



Washington State  
School Directors' Association

# Legislative Update

By [Marie Sullivan](#), WSSDA Director of Governmental Relations

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## State Board of Education adopts criteria for charter school applications

By a unanimous vote today, the State Board of Education adopted a tool to evaluate school district applications interested in becoming charter school authorizers.

At the May meeting, the Board directed staff to add clarity to the [rubrics](#), along with increasing the emphasis on serving at-risk students and how the district would show verifiable evidence, not just intentions, in the application.

Evaluation criteria are broken into five key areas:

- Authorizer strategic vision
- Authorizer capacity and commitment
- Request for Proposals (successful districts will use an RFP to bring in a charter school operator)
- Performance framework
- Renewal, revocation, and non-renewal processes

In the Vision section, an applicant district will be evaluated on how it will give priority to proposals that serve at-risk students. The rubric defines "at-risk students" as (but not limited to):

- Students who do not meet minimum standards of academic proficiency;
- Students who are at risk of dropping out of high school;
- Students in chronically low-performing schools;
- Students with higher than average disciplinary sanctions;
- Students with limited English proficiency;
- Students from economically disadvantaged families; and
- Students identified as having special educational needs.

Other aspects of the evaluation criteria are how well the applicant aligns with the charter school law (RCW 28A.710), clear reporting and authority for decision making, and financial needs and projected resources.

Applications are due to the SBE by July 1<sup>st</sup>. Notice of Intent applications for the 2014 round are due October 1, with final applications due December 31, 2013. For more information on charter school authorization through the SBE, click [here](#) or visit the [SBE web site](#). The schedule for applications is [here](#).

WSSDA recently co-hosted an all-day informational session for school districts that are interested in becoming charter school authorizes. About 10 districts remain interested in pursuing authorization, although only a few may apply by the July deadline.

## Board hears from public on new achievement index

Also at today's special meeting, the State Board of Education took public testimony on proposed changes to the Achievement Index (formerly the [Accountability Index](#)).

The Board used the K-20 network to encourage participation from across the state, while the main meeting was held in Olympia. Ten people voiced their concerns about the new index, ranging from the impact of slight downward adjustments in very small schools to the potential impact of a single subgroup that doesn't show growth on the entire school. District superintendents Kevin Chase of Grandview, Kevin McKay of Zillah, and Gene Sementi of West Valley (Spokane) expressed support for accountability but concern that the new index will be used to grade and punish schools.

"Success builds confidence," said Chase. "Success motivates everyone to be more successful. Punitive measures don't result in confidence or success," he said.

As part of the changes to the current Achievement Index, the SBE is considering using a "student growth model" which would compare a student's growth on statewide assessments with other students across the state on the same test who had similar scores. Here's a [quick video](#) of how it would work.

At the May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting in Federal Way (the [May 8<sup>th</sup> meeting is on TVW](#)), the SBE agreed to weight Student Growth at 60 percent and Proficiency on statewide assessments at 40 percent for grades K-8. For high schools, Student Growth, Proficiency and a catch-all of Career and College Ready (CCR) would all be weighted equally, at about 33 percent. Rankings will measure student performance for all students and subgroups, using current federal subgroup categories.

The high school CCR indicators include: four- and five-year adjusted cohort graduation rates; the percent of students earning dual college/high school credit or a nationally recognized industry certification; and the percent of students performing at or above a college- and career-ready cut score on the 11<sup>th</sup> grade assessment of Common Core State Standards, which will be first administered in the 2014-15 school year.

The change to the Achievement Index was kicked off last year as part of the state's waiver from the federally required No Child Left Behind Act. The SBE and OSPI convened a large stakeholder group to help advise them on changes to the index. The Achievement Accountability Work Group's meeting was earlier this month and their final report is [here](#). The Legislature enacted [E2SSB 5329](#) in the regular session which, if approved by the U.S. Department of Education, will use the Achievement Index to help identify the state's most persistently low-achieving schools.

The SBE is waiting for the Legislature to wrap up its work before finalizing the new index. While the Senate Majority Caucus has stopped pushing for school grading and other "education reforms" before new funding is invested in Washington's public schools, SBE staff explained that the board's executive committee decided to hold off until the next meeting to avoid adopting an index and then having to make changes passed by the Legislature at this late date. The SBE meets in Spokane July 11-12 at the ESD 101 offices.

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