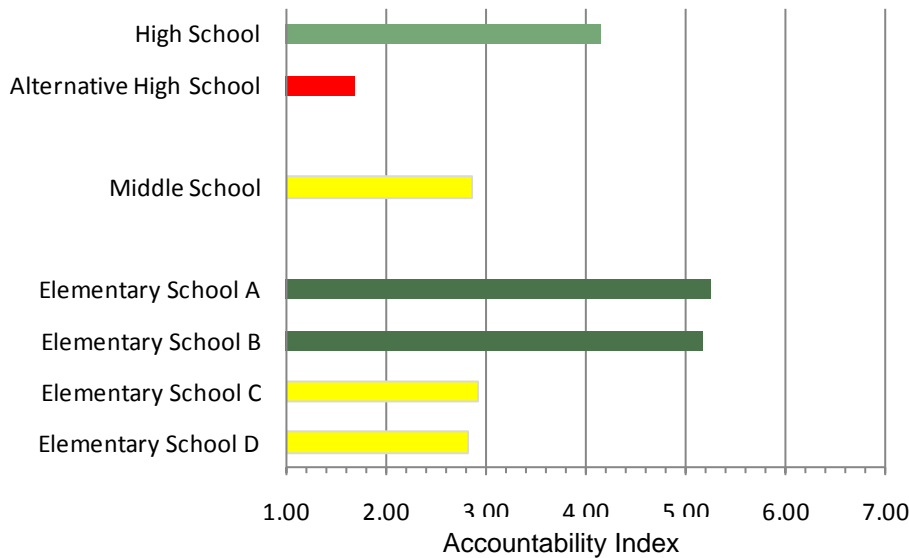
**Table 4: “Actual” High School, 2007**

Indicator	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Grad Rate	Average
Non-low inc. ach.	5	6	3	1	5	4.00
Low-inc. ach.	4	4	1	1	7	3.40
Ach. vs. peers	2	2	2	2	6	2.80
Improvement	1	4	1	4	7	3.40
Average	3.00	4.00	1.75	2.00	6.25	3.40 ← INDEX



Various charts can illustrate district results as well. Figure 1 shows an example of how the index could be shown for each school in a district. In this example (an actual district), no school reached the Exemplary tier.

**Figure 1: Accountability Results in “Actual” District, 2008**



### HANDLING SPECIAL CASES

The accountability system needs to be flexible enough to accommodate some special situations. These include holding alternative schools accountable using additional data, excluding some ELL results from the index calculations, and not counting the improvement cells when achievement is at very high levels.

Holding **alternative schools** accountable poses unique challenges. Many alternative schools exist in the state, and they vary greatly in their focus, structure, and clientele. Most are relatively small (total enrollment is less than 4% statewide), and more than half serve at-risk students in grades 9-12. Some believe these schools have taken on more challenging students while allowing traditional schools to generate better outcomes with their remaining students. On the other hand, some alternative schools offer special programs for students who are not at-risk and who meet rigorous academic requirements for admission. Some are considered “alternative” because they do not use a normal school approach, and a growing number of schools serve students through digital learning via the Internet. Parent Partnership Programs are a type of “school” where parents are the primary instructor and the district provides instructional support. Some target special student populations (e.g., special education, gifted, ELL). Given this variation, no “peer” indicator is computed for these schools.

Some alternative schools intentionally target student populations facing significant challenges and therefore are more likely to be in the Struggling tier. These schools should receive the normal index score based on calculations used for all schools. Alternative schools that do not make AYP in two consecutive years should be examined more closely to determine if they are using research-based best practices and showing progress. Areas for improvement should be identified and should be the focus of analysis if the alternative school does not make AYP again in the future.

**Results for ELL students** are currently included in AYP calculations in the student's second year of enrollment in a U.S. public school. OSPI has asked the U.S. Education Department to exclude ELL results until a student has been enrolled in a U.S. public school for three years or until the student achieves an advanced level of English proficiency on the WLPT, whichever comes first.<sup>1</sup> This request is based on research that shows it takes many years for an ELL student to acquire "academic" proficiency in English and because must be able to read and write English to understand and respond to each test item. Moreover, testing students who do not understand English violates widely-adopted testing standards because of threats to validity and mistreatment of human subjects. However, the Department has denied OSPI's repeated request to use this policy.

Nevertheless, computing the accountability index should exclude the results for ELL students who have not achieved advanced proficiency (Level 3 composite) on the WLPT or who are in their first three years of enrolling in a U.S. public school, whichever comes first, for any test that requires reading and writing in only English.<sup>2</sup> In addition, OSPI should begin reporting WLPT results on its Report Card in a way that allows educators, parents, and other stakeholders to monitor the progress ELLs make in terms of learning English and meeting state content standards. Finally, all ELLs should be required to take the WASL after their first year of enrollment, and OSPI should analyze the WASL and WLPT results to determine the extent to which ELLs are on track to meet state standards.

Most ELL results would still be included in the accountability index, even with this "extended exclusion, because (1) most ELLs enter school in kindergarten and have attended school for three years before taking state assessments for the first time in grade 3, and (2) most ELLs enrolled in the assessed grades (3-8 and 10) reach the advanced level of the WLPT. As a result, the exclusion has little impact on the index results. Nevertheless, the combination of recommendations improves the validity of the accountability system and provides more information about the progress of ELLs.

**Schools and districts that perform at very high levels** are not able to improve much from the previous year. To avoid "penalizing" these schools for a lack of improvement, the ratings for this indicator should not be included in the index calculations under certain conditions. Without this policy, schools/districts with nearly all of their students achieving Level 4 on an assessment and graduating nearly all their students would not be able to achieve a rating above 4 (little or no improvement). Specifically, the improvement indicator should be excluded when computing the index whenever a Learning Index reaches 3.85 out of 4.00 and remains at or above that level for two consecutive years. (A school or district needs to improve by more than .15 to receive a rating of 7, which is impossible when their Learning Index reaches 3.85.) The first year the Learning Index falls above 3.85, a school/district would get a rating based on its improvement. If the Index stays at or above 3.85, the maximum rating is not possible and the indicator should not be calculated.<sup>3</sup> The same policy applies to the extended graduation rate outcome (when the rate reaches or exceeds 94% in two consecutive years.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The composite score from the annual Washington Language Proficiency Test (WLPT) reflects proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The three-year exemption period reflects the views of most stakeholders and is the average time required for ELL students to meet standard on the WASL.

<sup>2</sup> The math and science tests are available in Spanish and Russian for the first time in 2009 but responses must be made in English.

<sup>3</sup> Of the schools and districts with reportable data (at least 10 students assessed), two schools reached this level on the Learning Index in 2006 (one in both reading and writing and the other in writing), but no district reached this level in 2006 and no school or district reached this level in any subject in 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Of the schools with graduation data, 11% had a rate that was at least 94% in two consecutive years.

## INTEGRATING THE FEDERAL AND STATE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

Federal law requires states to have a single accountability system. Many states have combined their state accountability system with the federal NCLB system. However, stakeholders across Washington believe the federal system is overly complex and that the AYP results do not provide an accurate picture of school and district quality. As a result, stakeholders are working to develop a set of policies that would use the index to determine AYP and different consequences for schools and districts that do not make AYP over an extended period of time. When these policies are finalized in the coming months, SBE and OSPI will submit a unified accountability plan to the U.S. Education Department that will recommend using the state accountability system for federal accountability purposes. A new administration may provide more flexibility to states that design alternative systems that provide more rigorous and valid accountability. All the data current reporting requirements of NCLB would continue to be met (i.e., making public the disaggregated data for the assessments, participation, and “other indicators” for the various student subgroups). Moreover, new data elements would be made public to further increase the rigor of the system.

### Advantages Over the Current System

The proposed accountability system has many desirable features that make it a preferred alternative to the current rules used to measure AYP while simultaneously increasing the system’s rigor.

- The index is a *more valid* measure of school and district performance because it is based on the performance of all students in more subjects, is more nuanced than a Yes/No (pass/fail) system, and addresses several unintended consequences created by the current AYP system.
- The index is *more inclusive/comprehensive* because it uses a smaller minimum number for reporting (10 students across the entire school/district), includes the results of all students (not just those continuously enrolled through the testing period), includes both writing and science (this helps prevent a narrow curriculum), and uses the Learning Index to measure performance across the range of assessment results (reduces the focus on “bubble” students who perform close to the proficiency cut point at the expense of students who are farther above and below that level).
- The index is *less volatile* over time because assessment results are combined across all grades in a school and district rather than using results for individual grades where students change from one year to the next.
- The index is *more transparent* because it does not include a margin of error, the benchmarks are the same over time and among the different subjects for both schools and districts, there are fewer subgroups and rules, and schools and districts have the same minimum number required for reporting the results.
- Using the index to determine AYP helps the state *maintain high performance standards*. Two recent studies found that Washington has some of the nation’s toughest AYP requirements, resulting in a high percentage of schools not making AYP and undergoing sanctions.<sup>5</sup> Using the index reduces the incentive for the state to lower its standards so all students can be counted as proficient and meet federal targets, which are viewed as unrealistic if standards are kept high.

### Identifying Schools and Districts Needing Improvement

Each fall OSPI will compute the accountability index and apply the rules for making AYP. All schools and districts in all tiers will be given an AYP status, not just those receiving Title I funds.

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<sup>5</sup> See “*The Accountability Illusion*,” Thomas Fordham Foundation (February 2009) and “*Schools Struggling to Meet Key Goal on Accountability*,” Education Week (January 7, 2009).

The first time a school or district does not make AYP, it is in a “warning” year. Schools and districts that do not make AYP two years in a row should not automatically fall into “improvement” status. Instead, they should undergo an in-depth review by OSPI staff (this is different from the current system where federal rules dictate an automatic designation). Professional judgment panels can be used to conduct this review. The results of this review would determine if the school/district should move into an “improvement” step and be required to take certain actions.

The data to be reviewed fall in five general categories. The list below provides examples in each.

- **Contextual Data**
  - Type of school
  - Changes in student population
  - Programs served by the school
  - Level of student mobility
- **Assessment Results (WASL/WAAS/WLPT)**
  - Trends over multiple years for each subject area
  - Subgroup trends (e.g., race/ethnicity, ELL, special education)
  - Results for students who have been enrolled for at least two years
- **Federal AYP Results**
  - Participation rates for all subgroups
  - “Other indicator” data (unexcused absence and graduation rates) for all subgroups
- **Teaching and Learning Issues**
  - Teacher education and experience levels
  - Student/teacher ratio
  - Recent changes in leadership (key central office staff and principals) and teachers
  - Alignment of curriculum and materials across grades and with state standards
- **Other Data**
  - Graduation and dropout rates for subgroups
  - Funding from local levies/bonds and outside sources
  - Problems with data that generate the index (e.g., reporting errors related to graduates)

### Consequences and the Priority Tier

NCLB currently requires schools and districts to undergo increasing levels of “sanctions” if they do not make AYP over an extended period of time. NCLB also requires schools and districts that are in an improvement step to make AYP two years in a row in order to exit improvement status. Many stakeholders believe the sanctions and exit criteria are flawed and need to be changed. A different set of consequences will be proposed after consulting with OSPI and stakeholders statewide.

While the Accountability Index cannot be used to determine AYP in 2009, it can still be calculated and made public so the details of the index can be used for educational purposes and by OSPI in its assistance decisions. Eventually, schools and districts with the most significant need should be placed in the Priority tier and offered significant state support that is tailored to meet their specific needs (participation is voluntary). If extra assistance is not accepted and improvement does not occur, a binding corrective action plan would be established between the district and the state, if authorized by the Legislature.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> ESHB 2261, passed by the 2009 Legislature, contains language on this issue.

## RECOGNITION

Index results can be calculated retroactively and used for recognition purposes. Providing recognition in Fall 2009 would be considered “Phase I” in the implementation of the accountability system, with full implementation contingent upon the provision of adequate funding. Using the index in this way will provide a more valid picture of school/district performance than AYP results, and it will introduce the concepts to the various stakeholders prior to its full implementation.

The recognition system should (1) be transparent and simple to understand, (2) rely mainly on criterion-referenced measures, and (3) provide multiple ways to demonstrate success. The recognition system is based on the belief that people are motivated more by success than by blame or guilt, and they need clear, challenging, and attainable goals.

SBE and OSPI are working together to create a unified recognition system based on the index results. At least two forms of recognition should be considered. The first is for “Outstanding Overall Performance” and the second is for “Noteworthy Performance.” The form of recognition given should depend on the difficulty of reaching the award criteria: recognition for Outstanding Overall Performance should have a high profile, while recognition for Noteworthy Performance should be handled in an inexpensive and efficient manner.

### Outstanding Overall Performance (8 types)

SBE should provide recognition based on high levels of performance in eight areas: the index, each of the five outcome areas, for closing the achievement gaps (a minimal difference between non-low income and low income ratings in all subjects), and for a small percentage of schools with high levels of gifted students. To ensure only truly outstanding performance is recognized, schools and districts should meet the following conditions.

- (a) For the **index**, the 2-year average must be at least 5.50 and there must be fewer than 10% students designated as gifted each year.
- (b) For **reading, writing, math, science**, and the **extended graduation rate**, the overall (column) 2-year average must be at least 6.00, at least 2 of the 4 cells in the column must be rated each year, and there must be fewer than 10% students designated as gifted each year.
- (c) For the **achievement gap**, there must be at least 10 students in at least 2 of the 5 outcomes (columns) in both of the income-related cells (non-low income and low income), there can be no rating of 1 in any income-related cell or peer cell, there can be no more than a 1-point difference in the rating between the two income-related cells,<sup>7</sup> and there must be fewer than 10% students designated as gifted each year. Each of the above criteria must be met two years in a row.
- (d) For **schools with gifted programs**, the top 5% of schools in grade band—elementary, middle, high, and multi-level—that have at least 10% gifted students would receive this type of recognition, based on the 2-year average peer ratings in all four subjects.

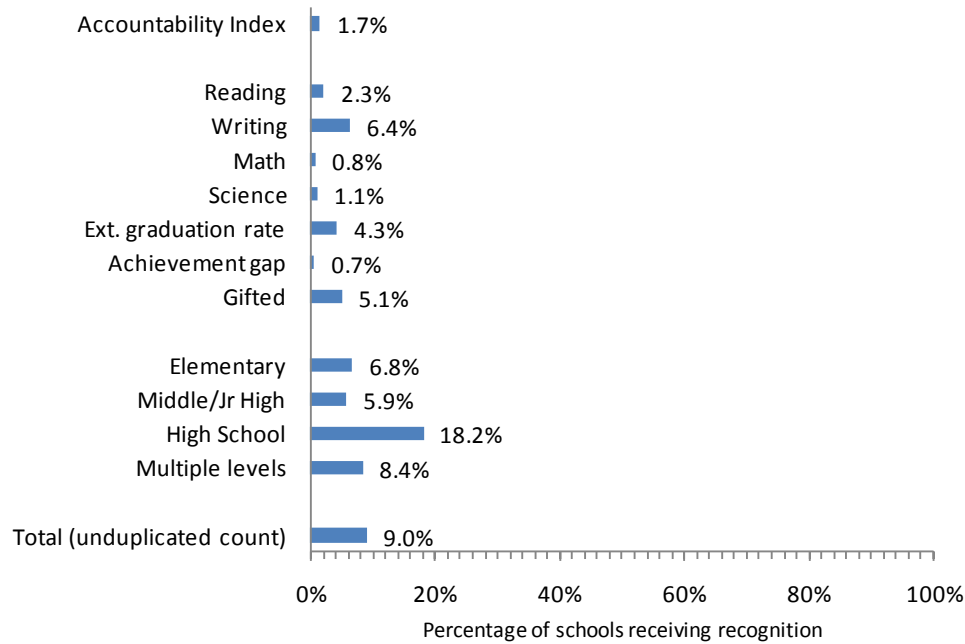
Figure 1 shows the percentage of all schools that met the criteria in 2008. If the system were in place, recognition would have been given to 191 different schools in a total of 277 areas (some

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<sup>7</sup>For example, if the reading non-low income cell is rated 5, the reading low-income cell could be rated no lower than 4 and no higher than 6.

schools would have received recognition in more than one area). This represents 9% of all schools. This level of recognition is similar to the OSPI’s School of Distinctions award.

**Figure 1: Percentage of Schools Meeting “Outstanding Overall Performance” Criteria (2008)**



Noteworthy Performance (21 types)

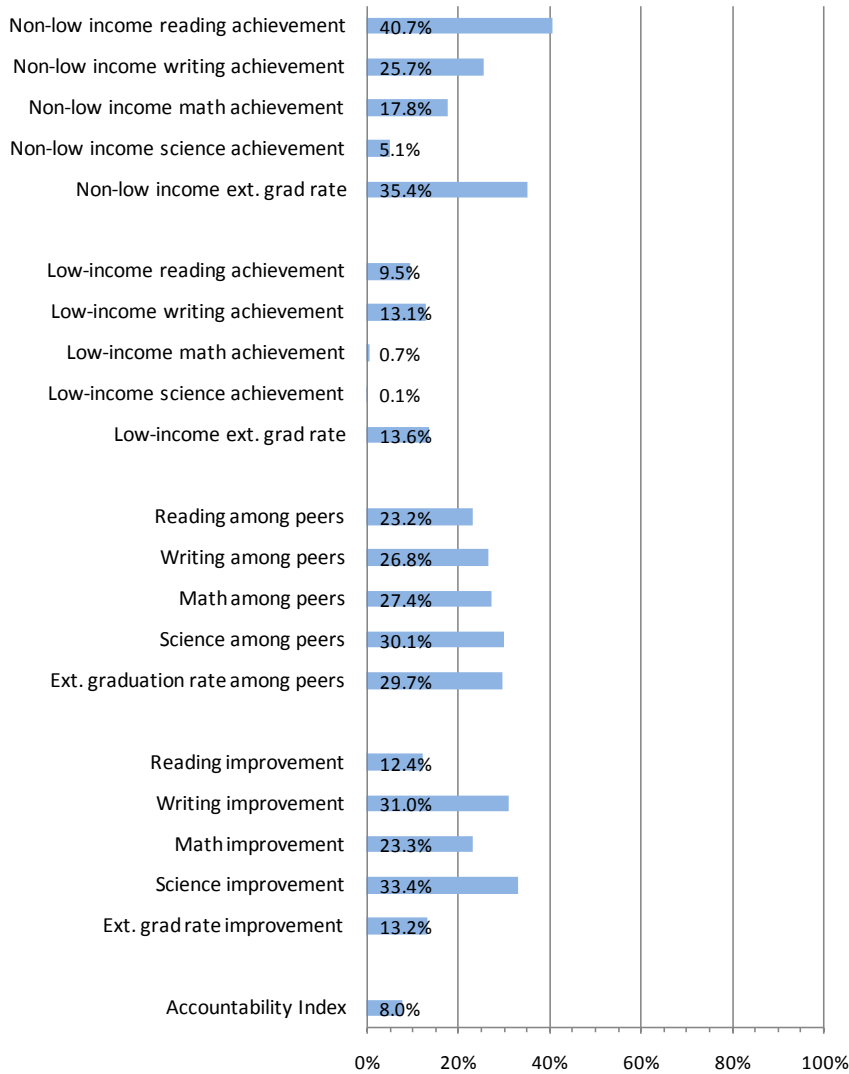
OSPI should consider giving recognition to schools and districts for each of the 20 cells of the matrix when the 2-year average for a cell is at least 5.50, and for the index when the 2-year average is at least 5.00. To receive this type of recognition, schools and districts should also meet the following conditions.

- (a) No rating below 5 can occur in either year in the 20 cells of the accountability matrix.
- (b) Recognition for non-low income cells in reading and writing requires a minimum 2-year average of the low income group of 4.00.

This option provides recognition to far more schools because it is based on performance in each of the 20 cells of the matrix as well as the index. More than 80% of the schools statewide (1,618 in total) met the criteria in some way in 2008, and some schools would have received recognition for performance in many of the cells of the matrix.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of schools that met the criteria for recognition in the 21 cells in 2008. Some areas would have received more recognition than others. The largest number of schools (40%) met the minimum criteria for non-low income reading achievement (even when requiring the low income group to have at least a 4.0 average). Achievement in math, science, and among low-income students had far fewer schools meeting the criteria. For the index, 8% had an overall 2-year average of at least 5.00.

**Figure 2: Percentage of Schools Meeting “Noteworthy Performance” Criteria (2008)**



Other forms of recognition could be given by OSPI or SBE based on their priorities. For example, OSPI could recognize a certain percentage of schools in math and science, even if they do not meet the criteria discussed above. Monetary compensation is not recommended, although matrix data could be used to generate schoolwide bonuses if the Legislature includes these as part of any law or reforms of the basic education finance system in the future.

**REMAINING WORK**

A number of issues must still be resolved before the index can be implemented effectively. Various OSPI and SBE activities need to be integrated and aligned with one another (e.g., how the index relates to NCLB requirements, how to use the index to identify Priority schools and districts, how and when assistance and recognition occur, how index results are represented and made available to the public). The methods for holding alternative schools accountable need further development. Finally, the proposed accountability system will need to remain flexible in order to adapt to changes in NCLB and graduation requirements, the assessment system and content standards, and other factors that may impact the results.

## **Summary of Accountability Recommendations for**

- **English Language Learners (ELLs)**
- **Alternative Schools**
- **Recognition**

April 27, 2009

Pete Bylsma, EdD, MPA

Three accountability issues have been discussed with various stakeholders during the past three months: (1) how to count the results of English language learners (ELLs) in the accountability index, (2) how to hold alternative schools accountable, and (3) how to recognize schools and districts using the Accountability Index data. This paper summarized the results of those discussions and presents the recommended approach to each. These recommendations reflect the views provided by the stakeholders. More details on each issue are provided in separate documents.

### **COUNTING RESULTS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLs)**

Federal accountability regulations (NCLB) require states to include the reading and math results of ELLs who are in their second year of enrollment in a U.S. public school, regardless of their English ability, when determining adequate yearly progress (AYP). Most stakeholders believe this requirement leads to invalid accountability results and forces schools to use unethical testing practices. To increase the validity of federal accountability results, OSPI repeatedly requested that ELL test results not be included during a student's first three years of enrollment in a U.S. public school or until the student achieves an advanced level of English proficiency (Level 3) on the Washington Language Proficiency Test (WLPT), whichever comes first. More recently, OSPI proposed using the ELL results in the second year of U.S. enrollment when determining AYP, but the definition of proficiency would be based on a "sliding scale" according to a student's level of English proficiency as measured on the WLPT. The U.S. Education Department has denied OSPI's requests to use both policies.

Various stakeholder groups and technical advisors discussed how best to use ELL results when calculating the Accountability Index. They considered the merits and disadvantages of both of the above approaches—the "extended exemption" and the "sliding scale"—as well as other options. Both approaches produced a very small positive impact on the index results.<sup>1</sup> While the effect of both approaches is small, the minor gains are nevertheless important to educators who support a new approach to increase the fairness and validity of accountability results. While there was support for both approaches, ultimately a majority of stakeholders preferred using the "extended exclusion" approach because it is simpler to understand and communicate. It is also consistent with OSPI's request to the U.S. Education Department and with empirical evidence on the amount of time it takes ELLs to acquire language skills and meet state standards. Moreover, the 3-year exclusion does not exclude many ELL results because (a) most ELLs have been enrolled for 3

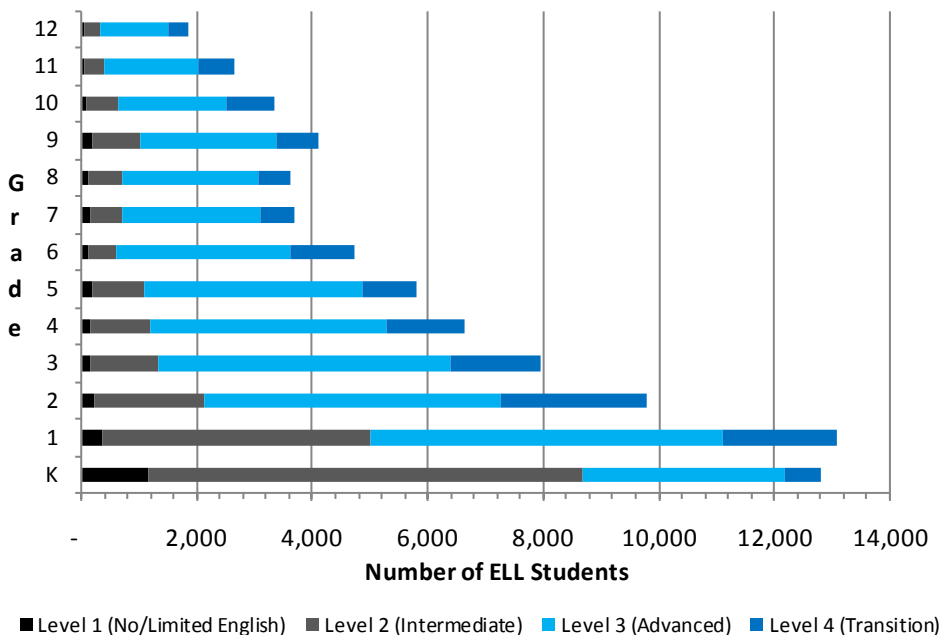
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<sup>1</sup> Analyses of a district with a high level of ELL students found that both methods improved the percentage of non-low income students meeting standard in the various content areas by 1 percentage point and the percentage of low income students meeting standard by about 7 percentage points (ELL students are more likely to be low income). The overall index for this district improved by 0.1 on a 7-point scale using both methods.



years by the time they first take a state assessment in grade 3, and (b) most ELLs in grades 3-10 have achieved advanced level on the WLPT (see Figure 1).<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 1: WLPT Results in 2008, by Grade and Language Proficiency Level**



Stakeholders were unanimous in wanting OSPI to provide more information about the performance of ELLs. Currently, OSPI reports no WLPT results for the state, districts, or schools on the Report Card, even though they are available. OSPI recently used new methods to estimate the WASL scale score needed by ELLs to be “on track” to meet standard when they acquire English proficiency. Stakeholders saw great value in having this kind of information available. These and the other WLPT results would be used in OSPI’s annual evaluation of the state program, and they would be reviewed as part of the analysis of schools and districts that do not make AYP two years in a row.

Three recommendations emerged from the stakeholder conversations.

1. WASL/WAAS results should be excluded from the accountability calculations for ELLs who are in the first three calendar years of U.S. public school enrollment or until Level 3 is reached on the WLPT, whichever comes first.
2. WLPT results should be made public on OSPI’s on-line Report Card.
3. OSPI should provide information to help districts and school know if ELLs are on track to meet standard based on their WLPT and WASL results.

<sup>2</sup> About 70% of all ELL students enter school in kindergarten, and they will have attended school for three years before taking the state assessment for the first time in grade 3. Of the ELL students who were enrolled in grades assessed by the WASL/WAAS (grades 3-8 and 10), more than 81% had reached the advanced level of the WLPT in 2008 and would have their scores included in the accountability calculations.

## ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

Many types of alternative schools exist in the state.<sup>3</sup> More than half the “schools” with this designation serve at-risk students in grades 9-12. Some believe these schools have taken on more challenging students, which allows more traditional schools to generate better outcomes with their remaining students. On the other hand, some alternative schools offer special programs for students who are not at-risk and who must meet rigorous academic requirements for admission. In addition, some are considered “alternative” because they do not use a normal school approach (e.g., digital learning, Parent Partnership Programs, programs offered by independent contractors or held on college campuses).

The wide variation in the focus, structure, and clientele of alternative programs poses unique accountability challenges. Their results are included in district results, but school-level outcomes may be very high or low, depending on the type of students served. As a result, no “peer” indicator is computed for these schools when calculating the accountability index. Most of these schools are relatively small—their total 2007 enrollment was less than 4% of enrollment statewide—but many serve student populations facing significant challenges. Alternative schools also frequently have very high mobility rates. Alternative schools, therefore, are over-represented in the Struggling tier: about 25% of all schools with an alternative school designation had a 2-year index average that placed them in the Struggling tier in 2008.

The Washington Association for Learning Alternatives (WALA) has compiled research on best practices among alternative schools. Findings from this research and from studies on effective schools provide a framework to hold alternative schools accountable. In addition, OSPI is collecting more information that will help educators and stakeholders understand outcomes in alternative (and other) schools. For example, it has created a database of students who achieve the Certificate of Academic Achievement via state-approved alternatives to the WASL. It has also begun collecting dropout recovery data and will soon collect data on student credits and courses that will allow for analyses of credits earned.

Stakeholders believe these schools should not be exempt from the normal accountability measures, but that they also require a different kind of analysis if they consistently do not make AYP. Specifically, two recommendations emerged from the stakeholder conversations.

1. Accountability for alternative schools should begin using the approach used for all schools. Each would receive an index score using the normal process (assignment of ratings using the same benchmarks, averaging the rating).
2. For alternative schools not making AYP two years in a row or in school improvement, a deeper analysis should examine existing data as well as factors related to best practices.

The deeper analysis conducted by OSPI would include recommendations about areas where improvement needs to occur in the future. If an alternative school does not make AYP again the following year, the areas that needed improvement would be the main focus on the deeper analysis.

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<sup>3</sup> “Alternative school” is a generic term referring to any school that is not identified as a regular school in the OSPI database. This includes alternative schools, ELL and special education centers, psychiatric facilities, private schools on contract, and long-term correctional institutions. It does *not* include tribal schools. Jails and juvenile detention centers are not authorized to give assessments, so they are excluded from accountability decisions.

## RECOGNITION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Legislature requires SBE to “adopt objective, systematic criteria” to identify schools and districts for recognition and for receiving additional state support. The SBE accountability system uses a 20-cell matrix that measures five outcomes in four ways, as shown in Table 1. The results for the cells are rated on a scale of 1 to 7 (see Appendix A). The ratings are averaged to create the Accountability Index. Averages for the outcomes and indicators are also computed to provide more feedback to educators.

**Table 1: Matrix of Accountability Measures**

INDICATORS	OUTCOMES					Average
	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Ext. Grad. Rate	
Achievement of non-low income						
Achievement of low income						
Achievement vs. peers						
Improvement from previous year						
<i>Average</i>						<i>INDEX</i>

Several principles guided the development of the recognition system. The system should (1) be transparent and simple to understand, (2) rely mainly on criterion-referenced measures, and (3) provide multiple ways to demonstrate success. Based on stakeholder feedback, **two forms of recognition should be given: “Outstanding Overall Performance” and “Noteworthy Performance.”** Other forms of recognition could be given as well based on index data.

### Outstanding Overall Performance (8 types)

SBE should provide recognition based on high levels of performance in the index, each of the five outcome areas, and for closing the achievement gaps (i.e., only a small difference between non-low income and low income ratings in all subjects). To ensure only truly outstanding performance is recognized, schools and districts should meet the following conditions.

- (a) For the **index**, the 2-year average must be at least 5.50, at least 10 cells of the matrix are rated each year, and there must be fewer than 10% students designated as gifted each year.
- (b) For **reading, writing, math, science**, and the **extended graduation rate**, the overall (column) 2-year average must be at least 6.00, at least 2 of the 4 cells in the column must be rated each year, and there must be fewer than 10% students designated as gifted each year.
- (c) For the **achievement gap**, there must be at least 10 students in at least 2 of the 5 outcomes (columns) in both of the income-related cells (non-low income and low income), there can be no rating of 1 in any income-related cell or peer cell, there can be no more than a 1-point difference in the rating between the two income-related cells,<sup>4</sup> and there must be fewer than 10% students designated as gifted each year. Each of the above criteria must be met two years in a row.

<sup>4</sup>For example, if the reading non-low income cell is rated 5, the reading low-income cell could be rated no lower than 4 and no higher than 6.

(d) For **schools with gifted programs**, the top 5% of schools in grade band—elementary, middle, high, and multi-level—that have at least 10% gifted students would receive this type of recognition, based on the 2-year average peer ratings in all four subjects.<sup>5</sup>

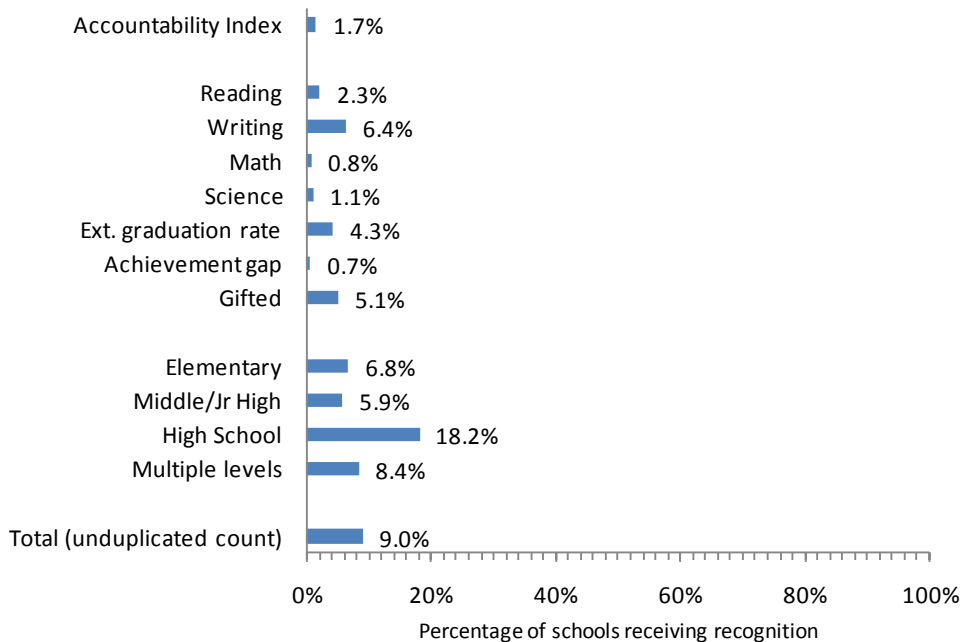
Table 2 shows the cells of the matrix that would be recognized. Figure 2 shows the percentage of schools that would have been recognized if it were in effect in 2008. Recognition would have been given to 191 different schools (9% of all schools) in a total of 277 areas (some schools would have received recognition in more than one area). Very few schools would have received recognition in math, science, the index, or for having closed the achievement gap.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 2: Areas of Recognition for Outstanding Overall Performance**

INDICATORS	OUTCOMES					Average
	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Ext. Grad. Rate	
Achievement of non-low income	Compare the two income-related cells to each other in each column, must have no more than a 1-point difference in each column					
Achievement of low income						
Achievement vs. peers						Gifted*
Improvement from previous year						
Average	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.50

\* The two-year average applies only to the four content areas (not the extended graduation rate).

**Figure 2: Percentage of Schools Meeting “Outstanding Overall Performance” Criteria (2008)**



<sup>5</sup>Results for the peer indicators control for the types of students attending the school (the percent gifted, low income, ELL, special education, and mobile). This ensures schools with the highest concentrations of gifted students so not automatically receive this form of recognition.

<sup>6</sup>The uneven results occur because recognition is given based on a set of criteria rather than on a percentage basis (a norm-referenced approach) and because of differences in the relative difficulty of the assessments.

Noteworthy Performance (21 types)

OSPI should consider providing recognition to schools and districts for each of the 20 cells of the matrix when the 2-year average for a cell is at least 5.50, and for the index when the 2-year average is at least 5.00. To receive this type of recognition, schools and districts should also meet the following conditions:

- (a) No rating below 5 can occur in either year in the 20 cells of the accountability matrix.
- (b) Recognition for non-low income cells in reading and writing requires a minimum 2-year average of the low income group of 4.00.

Table 3 shows the cells of the matrix that would be recognized and the minimum average. Figure 3 shows the percentage of schools that met the criteria for recognition in the 21 cells in 2008. Far more schools would have received this type of recognition because it is based on performance in each of the 20 cells of the matrix as well as the index. More than 80% of the schools statewide (1,618 in total) met the criteria in some way, and some schools would have received recognition for performance in many of the cells of the matrix. The largest number of schools (40%) met the minimum criteria for non-low income reading achievement (even when requiring the low income group to have at least a 4.0 average). Achievement in math, science, and among low-income students had far fewer schools meeting the criteria. For the index, 8% had an overall 2-year average of at least 5.00.

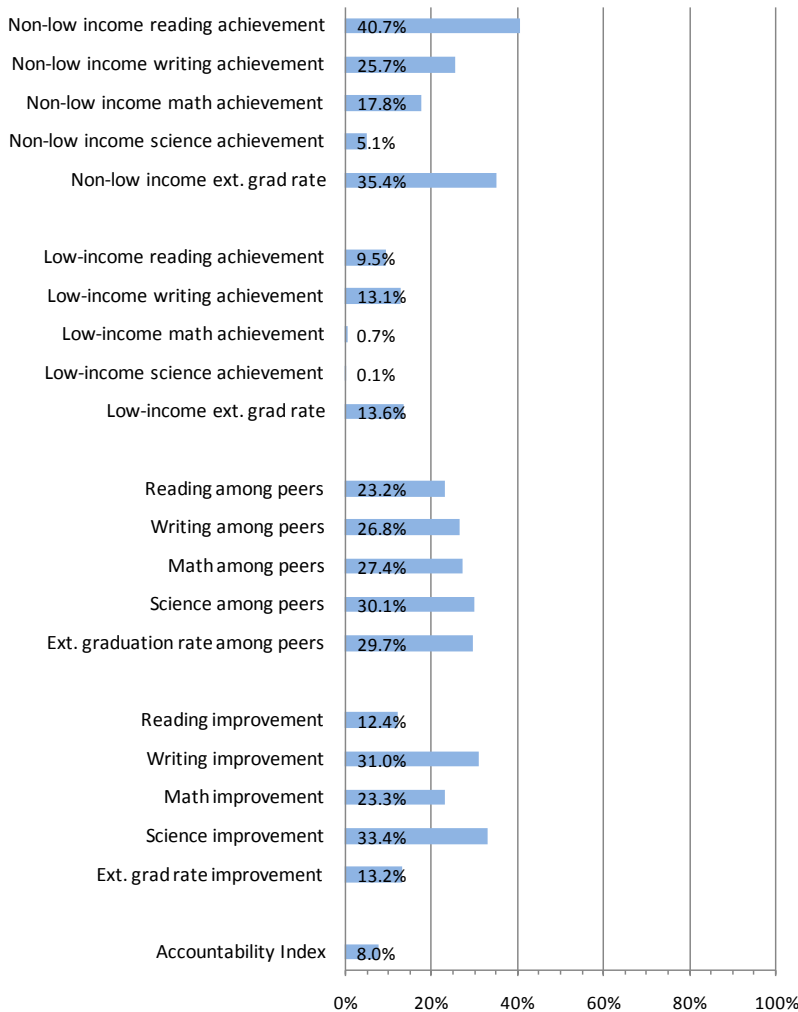
Appendix B provides more results for both types of recognition.

**Table 3: Areas of Recognition and 2-Year Average Required for Noteworthy Performance**

INDICATORS	OUTCOMES					Average
	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Ext. Grad. Rate	
Achievement of non-low income	**	**				
Achievement of low income	<b>5.50</b>					
Achievement vs. peers						
Improvement						
Average						<b>5.00</b>

\*\*Recognition in these cells requires the low-income cell to have a 2-year average of at least 4.00.

**Figure 3: Percentage of Schools Meeting “Noteworthy Performance” Criteria (2008)**



Forms and Timing of Recognition

The *Outstanding Overall Performance* award should be recognized in a significant manner, such as through a special event and banner. Relatively few schools (less than 200 statewide) reached these levels in 2008, so the extra cost will be relatively minimal. For *Noteworthy Performance*, recognition should be via a letter to the district with the names of the schools that are to be recognized and the reason for recognition. The results should also be posted on the OSPI Web site. This is the least expensive and most efficient form of recognition.

Other forms of recognition could be given by either OSPI or SBE based on their priorities. For example, OSPI could recognize a certain percentage of schools in math and science, even if they do not meet the criteria discussed above. Monetary compensation is not recommended, although matrix data could be used to generate schoolwide bonuses if the Legislature includes these as part of any law or reforms of the basic education finance system in the future.

The index can be computed retroactively using existing data, so it should be used for recognition purposes in Fall 2009. Providing recognition would be “Phase I” in the implementation of the accountability system, with full implementation contingent upon adequate funding.

## Appendix A

### Benchmarks and Ratings for Outcomes and Indicators

		OUTCOMES					
		READING	WRITING	MATH	SCIENCE	EXT. GRAD. RATE <sup>1</sup>	
<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>ACHIEVEMENT (NON-LOW INCOME)</b>	<u>% MET STANDARD</u>			<u>RATING</u>	<u>RATE</u>	<u>RATING</u>
		90 - 100% .....			7	> 95 .....	7
		80 - 89.9% .....			6	90 - 95% .....	6
		70 - 79.9% .....			5	85 - 89.9% .....	5
	<b>ACHIEVEMENT (LOW INCOME)</b>	60 - 69.9% .....			4	80 - 84.9% .....	4
		50 - 59.9% .....			3	75 - 79.9% .....	3
		40 - 50% .....			2	70 - 74.9% .....	2
		< 40% .....			1	< 70% .....	1
	<b>ACHIEVEMENT VS. PEERS<sup>2</sup></b>	<u>DIFFERENCE IN LEARNING INDEX</u>			<u>RATING</u>	<u>DIFFERENCE IN RATE</u>	<u>RATING</u>
		> .20 .....			7	> 12 .....	7
		.151 to .20 .....			6	6.1 to 12 .....	6
		.051 to .15 .....			5	3.1 to 6 .....	5
		-.05 to .05 .....			4	-3 to 3 .....	4
		-.051 to -.15 .....			3	-3.1 to -6 .....	3
		-.151 to -.20 .....			2	-6.1 to -12 .....	2
		< -.20 .....			1	< -12 .....	1
	<b>IMPROVEMENT (from previous year)</b>	<u>CHANGE IN LEARNING INDEX</u>			<u>RATING</u>	<u>CHANGE IN RATE</u>	<u>RATING</u>
		> .15 .....			7	> 6 .....	7
		.101 to .15 .....			6	4.1 to 6 .....	6
		.051 to .10 .....			5	2.1 to 4 .....	5
		-.05 to .05 .....			4	-2 to 2 .....	4
		-.051 to -.10 .....			3	-2.1 to -4 .....	3
		-.101 to -.15 .....			2	-4.1 to -6 .....	2
		< -.15 .....			1	< -6 .....	1

Note: Assessment-related results are the combined results of both the WASL and WAAS from all grades.

<sup>1</sup>This outcome only applies to schools and districts that are authorized to graduate students.

<sup>2</sup>This indicator adjusts the outcomes using statistical methods (multiple regression) to control for five student characteristics beyond a school's control: the percentage of low-income, ELL, special education, gifted, and mobile students. (Mobile students are those who are not continuously enrolled from October 1 through the entire testing period.) Scores are the difference between the actual level and the predicted level. Scores above 0 are "beating the odds" and negative scores are below the predicted level. Separate analyses are conducted for schools for each of the four assessments for each type of school (elementary, middle, high). District calculations also control for the level of current expenditures, adjusted for student need.

## Appendix B

### Recognition Results, 2008

#### Distribution of Schools Meeting “Outstanding Overall Performance” Criteria (2008)

Type of Recognition	Elementary	Middle/ Jr. High	High	Multiple Levels	Total*
Index	27	1	1	4	33
Reading	26	3	11	4	44
Writing	29	13	62	14	118
Math	10	2	1	3	16
Science	16	4	1	0	21
Ext. Grad. Rate	—	—	10	10	20
Achievement Gap	12	0	0	2	14
Gifted	6	3	1	1	11
<b>Total*</b>	126	26	87	38	277
<b>Total**</b>	6.8%	5.9	18.2%	8.4%	9.0%

\* Duplicated count (schools can be recognized in more than one area); 19 alternative schools are included in the totals.

\*\*Based on unduplicated count of that type of school; a total of 191 schools would have been recognized.

#### Distribution of Schools Meeting “Noteworthy Performance” Criteria (2008)

	# of schools rated	Total recognized	Total percent
Non-low income reading achievement	1,841	750	40.7%
Non-low income writing achievement	1,668	428	25.7%
Non-low income math achievement	1,842	327	17.8%
Non-low income science achievement	1,636	84	5.1%
Non-low income ext. grad rate	460	163	35.4%
Low-income reading achievement	1,784	170	9.5%
Low-income writing achievement	1,536	201	13.1%
Low-income math achievement	1,785	13	0.7%
Low-income science achievement	1,522	2	0.1%
Low-income ext. grad rate	441	60	13.6%
Reading among peers	1,755	408	23.2%
Writing among peers	1,710	458	26.8%
Math among peers	1,757	482	27.4%
Science among peers	1,679	505	30.1%
Ext. graduation rate among peers	333	99	29.7%
Reading improvement	1,932	240	12.4%
Writing improvement	1,861	577	31.0%
Math improvement	1,931	449	23.3%
Science improvement	1,840	614	33.4%
Ext. grad rate improvement	453	60	13.2%
Accountability Index	1,972	158	8.0%



# Recognition Recommendations

April 27, 2009

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*The state should give two types of recognition using data from the Accountability Index matrix: for “Outstanding Overall Performance” in eight areas, and for “Noteworthy Performance” in 21 areas. Relatively few schools would receive the first type of recognition because they must meet very rigorous criteria; a majority of schools would likely receive recognition for Noteworthy Performance in one or more of the 21 cells of the matrix. Data from the matrix can be used for other recognition purposes as well. The form of recognition given should depend on the difficulty of reaching the award criteria—recognition for Outstanding Overall Performance should have a high profile, while recognition for Noteworthy Performance should be handled in an inexpensive and efficient manner.*

## **BACKGROUND**

The Legislature requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to “adopt objective, systematic criteria” to identify schools and districts for recognition and for receiving additional state support. The proposed criteria are in the form of a 20-cell matrix that measures five outcomes in four ways, as shown in Table 1. The results for the cells are rated on a scale of 1 to 7 (see Appendix A). The ratings are averaged to create the Accountability Index. Averages for the outcomes and indicators are also computed to provide more feedback to educators.

**Table 1: Matrix of Accountability Measures**

INDICATORS	OUTCOMES					Average
	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Ext. Grad. Rate	
Achievement of non-low income						
Achievement of low income						
Achievement vs. peers						
Improvement from previous year						
Average						INDEX

Several principles guided the development of the recognition system. The system should (1) be transparent and simple to understand, (2) rely mainly on criterion-referenced measures, and (3) provide multiple ways to demonstrate success. SBE and OSPI should work together to create a unified recognition system (see Appendix B for the current types of recognition).

Based on stakeholder feedback, two forms of recognition should be given, as described below. The first is for “Outstanding Overall Performance” and the second is for “Noteworthy Performance.” The rationale for each type of recognition is provided in Appendix C.

### **1. OUTSTANDING OVERALL PERFORMANCE (8 TYPES)**

**Provide recognition based on high levels of performance in the index, each of the five outcome areas, and for closing the achievement gaps (i.e., only a small difference between non-low income and low income ratings in all subjects). To ensure only truly outstanding performance is recognized, schools and districts must meet the following conditions.**

(a) For the **index**, the 2-year average must be at least 5.50 and there must be fewer than 10% students designated as gifted each year.

(b) For **reading, writing, math, science**, and the **extended graduation rate**, the overall (column) 2-year average must be at least 6.00, at least 2 of the 4 cells in the column must be rated each year, and there must be fewer than 10% students designated as gifted each year.

(c) For the **achievement gap**, there must be at least 10 students in at least 2 of the 5 outcomes (columns) in both of the income-related cells (non-low income and low income), there can be no rating of 1 in any income-related cell or peer cell, there can be no more than a 1-point difference in the rating between the two income-related cells,<sup>1</sup> and there must be fewer than 10% students designated as gifted each year. Each of the above criteria must be met two years in a row.

Each of the above seven recognition areas require fewer than 10% of the students to be designated as gifted in each year. Statewide approximately 3% of all students received this designation in 2008, so schools with 10% or more gifted students have unusually high concentrations of the most capable students. This often occurs when a district decides to concentrate these types of students in one location so they can take advantage of special programs that meet their needs. The exclusion criterion prevents school from receiving this type of recognition because they will likely have much higher than normal ratings based on district enrollment decisions. Hence, an eighth recognition area needs to be based on criteria that ensures these types of schools can also receive recognition for outstanding overall performance.

(d) For **schools with gifted programs**, the top 5% of schools in grade band—elementary, middle, high, and multi-level—that have at least 10% gifted students would receive this type of recognition, based on the 2-year average peer ratings in all four subjects.<sup>2</sup>

Table 2 shows the eight areas of the accountability matrix that would be recognized for Outstanding Overall Performance.

**Table 2: Areas of Recognition for Outstanding Overall Performance**

INDICATORS	OUTCOMES					Average
	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Ext. Grad. Rate	
Achievement of non-low income	Compare the two income-related cells to each other in each column, must have no more than a 1-point difference in each column					
Achievement of low income						
Achievement vs. peers						Gifted*
Improvement from previous year						
Average	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.50

\* The two-year average applies only to the four content areas (not the extended graduation rate).

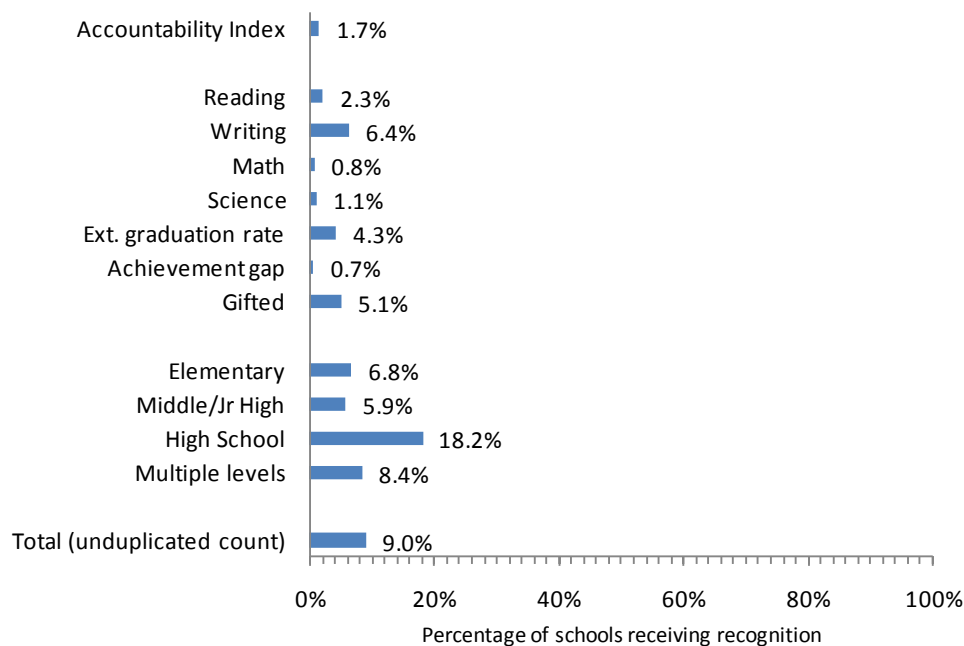
Figure 1 and Table 3 show the percentage of all schools that met the criteria in 2008. If the system were in place, recognition would have been given to 191 different schools in a total of 277 areas

<sup>1</sup>For example, if the reading non-low income cell is rated 5, the reading low-income cell could be rated no lower than 4 and no higher than 6.

<sup>2</sup>Results for the peer indicators control for the types of students attending the school (the percent gifted, low income, ELL, special education, and mobile). This ensures schools with the highest concentrations of gifted students so not automatically receive this form of recognition.

(some schools would have received recognition in more than one area). This represents 9% of all schools. Elementary schools represent the largest percentage of schools statewide, so they would have been recognized most often. However, high schools were more likely to be recognized because of their strong performance in writing. Very few schools would have received recognition in math, science, the index, or for having closed the achievement gap in all areas.<sup>3</sup> Finally, 5% of the schools with high concentrations of gifted students receive this form of recognition. A total of 116,000 students were enrollment in the 191 schools in 2008 (11% of all students), with an average size was slightly more than 600 students per school.

**Figure 1: Percentage of Schools Meeting “Outstanding Overall Performance” Criteria (2008)**



**Table 3: Distribution of Schools Meeting “Outstanding Overall Performance” Criteria (2008)**

Type of Recognition	Elementary	Middle/ Jr. High	High	Multiple Levels	Total*
Index	27	1	1	4	33
Reading	26	3	11	4	44
Writing	29	13	62	14	118
Math	10	2	1	3	16
Science	16	4	1	0	21
Ext. Grad. Rate	—	—	10	10	20
Achievement Gap	12	0	0	2	14
Gifted	6	3	1	1	11
<b>Total*</b>	126	26	87	38	277
<b>Total**</b>	6.8%	5.9	18.2%	8.4%	9.0%

\* Duplicated count (schools can be recognized in more than one area); 19 alternative schools are included in the totals.

\*\*Based on unduplicated count of that type of school; a total of 191 schools would have been recognized.

<sup>3</sup>The uneven results occur because recognition is given based on a set of criteria rather than on a percentage basis (a norm-referenced approach) and because of differences in the relative difficulty of the assessments.

**2. NOTEWORTHY PERFORMANCE (21 TYPES)**

**Provide recognition to schools and districts for each of the 20 cells of the matrix when the 2-year average for a cell is at least 5.50, and for the index when the 2-year average is at least 5.00.** To receive this type of recognition, schools and districts must also meet the following conditions.

- (a) No rating below 5 can occur in either year in the 20 cells of the accountability matrix.
- (b) Recognition for non-low income cells in reading and writing requires a minimum 2-year average of the low income group of 4.00.

Table 4 shows the areas where recognition would be given and the minimum average.

**Table 4: Required 2-Year Average for Noteworthy Performance**

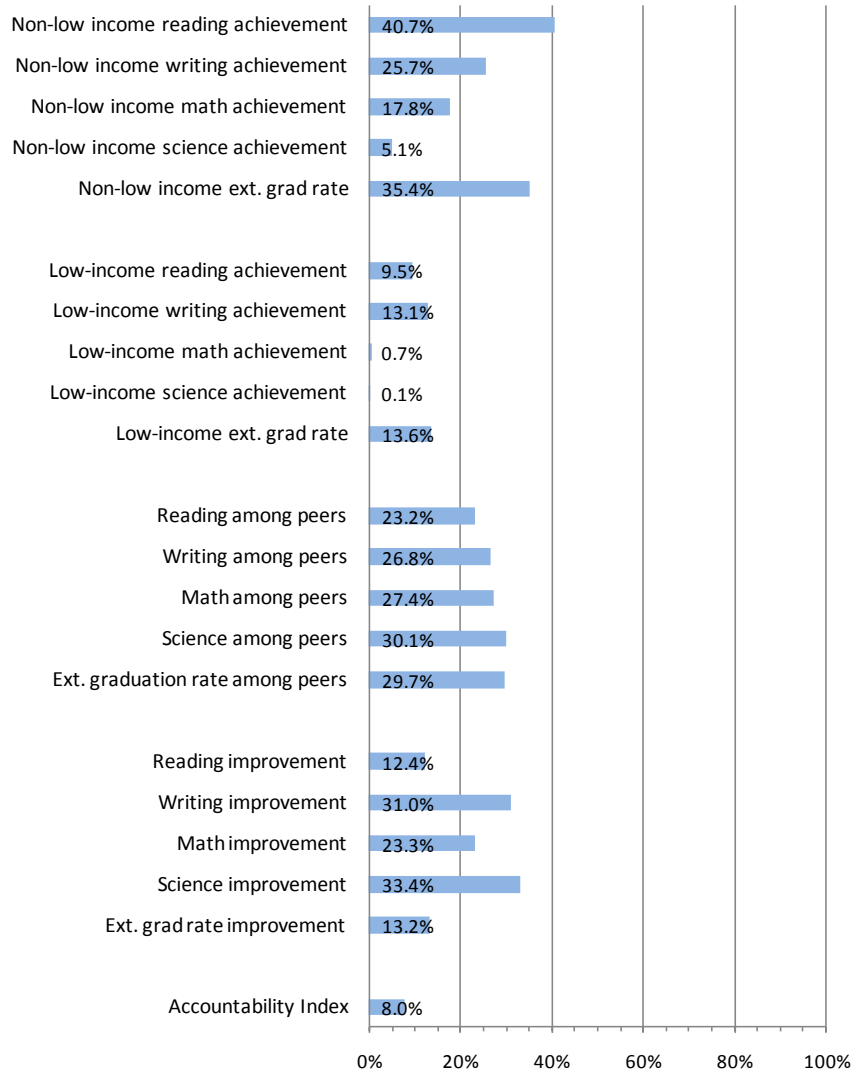
INDICATORS	OUTCOMES					Average
	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Ext. Grad. Rate	
Achievement of non-low income	**	**				
Achievement of low income	<b>5.50</b>					
Achievement vs. peers						
Improvement						
Average						<b>5.00</b>

\*\*Recognition in these cells requires the low-income cell to have a 2-year average of at least 4.00.

This option provides recognition to far more schools because it is based on performance in each of the 20 cells of the matrix as well as the index. More than 80% of the schools statewide (1,618 in total) met the criteria in some way, and some schools would have received recognition for performance in many of the cells of the matrix.

Figure 2 and Table 5 show the percentage of schools that met the criteria for recognition in the 21 cells in 2008. Some areas would have received more recognition than others. The largest number of schools (40%) met the minimum criteria for non-low income reading achievement (even when requiring the low income group to have at least a 4.0 average). Achievement in math, science, and among low-income students had far fewer schools meeting the criteria. For the index, 8% had an overall 2-year average of at least 5.00.

**Figure 2: Percentage of Schools Meeting “Noteworthy Performance” Criteria (2008)**



**Table 5: Distribution of Schools Meeting “Noteworthy Performance” Criteria (2008)**

	# of schools rated	Total recognized	Total percent
Non-low income reading achievement	1,841	750	40.7%
Non-low income writing achievement	1,668	428	25.7%
Non-low income math achievement	1,842	327	17.8%
Non-low income science achievement	1,636	84	5.1%
Non-low income ext. grad rate	460	163	35.4%
Low-income reading achievement	1,784	170	9.5%
Low-income writing achievement	1,536	201	13.1%
Low-income math achievement	1,785	13	0.7%
Low-income science achievement	1,522	2	0.1%
Low-income ext. grad rate	441	60	13.6%
Reading among peers	1,755	408	23.2%
Writing among peers	1,710	458	26.8%
Math among peers	1,757	482	27.4%
Science among peers	1,679	505	30.1%
Ext. graduation rate among peers	333	99	29.7%
Reading improvement	1,932	240	12.4%
Writing improvement	1,861	577	31.0%
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Science improvement	1,840	614	33.4%
Ext. grad rate improvement	453	60	13.2%
Accountability Index	1,972	158	8.0%

**FORMS AND TIMING OF RECOGNITION**

- The *Outstanding Overall Performance* award should be recognized in a significant manner, such as through a special event and banner. This is how Schools of Distinction were recognized. Relatively few schools (less than 200 statewide) reached these levels in 2008, so the extra cost will be relatively minimal. Public officials (e.g., legislators, OSPI staff, State Board of Education members, the Governor) could participate in any state and/or local celebrations.
- For *Noteworthy Performance*, recognition should be via a joint SBE/OSPI letter to the district with the names of the schools that are to be recognized and the reason for recognition. The results would also be posted on the OSPI Web site, as they are now. This is the least expensive and most efficient form of recognition, which is appropriate given the large number of schools that would receive this type of recognition.
- Other forms of recognition could be given by either OSPI or SBE based on their priorities. For example, OSPI could recognize a certain percentage of schools in math and science, even if they do not meet the criteria discussed above. Monetary compensation is not recommended, although matrix data could be used to generate schoolwide bonuses if the Legislature includes these as part of any law or reforms of the basic education finance system in the future.

The index can be computed retroactively using existing data, so it should be used for recognition purposes in Fall 2009. Providing recognition at that time would be considered “Phase I” in the implementation of the accountability system, with full implementation contingent upon adequate funding.

## APPENDIX A

### Benchmarks and Ratings for Outcomes and Indicators

		OUTCOMES				
		READING	WRITING	MATH	SCIENCE	EXT. GRAD. RATE <sup>1</sup>
<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>ACHIEVEMENT (NON-LOW INCOME)</b>	<u>% MET STANDARD</u> <u>RATING</u>			<u>RATE</u> <u>RATING</u>	
		90 - 100% .....7			> 95 ..... 7	
		80 - 89.9% .....6			90 - 95% ..... 6	
		70 - 79.9% .....5			85 - 89.9% ..... 5	
	<b>ACHIEVEMENT (LOW INCOME)</b>	60 - 69.9% .....4			80 - 84.9% ..... 4	
		50 - 59.9% .....3			75 - 79.9% ..... 3	
		40 - 50% .....2			70 - 74.9% ..... 2	
		< 40% .....1			< 70% ..... 1	
	<b>ACHIEVEMENT VS. PEERS<sup>2</sup></b>	<u>DIFFERENCE IN LEARNING INDEX</u> <u>RATING</u>			<u>DIFFERENCE IN RATE</u> <u>RATING</u>	
		> .20 .....7			> 12 ..... 7	
		.151 to .20 .....6			6.1 to 12 ..... 6	
		.051 to .15 .....5			3.1 to 6 ..... 5	
		-.05 to .05 .....4			-3 to 3 ..... 4	
		-.051 to -.15 .....3			-3.1 to -6 ..... 3	
		-.151 to -.20 .....2			-6.1 to -12 ..... 2	
		< -.20 .....1			< -12 ..... 1	
	<b>IMPROVEMENT (from previous year)</b>	<u>CHANGE IN LEARNING INDEX</u> <u>RATING</u>			<u>CHANGE IN RATE</u> <u>RATING</u>	
		> .15 .....7			> 6 ..... 7	
		.101 to .15 .....6			4.1 to 6 ..... 6	
		.051 to .10 .....5			2.1 to 4 ..... 5	
		-.05 to .05 .....4			-2 to 2 ..... 4	
		-.051 to -.10 .....3			-2.1 to -4 ..... 3	
		-.101 to -.15 .....2			-4.1 to -6 ..... 2	
		< -.15 .....1			< -6 ..... 1	

Note: Assessment-related results are the combined results of both the WASL and WAAS from all grades.

<sup>1</sup>This outcome only applies to schools and districts that are authorized to graduate students.

<sup>2</sup>This indicator adjusts the outcomes using statistical methods (multiple regression) to control for five student characteristics beyond a school's control: the percentage of low-income, ELL, special education, gifted, and mobile students. (Mobile students are those who are not continuously enrolled from October 1 through the entire testing period.) Scores are the difference between the actual level and the predicted level. Scores above 0 are "beating the odds" and negative scores are below the predicted level. Separate analyses are conducted for schools for each of the four assessments for each type of school (elementary, middle, high). District calculations also control for the level of current expenditures, adjusted for student need.

## APPENDIX B

### Current Federal and State Recognition Programs

The federal and state governments each provide limited recognition. **Federal awards** are only given to schools and are competitive in nature. Three types of awards are given and only to schools that make AYP. In 2008, 59 schools receive these awards (3% of all schools statewide).

1. *Blue Ribbon Schools* are nominated by OSPI and selected by the U.S. Department of Education based on high academic performance. In order to be selected, nominated schools must provide detailed information about their school, they can be any type of school (including private schools), and they must make AYP in the year of the nomination and the following year. In 2008, four schools were recognized (seven schools had been nominated).
2. For the *Academic Achievement Award* program, Title I Part A schools that met AYP for three consecutive years in math and/or reading can apply for recognition of improving student achievement in one or both content areas. Up to nine schools can receive an award of \$10,000, and four received the award in 2008. The application provides details about successful math and/or reading strategies, and these strategies are showcased at state conferences and on OSPI's website in order to assist other schools.
3. The *Academic Improvement Award* is given to Title I Part A schools that have made AYP the past three years and shown significant gains overall, preferably among subgroups of students. Of the 48 schools receiving recognition in 2008, most were elementary schools.
4. For the *Distinguished Schools Award*, four Title I Part A schools are selected, two in the national category and two in the state category. Schools must apply for this award, which focuses on either exceptional student performance for two or more years or significant progress in closing the achievement gap. National award winners receive \$10,000 while state award winners receive \$5,000. In 2008, three schools received this award.

Two types of **state awards** have been given recently, both for improvement.

1. *Schools of Distinction* were recognized in the last two school years (2006-07 and 2007-08) based on average improvement in the Learning Index in reading and math over an extended period of time (e.g., comparing 2008 to the average of 2002 and 2003) and required achievement to exceed the state average. Only the top 5% of schools receive this award based on their improvement. This is a "norm-referenced" system, so schools with high levels of improvement may not receive the award if they do not meet the state average or others improve by a greater amount. In 2008, a total of 101 schools (53 elementary, 21 middle, 20 high, and 7 alternative) received this award (two schools received recognition for performance at two grade levels). The average index for these schools in 2008 as 4.68, which is in the Good tier. Of these schools, 41% did not make AYP and 15 were in School Improvement. One alternative school receiving this recognition in 2008 had an index in the Struggling tier. Many of the schools receiving this recognition had a relatively high percentage of gifted students (as a group, they averaged nearly twice the state average), and their percentage of low income students was less than the state average.
2. *Academic Improvement Awards* have been given since 2004 to both schools and districts that make at least a 10% reduction in the percentage of students not meeting standard from the



previous year in reading, writing, and math in grades 4, 7, and 10. (This is the level required for a school to make “safe harbor” under AYP.) Wall plaques with metal plates for updates are provided. In 2007, there were 1,255 schools (60% of schools statewide) that received a total of 2,190 awards in the three grades and subjects (a similar number of schools received awards in 2008); 241 districts (81% statewide) received a total of 804 awards in the three grades and subjects. All these awards are given regardless of AYP status.

No recognition is given at the federal or state level based on how schools or districts compare to others with similar student characteristics or for achievement by any student group, including all students combined. With new administrations at the federal and state level, the criteria for the federal awards could change, and the future status of the OSPI awards is uncertain.

## APPENDIX C

### **Rationale for Recommendations**

#### Rationale for Both Types of Recognition

- The recommended minimum 2-year averages are challenging but reachable targets. If a goal is too high, few will think they can reach it and the reward of recognition loses its motivational power.
- The same criteria are used for each subject for schools and districts for simplicity.
- The recognition system is based on a “theory of change” that people are motivated more by success than by blame or guilt and need clear, challenging, and attainable goals.
- The goals are criteria-based so schools/districts know what needs to be done to be recognized, and they do not have to worry about the performance of others. This goals are clear and encourages collaboration and cooperation among educators.
- Requiring minimum ratings ensures recognition is given only for sustained exemplary performance and not based on one good year.
- Lower averages are justified for the index because it is harder to have a high average in multiple categories. The 5.00 average is the beginning of the Very Good tier, so it would include all schools/districts with an average in the Very Good or Exemplary tiers. The 5.50 average is the beginning of the Exemplary tier.

#### Rationale for “Outstanding Overall Performance”

- Recognizing relatively few schools in high priority areas demonstrates a commitment to these areas and provides more incentive to improve where the greatest improvement needs to occur.
- A more limited system ensures that any recognition that occurs is truly special. Having too many schools getting many awards reduces the significance of the recognition.
- The strongest predictor of the achievement gap is the difference between the two socioeconomic groups (non-low income and low income). The gap is measured in terms of the cells in the matrix rather than other gaps outside the matrix (e.g., the differences between race/ethnic groups).
- Outstanding sustained performance in schools with a “regular” student composition deserves recognition. Restricting the percentage of gifted students that are assessed provides a more accurate picture of school performance. High concentrations of gifted students generally inflate the results, making it easier for schools with special programs to receive recognition.

#### Rationale for “Noteworthy Performance”

- Giving recognition for all five outcomes and four indicators conveys the belief that all parts of the system are important. Recognizing fewer cells of the matrix could generate extra focus in some areas and not others.
- Requiring the low income reading and writing cells to have at least a 4.00 average ensures that cells that have high levels of performance do not get recognized if there is a significant achievement gap.
- There is no restriction on schools receiving recognition if they have 10% or more of their students designated as gifted. This allows all schools to be eligible for this type of recognition.
- Research has found that “small victories” support continuous improvement efforts. Education stakeholders viewed even minor forms of state recognition as a way to support improvement.