

**Update on the Achievement Gap Studies  
and the work of Commissions and the Legislature**

**SUMMARY OF POLICY ISSUE /STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION (SBE) STRATEGIC  
PLAN GOALS**

To reduce the achievement gaps in Washington State, the 2008 Legislature commissioned five studies that were conducted by the Commission on Hispanic Affairs (CHA), Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA), the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs (GOIA), and the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning (CISL), and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in collaboration with the Commission on African-American Affairs (CAA). The studies, recommendations, and the continued work on the issue will provide information to inform the Board in its work on CORE 24, accountability, and in its role to lead the development of state policy, provide system oversight, and advocate for student success. The studies and recommendations also resonate with the Board's first overarching goal to improve achievement for all students.

**BACKGROUND**

The 2008 Legislature provided funds for conducting the analyses of the achievement gaps that exist for students in Washington State. The final reports were given to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board of Education, the Governor, the P-20 Council, and the education committees of the Legislature in December 2008.

Achievement Gap Analysis for:	Conducted by:	Tasks to CISL, Commissions, and Governor's Office of Indian Affairs
African-American students	Center for the Improvement of Student Learning (CISL) and the Advisory Committee	Craft a strategic plan to address the achievement gap for African-American students; examine the extent to which current initiatives address the needs of African-American students; craft a strategic plan with school and community-based strategies to improve educational outcomes for African-American students; and develop performance improvement measures and benchmarks to monitor progress.
Asian American students	Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs	Conduct a detailed analysis of the achievement gaps and to recommend a comprehensive plan for closing the achievement gaps by No Child Left Behind Act's goal of 2014; identify performance measures for determining adequate yearly progress.
Pacific Islander American students	Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs	
Hispanic students	Commission on Hispanic Affairs	
Native American students	Governor's Office of Indian Affairs	Conduct a detailed analysis of the achievement gaps and to recommend a comprehensive plan for closing the achievement gaps by No Child Left Behind Act's goal of 2014; identify performance measures for determining adequate yearly progress; analyze the progress in developing effective government-to-government relations and adoption of curriculum regarding tribal history, culture, and government.

The State Board of Education received reports from the commissions and the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs in December, 2008 and each provided a presentation to the Board at the its meeting in January, 2009. The recommendations from one or more of the achievement gap studies include:

- Adopting a data collection, research, and evaluation plan to assess the reduction of gaps in achievement over time.
- Revising school improvement plans to focus on efforts to close the achievement gap.
- Improving collaboration between K-12 and higher education for preparation of teachers and recruitment and retention of diverse teachers and other educators.

- Providing professional development in working with diverse students, parents, and communities.
- Improving parent and community involvement and engagement in public schools.
- Establishing an appointed, statewide achievement gap oversight committee to monitor the implementation of efforts to close the achievement gap.

The 2009 Legislature has been considering the recommendations from the commissions and the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs. Legislative committees are moving two bills forward that address issues related to the achievement gap reports and recommendations. House Bill 2147 and Senate Bill 5973 establish the Achievement Gap Advisory Committee within the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to advise OSPI, the Professional Educator Standards Board, and the State Board of Education on effective measures to close the achievement gap, to foster public accountability for achieving excellence and equity in public education, and to promote a greater sense of urgency and priority for doing so. The advisory committee would establish key indicators and benchmarks to measure progress in closing the achievement gap; identify current programs and resources; advise on methods to effectively develop professional development for teachers, recruit and retain diverse teachers and administrators; and advise on ways to make closing the achievement gap a central goal of all school improvement plans. The State Board of Education staff signed in Pro at the hearings for the bills and spoke about how the work of the committee would help to inform the Board in its continued work on accountability and improving academic achievement for all students.

### **POLICY CONSIDERATION**

The Board will consider the recommendations from the achievement gap reports in its continued work. The Board will examine ways to reduce achievement gaps through its accountability framework and continue to seek input from the Commission on Hispanic Affairs, the Commission on Asian Pacific-American Affairs, the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, the Commission on African-American Affairs, and the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning in the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

### **EXPECTED ACTION**

None