



Exhibit C

DRAFT State Board of Education Position Statement: Educator Professional Development

Having discussed the issue at its November 2014 meeting, the Washington State Board of Education adopted the following position statement concerning the need for state-funded professional learning programs for educators in Washington State.

A primary goal of the State Board of Education is to ensure that all students are prepared for career and college.

Achieving this objective requires a portfolio of bold reforms. One essential component of that portfolio is sustained state-funded educator professional learning which supports job-embedded professional development activities as an essential, built-in component of the school year calendar.

Rather than increasing state support for educator professional development as the demands on educator learning have increased, the opposite has happened. Dedicated state support for Learning Improvement Days (LIDs) was eliminated at precisely the time they became most critical to the implementation of new standards, assessments, and systems of evaluation. Educator development needs will only intensify as the system goes through the transition to fully implementing the Common Core standards, Next Generational Science standards, and aligned assessments.

Currently, systematic professional development for teachers is treated by our funding system as a local enhancement; a non-essential add-on that practitioners must live without if their district lacks a local levy, or has a levy constrained by other costs. Yet, this flies in the face of what the research tells us, and practitioners know to be true: it is impossible to deliver high quality system-wide instruction without embedded opportunities for reflection, collaboration, inquiry, and planning for teachers.

Local school district leaders understand this need. Unfortunately, to accommodate these needs, they are unfairly forced to compromise one essential resource for another. The only way they can offer professional development is often by offering half school days, or shortening the school year calendar. Our goal as a state should be to protect instructional time for students by making the necessary investment in professional development statewide.

The board affirms that quality education programming cannot be offered to all students without high quality professional learning opportunities for teachers. Therefore, the Board recommends that the legislature incorporate 80 hours of District-directed professional development funding into its program of basic education. This will allow districts to restructure their calendar to build-in professional development opportunities into their instructional calendar, but without compromising a full 180-day instructional calendar for students.