

Exhibit A

August 16, 2017

Dear Superintendent Reykdal:

In accordance to the responsibilities of the State Board of Education under [RCW 28A.657.110](#) (2) and (4), with this letter the Board offers its support for inclusion of the revised elements of the Washington Achievement Index contained in the state's federal consolidated plan submission as presented at our August 16th meeting, and as required for a system of meaningful differentiation under the Every Student Succeeds Act.

We believe many of these changes have the potential to make a meaningful difference in the educational outcomes of all students in Washington State.

Additionally, we look forward to working with you to complete the Achievement Index and improve the state accountability system in Washington, even as the U.S. Department of Education evaluates whether elements of the plan meets the minimum federal requirements. In our view, the way we serve and support schools should be constrained less and less by federal requirements, and shaped more by the unique needs of our state.

The Board has a number of remaining concerns and questions regarding the ESSA plan submission that it wishes to have addressed, which include the following:

- The Board is concerned that this plan significantly increases the number of schools identified for improvement, without a clear plan to maintain the supports and resources provided to those schools. If the plan identifies about 850 schools (as Comprehensive, Targeted, or Additional Targeted), that could be nearly a three-fold increase from prior years. It is unclear to the Board what this means for the financial and technical assistance these schools will be receiving under this plan, or whether school identification still implies technical assistance and support in this model.
- The Board also believes that the school identification categories need to be carefully described and differentiated, and the process for providing support with finite financial resources needs to be thoughtfully developed and vetted. A question remains as to how OSPI will communicate this information to the schools and to the public, especially about the different categories of identified schools, and how the existing school accountability funding from the legislature will be stretched or reprogrammed to accommodate the more ambitious charge.
- The Board is unclear on how the recommendations contained in this plan meet the requirements of state law under RCW 28A.657 to identify Challenged Schools in Need of Improvement and Required Action District schools under certain requirements and specifications. It is important to be of a common understanding about how this plan conforms to state law.

- The Board remains very interested and concerned with the public presentation of the Washington Achievement Index as an integrated but distinct aspect of the Report Card or other data OSPI chooses to post. These issues need further work, and agreement between OSPI and SBE.
- As OSPI has acknowledged in the meeting, the Plan should state that science needs to be added back to the Index when NGSS testing data is available in 2021.
- Additionally, further work is needed to refine and clarify how student absences are defined by rule and how absence decisions and coding are carried out at the school level.

We look forward to working with you in the future to work on these issues, and ultimately develop a model accountability system that other states can emulate.

On behalf of the Board,

Kevin Lavery, Acting Chair