



I-728: Community Reporting

INFORMATION FOR SCHOOL BOARDS AND ADMINISTRATORS

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION

MARCH 2002

A Guide to the Community Reporting Requirements of Initiative 728

I-728 REPORTING: A RESPONSIBILITY AND AN OPPORTUNITY

Voter approval of Initiative 728 has provided important new resources to improve student achievement in Washington's public schools. It also has created a responsibility – and an opportunity – to keep citizens informed about how this landmark law is making a real difference in helping our children learn and succeed.

Under I-728, each school district in the state must provide its citizens with an annual report regarding I-728 resources and improvements to student learning. Specifically, the district must provide a) a public accounting of the funds made available to the district during the previous school year, b) how the funds were used, and c) the progress the district has made in increasing student achievement.

To assist school directors and administrators in meeting this requirement, the Washington State School Directors' Association has prepared this information packet on I-728 reporting. The packet includes additional background and details on the requirements of the law, a discussion of options and strategies for reporting, and a sample report that may be used as a "template" for customizing a report for your district.

Thank you for your interest in this material. If you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact WSSDA at 1-800-562-8927 or 360/493-9231.

Initiative 728, formally titled "The K-12 Student Achievement Act," was approved by Washington voters at the statewide election in November 2000. The measure received an overwhelming "yes" vote of 72 percent – one of largest approval margins in state history.

The purpose of I-728, as stated in the Act, is "to improve public education and to achieve higher academic standards for all students through smaller class sizes and other improvements." To that end, the law provides new funding and resources targeted to the state's student learning goals and requirements; it also gives local school districts flexibility in deciding the best way to apply those resources. Under the Act, districts are allowed to use I-728 funds in the following broad categories:

- Reducing class sizes in grades K through 4;
- Making selected class size reductions in grades 5 through 12;
- Providing extended learning opportunities for students in grades K through 12 such as extended school year, extended school days, before- or after-school programs, special tutoring programs, weekend school programs, summer school or all-day kindergarten;
- Providing additional professional development for educators to ensure that instruction is aligned with state standards and student needs;
- Providing early assistance for children who need pre-kindergarten support in order to be successful in school; and
- Improving or adding to school facilities to directly support class size reductions and extended learning opportunities.

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As required by I-728, the State Legislature appropriated \$393.3 million of Student Achievement Fund monies (i.e., funds outside the General Fund) to school districts for the 2001-2003 Biennium. The appropriation specifies a rate of \$193.92 per full-time-equivalent (FTE) student for the 2001-02 school year and \$220.59 per FTE student for the 2002-03 school year.

I-728 Reporting Requirements

Under the Act, school districts must have a plan for using I-728 funds to improve student achievement, tied to the categories listed above. School boards around the state held public hearings and community meetings on I-728 last summer, and incorporated student achievement improvement plans in their budgets at the end of August.

The companion to this requirement is that school districts must also provide a follow-up report on how they used I-728 funds and what progress was made on student achievement.

Specifically, each district **must** provide to its citizens:

- **A public accounting of the funds made available to the district during the previous school year;**
- **How the funds were used; and**
- **The progress the district has made in increasing student achievement, as measured by required state assessments and other assessments deemed appropriate by the district.**

Additionally, the Act stipulates that copies of this report shall be provided both to the Superintendent of Public Instruction (*see notation below*) and to the state's Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission (RCW 28A.505.210 [2]).

A NOTE ABOUT I-728 REPORTING TO OSPI

To facilitate consistent and timely reporting on how I-728 funds are being used statewide, OSPI is asking districts to complete a streamlined reporting form covering the basics of I-728 implementation (see OSPI Bulletin 13-02). Districts should complete this form and return it to OSPI by November 1, 2002 (OSPI will provide a copy to the A+ Commission). At the same time, keep in mind that the OSPI form is NOT a substitute for the community reporting requirements of the Act.

Timing of the Report to the Community

The Act does not set forth a specific deadline for issuing a report to the community on I-728. It merely states that the information shall be provided "annually" and that it include an accounting of funds received by the district during the "previous school year." Taken by itself, this language would seem to provide a great deal of latitude in the timing of the report. There are other factors, however, which should be considered in deciding when to distribute the information to the community.

- First, keep in mind that the Act requires the annual adoption of a plan for using I-728 funds to improve student achievement. While many districts have developed such plans in a multi-year format, they (and all others) must still hold public hearings and formally adopt the plan as part of their budget for the upcoming school year. The law specifically requires that the Board of Directors hold a public hearing on the proposed plan on or before May 1st each year, and that the plan be adopted no later than August 31st.
- Second, districts also have yearly community reporting responsibilities under the state's Education Reform Act of 1993 (HB1209). This law requires an annual "report card" from each district and each school on student performance, performance goals, and progress made toward achieving the goals (RCW 28A.655.100-110). There are no requirements regarding the timing of the performance reports other than the stipulation that they be produced annually. Since these reports have been required for the past six years, each district undoubtedly has developed its own schedule for producing them.
- Third, a copy of the community report required under I-728 must be provided both to the OSPI and the A+ Commission. OSPI has indicated it would prefer to receive year-end expenditure information, and has asked that I-728 data be provided in summary by November 1, 2002 (*see notation at left*).

So, when should the I-728 community report be issued? Given the other requirements of the initiative, a good approach would be to publish the report prior to the annual public hearing on the district's I-728 implemen-

tation plan. Since this hearing must be held on or before May 1st, a report issued in April would give the community timely information about how I-728 resources are being used. The report could also be made available at the hearing to promote informed public input about the implementation plan.

Another option would be to time the I-728 information to coincide with the district and building "report cards" issued each year under the Education Reform Act. A key

component of the I-728 report – student achievement information – is also set forth in detail in these progress reports. By adding specific information about I-728 funds and how they were used, districts could meet the requirements of both the initiative and HB 1209 in a single report.

As mentioned previously, each district will have its own timetable for issuing performance reports. If your district

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What to Report?

At a minimum, each district must report how much it received from I-728, how those funds were spent, and current data on student achievement. Beyond that, this is also an opportunity to assure the community that its approval of I-728 was well-founded. The reporting requirements of the initiative should be viewed as a vehicle for engaging the community and reinforcing public support for resources that make a difference in student achievement.

With that in mind, here is the suggested content of the I-728 report to the community. An asterisk () indicates that the subject matter is required under the reporting requirements of the Initiative.*

Brief background on the Initiative

This section should emphasize the initiative's focus on promoting student achievement through dedicated resources and local flexibility in using those resources, and explain the planning/reporting requirements. It should also note that funding from the initiative will increase in the 2004-05 school year.

Summary of I-728 funds received by the district for the year*

This could be listed both as a total amount and a per-student FTE amount. It could also include estimates on how much will be received in coming years, based on projected FTE levels.

How the funds were spent*

List the category or categories in which I-728 funds were assigned and the amounts allocated. Explain how the funds were used in each category, e.g., "Ten additional teachers were hired for the purposes of reducing class sizes. As a result, class sizes in grade 2 have been reduced to 23 students from the previous year's size of 28."

Progress on student achievement*

This section is more challenging because it is probably too early to measure I-728's impact on WASL or ITBS scores. The most current results of state-level

assessments for the district should be reported, but with a prominent disclaimer explaining that the testing and the scores actually preceded the receipt of I-728 funds. If your district has its own classroom assessments or other internal measurements, this information may provide a better view of I-728's effect on student achievement and should be included. This is also a good place to include anecdotal information about how I-728 resources have helped.

Mission Statement

Include the district's mission or vision statement to tie in with the I-728 goal of improving student learning and success.

Notice of Public Hearing/Invitation to Comment

If you are issuing the I-728 community report in advance of your annual public hearing on I-728, be sure to include information on where and when the hearing will be held – and invite the public to attend and/or comment on the plan.

Thank you

Emphasize that public support for programs such as I-728 is making a real difference in the lives of our children. Thank the members of your community for their continued support of public schools and student success.

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and building performance reports are issued in the spring, it would make good sense to incorporate the I-728 information so it would coincide with your public hearing on the adoption of the I-728 implementation plan. Districts which issue their performance reports at other times of the year should weigh whether a combined report would be timely and useful to the community. If not, the board may want to consider moving the performance reports to the spring.

The Multi-Year Approach to Implementation and Reporting

Many school boards in the state have developed their I-728 implementation plans as a multi-year document, outlining how they will target the funds over a three- to four- year period. This approach allows districts to implement a comprehensive, long-range strategy for targeting I-728 resources, and plan for the increase in I-728 funds that will occur in the 2004-05 school year.

The multi-year approach is also helpful in terms of fulfilling the community reporting requirements of I-728. With a multi-year implementation plan, the annual report to the community can be structured as a “progress report” or update on how I-728 is being put into place in the district and its effect on student learning and achievement.

In using the multi-year approach, districts should consider establishing benchmarks for use in evaluating successes of various decisions and programs implemented under I-728.

This I-728 information packet was prepared by the Washington State School Directors’ Association with assistance from the Washington Association of School Administrators, the Washington Association of School Business Officials, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, and school board members. We deeply appreciate the advice and assistance provided by these organizations and individuals.

See the enclosed “Sample I-728 Report to the Community” for ideas on the content and organization of your district’s report. You may also download an electronic copy of the Sample Report from the WSSDA Web Site – wssda.org.



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