

March 14-15, 2012 Meeting Highlights

Note: The materials listed below are available in the [online packet](#).

On March 14-15, the State Board of Education (SBE) met at Green River Community College, in Auburn, Washington, to:

- Discuss the next wave of potential Next Generation K-12 Science Standards.
- Receive an update on Washington State's application for an Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility waiver.
- Review the process of developing a revised Achievement Index and partnering with the Joint Select Committee on Education Accountability.
- Evaluate 180-day and credit-based graduation requirements waiver requests.
- Discuss the implications of changing workforce needs in Washington's economy.
- Review education reform efforts in the Auburn School District.
- Discuss P-13 goals setting.
- Review Green River Community College's efforts to reduce math remediation through the Math Transcript Placement System.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION ACTIONS

SBE approved the following:

- Economy and Efficiency Waivers for the following school districts:
 - Bickleton
 - Paterson
- Option One 180-day Waivers for the following school districts:
 - Eastmont
 - Granger
 - Snohomish
 - South Bend
- Graduation Requirements Waiver (credits)
 - Highline School District
- Establishment of the ad hoc SBE Goal Setting Committee and ESEA Committee.

NEXT GENERATION K-12 SCIENCE STANDARDS

David Heil, who led the Board's review of Washington's science standards in 2008, provided his analysis of the 2012 Fordham report "The State of State Science Standards." Washington State's science standards (and those of ten other states) earned a grade of "C." Twelve states and the District of Columbia fared better, and 27 states fared worse.

Mr. Heil joined representatives from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in previewing issues the Board may want to explore in consideration of the next wave of science standards: Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

Washington is one of 26 lead states providing input to the writers of the NGSS. The NGSS are based on the Framework of K-12 Science Education, released in July 2011, by the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academy of Sciences.

The NGSS are scheduled to be released in fall 2012. Washington, as a lead state, has committed to giving “serious consideration” to adopting the new standards. Members discussed issues relevant to a potential overhaul of the science standards, including the necessity for a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process, greater resources for professional development, and increased focus on science instruction in the elementary grades.

ESEA FLEXIBILITY AND THE FUTURE WORK OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY

ESEA Flexibility Overview: Last September, the U.S. Department of Education announced guidelines for state educational agencies wishing to apply for flexibility waivers. The waivers would allow relief from existing sanctions under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability system. In February of 2012, OSPI submitted an ESEA Flexibility Request to the US Department of Education. This request was developed in partnership with SBE and was aligned with the expectations of RCW 28A.657.110, which directed OSPI and SBE to seek approval from Department of Education to use the Achievement Index to replace the ESEA / No Child Left Behind accountability system. OSPI and SBE staff provided an update on the status of Washington’s application and the anticipated work as the application moves forward through the peer-review and evaluation process.

Joint Select Committee on Education Accountability Overview: ESSB 6696 requires the Legislature to consider what should happen if a Required Action District continues not to make improvement after an extended period of time. To answer this question, the Legislature created the Joint Select Committee on Education Accountability, made up of four members from each of the largest caucuses of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Committee is scheduled to convene after May. The committee is required to produce an interim report to the Legislature in September 2012 and a final report with recommendations by September 2013.

180-DAY WAIVERS AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS WAIVERS

Economy and Efficiency Waivers

SBE has the statutory authority to grant waivers from the basic education requirement for a 180-day school year to districts that propose to operate schools on a flexible calendar for purposes of economy and efficiency. No more than five waivers may be granted at any time, including no more than two districts with student enrollment of less than 150, and no more than three districts with student enrollment of 150-500. SBE received three applications during the application period, all from districts with fewer than 150 students.

The Bickleton and Paterson School Districts’ waiver applications were approved.

Option One Waivers

180-day Option One waivers are approved for districts to enhance educational programs and improve student achievement. Members evaluated four different applications and approved 180-day waivers for the Eastmont, Granger, Snohomish, and South Bend School Districts.

Graduation Requirements Waivers

SBE’s WAC 180-18-055 establishes credit-based graduation requirements. In the current school year, two districts have this type of waiver: Federal Way (for Truman High School), and Highline

(for Big Picture High School). Highline was recently awarded an additional waiver for Odyssey High School during the February 2012, special Board meeting. That waiver will begin in 2012-13.

Members evaluated and approved Big Picture High School's waiver application.

WASHINGTON'S CHANGING WORKFORCE

By statute, SBE is required to continue on-going collaboration with workforce representatives. RCW 28A.305.130 lists among SBE's duties the responsibility to "...articulate with the institutions of higher education, workforce representatives, and early learning policymakers and providers to coordinate and unify the work of the public school system."

At the March Board meeting, SBE hosted a presentation by Eleni Papadakis, Executive Director of the Washington Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. Ms. Papadakis discussed the implications of HB 2170 (The Career Pathways Act), as well as the Workforce Board's efforts to:

- integrate workforce experiences into a high school coursework
- identify data points to track progress and focus policymaker attention to the problems most critical to improving Washington's economic competitiveness.

AUBURN SCHOOL DISTRICT'S SUCCESSFUL REFORM EFFORTS

Auburn School District Superintendent Dr. Kip Herren provided an overview of Auburn's strategic plan. This includes an effort to identify high-yield strategies resulting in a significant impact on student achievement.

Dr. Herren highlighted the implementation of Teacher Leadership Academies as a key strategy for improving the quality of instruction. To implement these academies, Auburn partnered with the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession at the University of Washington.

Dr. Herren also provided insights on how current state policies aid or hinder a school district's ability to implement best practice reforms.

FORWARD

SBE has initiated a goals-setting project for the purpose of helping the P-20 system to define success and track improvement. Members continued that discussion, considering potential Leading System Indicators (LSI), or data points, with which to gauge the health of the system and set P-20 goals.

SBE will solicit stakeholder feedback on potential LSIs in anticipation of a May Board meeting adoption. In May, SBE members will also explore additional data points instrumental to improving performance on LSIs. These data points, or Foundational Indicators (FI), will likely include 7-10 metrics per LSI. SBE will release a draft set of FIs in May, followed by a stakeholder engagement process prior to an anticipated July adoption.

GREEN RIVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE MATH PLACEMENT SYSTEM

Members reviewed Green River Community College's (GRCC) innovative mathematics course placement method. Instead of relying on ACCUPLACER and COMPASS tests solely, GRCC developed a multiple-measures approach to course placement, factoring students' school coursework, the proximity of that coursework to community college enrollment, and grades.

This approach suggests a number of benefits. It develops strong collaborative relationships between community colleges and neighboring school districts. It appears to offer an incentive to students to take more math courses, since doing so potentially gives them more control over their course placement at the community college level. There is also empirical research to suggest that transcript placements are more predictive of future success in college coursework.

The next State Board of Education meeting will be in Yakima, Washington, on May 8-9 at Education Service District 105.

For additional information and Board meeting materials, go to: www.sbe.wa.gov
or call the Board office at: 360-725-6025.