

Mr. Ben Rarick, Executive Director
Ms. Mary Jean Ryan, Executive Committee Acting Chair
Washington State Board of Education
600 Washington Street SE
P.O. Box 47206
Olympia, Washington 98504

Dear Mr. Rarick and Ms. Ryan,

The Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC) is writing to express extreme concern about the lack of participation of communities of color in the Achievement and Accountability Workgroup (AAW). Several members of the EOGOAC serve on the AAW and were concerned that value statements regarding the priority for closing the opportunity gap were asked and that members of the ethnic communities affected by the gap were not there. The few members of the EOGOAC present did not fully represent all of the ethnic communities affected by the opportunity gap and are not a proxy for full and meaningful community participation.

As the AAW was charged with advising the creation of a revised Washington Achievement Index to illustrate the opportunity gaps of schools and to be used for school accountability purposes, the State Board of Education *has not provided ample opportunities to those very communities affected by the gap to be involved in the creation of the index*. The EOGOAC is concerned that the Index does not create a sense of urgency and moral imperative for the closing of the opportunity gap.

In order to have an achievement index that is credible in the public, the SBE and AAW must ensure that the very communities that are disproportionately affected by the opportunity gap have had a meaningful opportunity to provide input. The EOGOAC requests that the SBE creates a community involvement plan and provides regular updates to the EOGOAC on its progress in implementing the plan.

Moreover, as the role of the AAW evolves to advise the design of a new accountability system framework, the membership should be inclusive of all students served by Washington schools and additional members should be added to the AAW.

The EOGOAC advises that the SBE presents to each of the ethnic commissions and the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs on the design of the accountability system. Additionally, broader community meetings should be held in order to allow the families of students affected by the gap to learn and inform the accountability system redesign.

The EOGOAC remains committed to assisting the SBE in the creation of the accountability system for schools that supports all students and helps close the opportunity gap.

Sincerely,

Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos
Co-Chair

Sen. Steve Litzow
Co-Chair

Commissioner Lillian Ortiz-Self
Co-Chair

Cc: Mr. Alan Burke, Superintendent Randy Dorn, Ms. Phyllis Bunker Frank, Mr. Bob Hughes, Mr. Tre' Maxie, Ms. Mara Childs, Ms. Judy Jennings, Dr. Kristina Mayer, Mr. Eli Ulmer, Mr. Kevin Laverty, Ms. Cindy McMullen, Dr. Deborah Wilds, Ms. Connie Fletcher, Mr. Peter Maier, Ms. Isabel Munoz-Colon