

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

HEARING TYPE: X INFORMATION/NO ACTION

DATE: NOVEMBER 27–28, 2006

SUBJECT: **ACCOUNTABILITY WORK PLAN**

SERVICE UNIT: State Board of Education
 Edie Harding, Executive Director

PRESENTER: Edie Harding, Executive Director
 State Board of Education

BACKGROUND:

In 2005, the Legislature transferred responsibility to create a statewide accountability system from the Academic Achievement, and Accountability (A+) Commission to the State Board of Education (SBE). The final report from Washington Learns asks the Board to create recommendations for this accountability system by December 2007. A work plan is attached to begin the accountability tasks. The plan includes a background piece on the accountability issues as well as specific activities and milestones.

Staff will conduct work to provide State Board members and Legislators with thoughtful, well-researched policy options and recommendations for improving Washington State's accountability and management systems to review educational outcomes and raise student achievement. This work is dependent on additional resources (especially for the use of consultants and public forums). We have requested funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Legislature to complete the work.

DRAFT WORK PLAN FOR STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION ON ACCOUNTABILITY DISCUSSION FOR NOVEMBER 2006 BOARD MEETING

The Board's Responsibility:

In 2005, the Legislature transferred responsibility to create a statewide accountability system from the Academic Achievement and Accountability (A+) Commission to the State Board of Education (SBE). The final report from Washington Learns asks the Board to create recommendations for this accountability system by December 2007.

Statement of the Problem:

The current accountability system based on the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has made some progress but is incomplete—

- There is extensive information on the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Web site for school and district student performance for reading, writing, math, and science assessments by 20 categories of student demographics. Cutscores for the current Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) have been adopted by the SBE. The SBE is in the process of approving alternative assessments to the 10th grade WASL. A school improvement planning process is in place at the school level. The Superintendent of Public Instruction recognizes schools and districts that meet reading and mathematics improvement targets despite the fact that they may not make their Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) targets.
- Other components have not been authorized or successfully implemented, such as developing mechanisms to strengthen school district management systems, identifying a process for intervening in school districts that persistently fail to take action to improve student achievement, and holding the Legislature and other state-level policy makers accountable for their responsibility to provide resources to assist with improving student achievement. Limited resources exist for incentives to encourage or reward improvement.
- The traditional authority for Washington's school system is built upon a strong system of local control. While the state provides the majority of funding to school districts and has created a standards-based system, generally, it does not dictate curriculum, types of professional development, and other key issues related to student achievement. Schools are required to develop school improvement plans, but they are not required to share them with the SBE or OSPI. OSPI cannot review those plans or intervene to help improve student achievement with school districts that do not want to engage. The Legislature does provide funding to help improve student achievement but school districts must access the fund voluntarily. It may be time to consider a greater role for the state to assess the return on their investment particularly when a district's achievement levels are persistently low with little sign of improvement. It may be not sufficient to have districts/schools 'volunteer' to get help when districts, schools, and student groups are failing.

- Reasons for the incomplete implementation of accountability systems include:
 - There is a lack of coherence with the imposition of NCLB on top of the prior state system, which has created a patchwork of different state and federal requirements. The state has little authority to intervene except to withhold funds under NCLB.
 - Unsuccessful efforts by the state's former A+ Commission in working with state policy makers and the public to adopt additional components of a statewide accountability system.
 - Tension between local and state control.
 - The state lacks the ability to intervene in failing districts except to withhold or redirect federal funding under NCLB.
 - Lack of articulated interventions by the state for districts/schools that are persistently failing under the federal and state systems.
- Components of the state law identified to develop a comprehensive statewide accountability system may include:
 - A system to integrate coherently both federal and state accountability systems.
 - Student performance improvement goals and statewide assessments in reading, writing, math, and science. Including performance goals for individual categories of students.
 - High school graduation and dropout reduction goals.
 - Objective, systematic criteria to identify successful schools and districts for improvements in student achievement (despite challenges) as well as objective systematic criteria to identify schools and school districts in need of assistance.
 - Range of appropriate state intervention strategies.
 - Performance incentive systems to improve student achievement and public recognition.
 - State resources to assist under-performing school districts; monitor, document, and report the performance of all schools; identify promising practices; examine the reliability and validity of alternative assessments; identify human resource issues and professional development needs.

Objective for Board and Staff Work:

Conduct work to provide State Board members and Legislators with thoughtful, well-researched policy options and recommendations for improving Washington State's accountability and management systems to review educational outcomes and raise student achievement.

Specific activities and milestones will include:

Activities	Milestones
<p>Form stakeholder advisory group to assist with project</p> <p>Hire research associate</p> <p>Review the Washington School Improvement process with OSPI</p> <p>Review funding available to assist schools and students with achievement gaps with OSPI</p> <p>Review highly-qualified teacher requirements under NCLB with OSPI</p> <p>Investigate other states' accountability systems and examine lessons learned in Washington State to create framework for proceeding</p> <p>Examine current and reauthorization efforts for NCLB to find ways to integrate federal and state efforts</p> <p>Develop a framework for statewide accountability system</p> <p>Review current statewide data available for tracking performance</p> <p>Examine accreditation of schools or use of education performance audits as an accountability tool</p>	<p>Fall 2006 – Winter 2007</p>
<p>Identify objective criteria for successful and under-performing schools and districts</p> <p>Identify potential intervention strategies</p> <p>Examine growth models</p> <p>Assess state capacity to provide assistance to school districts</p>	<p>Spring – Summer 2007</p>

Activities	Milestones
<p>Assess the quality of data available and needed management and information systems to improve flow of information and use of performance data for school districts as well as individual schools</p> <p>Identify incentives for rewarding performance</p> <p>Examine goals for dropout reduction and graduation improvement</p>	<p>Spring – Summer 2007</p>
<p>Draft recommendations</p>	<p>Late Summer 2007</p>
<p>3–5 regional forums for public engagement around state to convene interested education policy makers, parents, educators, and the business community in draft accountability policy options.</p>	<p>Fall 2007</p>
<p>Final recommendations/report to Legislature</p>	<p>Late Fall 2007</p>

Project Outcomes:

- o A proposed statewide accountability system with incentives and interventions to improve achievement dramatically for all students by December 2007.
- o An annual report to the citizens of our state that tracks educational outcomes for all students based on the accountability system.