



Education Reform in Washington State

Presentation by

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Washington Public Schools — The Inputs

- School population: 1 million students educated in public schools; 100,000 in private schools or homeschooled
- Public school annual spending in 2011: \$10.2 billion from state, local, federal sources — up from \$8.08 billion in 2005
- Between 1980 and 2010, spending in constant 2010 dollars increased from \$6,861 per student to \$10,237 per student
- Only 59 cents of every education dollar reaches the classroom — highly centralized, top-down system
- Washington Public Schools
 - Number of school districts: 295
 - Number of schools: 2,345
 - Number of charter schools: 0
 - Per-student spending in 2010: \$10,200
 - Student/teacher ratio: 20 to one
 - Student/school employee ratio: 10 to one
 - Total public school employees: 100,310
 - Number of teachers: 47,662 classroom teachers, or 47% of all employees
 - Average teacher salary in 2011–12: \$61,116, plus benefits and pension \$18,334; total salary and benefit cost: \$79,450

2011-13 Budget — 2012 Supplemental

- Public Schools — \$ 13.647 billion, a \$653 million increase over 2009–11 budget of \$12.99 billion
- Higher Education — \$2.73 billion, a decrease of \$360 million

Student Outcomes

- 10th grade 2010–11 state test results:
 - 83% students are meeting standard in reading, 86% in writing, 62% meet standard in End of Course math I, 50% meet standard in science
- 8th grade on 2011 federal National Assessment of Student Progress (NAEP):
 - Washington's students score slightly above national average, with only 40% proficient or better in math, and only 37% proficient or better in reading

Student Achievement Gap

- 10th grade 2010–11 state test results:
 - 87% of white students pass reading test,
68% white students pass math End of Course Math 1
 - 68 % of black students pass reading,
36% black students pass math End of Course Math 1
 - 69% Hispanic students pass reading,
39% Hispanic students pass End of Course Math 1

More Student Results

- Washington ranks 43rd in nation in college graduation rates
- Public education officials are producing a generation of students less educated than their parents
(source: Washington Learns and Higher Education Coordinating Board)
- In a single generation, America has fallen from second place to 11th place in the portion of students completing college

More Student Results

- One-third of students drop out of high school, another third graduate without skills they need to succeed in college or workplace
- 52% of 2006 high school graduates who entered two-year community colleges or technical schools had to enroll in remedial math, English or reading
- 37% of students entering two-year and four-year colleges have to enroll in remedial math or English
- Only 53% graduate from college
- Washington state spends \$17.2 million per year on remediation in community and technical colleges

Past State Efforts at Education Reform

- 1993 Education Reform Act set three goals:
 - 1) Created statewide standards for what students should know in six subjects
 - 2) Created test (WASL) to evaluate student knowledge and progress toward standards (WASL is no longer used)
 - 3) School accountability (not accomplished yet)
 - Giving every school a “grade” for performance
 - Holding schools accountable for student achievement

Past State Efforts at Education Reform

- 87 failed education reform programs — the band-aid approach
- Cost: over \$5 billion, with no overall improvement in student test scores or graduation rates
- For list of failed programs, see appendix to Washington Policy Center's [*“Eight Practical Ways to Reverse the Decline of Public Schools”*](http://www.washingtonpolicy.org) at [*www.washingtonpolicy.org*](http://www.washingtonpolicy.org)

State Board of Education

Assessment of Washington schools

More than 41.9% of schools are Fair or Struggling;
only 23% are Exemplary or Very Good

Source: 2011 [Public School Accountability Index](#)

Category	Score Range	Number of Schools	Percentage of all Schools
Exemplary	5.50—7.00	203	9.7%
Very Good	5.00—5.49	288	13.8%
Good	4.00-4.99	713	34.3%
Fair	2.50-3.99	702	33.8%
Struggling	2.00-2.49	169	8.1%

Federal Efforts at Education Reform

- No Child Left Behind Act – 2001
 - Required states to measure student achievement annually in reading and math between 3rd and 8th grade and once in high school
 - Requires all students to achieve proficiency in these subjects by 2014
 - Required states to disaggregate student achievement data
 - Revealed that large percentages of students were failing to meet state standards, especially poor and minority students

Federal Efforts at Education Reform, continued

- In 2009, President Obama offered \$4.3 billion in competitive “Race to the Top” grants to states that allow charter and innovation schools, teacher and principal evaluations which include student achievement growth as a significant factor of evaluation, allowing teachers and principals to receive performance pay, collecting data on students, adopting Common Core Standards, turning around the lowest performing schools
- March 2010, the Legislature passed SB 6696, the Governor’s “Race to the Top” bill
- Washington’s “Race to the Top” application was rejected by the Obama Administration
- Nevertheless, Washington state has now adopted the Common Core standards, ceding control over its learning standards to national groups

Federal Efforts at Education Reform, continued

- Reauthorization of No Child Left Behind has stalled in Congress
- States are seeking waivers from the U.S. Department of Education from NCLB requirements
- Waivers are being granted to states, with many conditions attached. Over two-thirds of states have applied for waivers. The U.S. Department of Education is imposing numerous conditions on states seeking waivers. These conditions are similar to requirements of the “Race to the Top”

2009 Washington Education Reform Bill — HB 226 I

- Expanded definition of basic education
- New funding model based on “prototype schools,” defining staffing ratios for administrators, secretaries, teachers, librarians, counselors and classified staff
- Would reduce class sizes in K–3 to 17 students per class, and between 27 and 28 students in higher grades
- This reform is unproven, untested and very expensive
- Washington Supreme Court McCleary decision in December 2011 endorsed the funding of this reform

Projected Costs of Implementing HB 2261

- Funding HB 2261 would add \$3.4 billion to the \$6.8 billion per year the state provides for K–12 education
- Many say Washington cannot afford HB 2261, and that improving the effectiveness of teachers and principals is more important to student achievement than reducing class sizes
- Eric Hanushek of the Hoover Institute at Stanford University reports that the prototype school model adopted by HB 2261 is based upon the flawed and cherry-picked research of two university professors, Dr. Allen Picus and Dr. Lawrence O. Odden, calling them “confidence men”:
<http://educationnext.org/the-confidence-men/>

Reforms Blocked in Olympia by Powerful Teacher Union

- Charter schools – most recent effort HB 2428, SB 6202, were blocked by union in 2012 session.
- Repealing mandatory deduction of teachers dues RCW 41.59.100. Through this provision, state and local unions collect \$900 a year per teacher. Washington Education Association revenue from dues is \$33 million annually.
- Repealing RCW 28A.405.100 et seq., which establishes strong disincentives for school districts seeking to remove underperforming teachers, requiring administrators to meet excessive paperwork requirements, allow numerous hearings, and four appeals from administrative decisions.

Teacher Evaluation Bill

2012 Legislative Session

- SB 5895
 - Creates new top-down state system of evaluating teachers and principals, reducing principal authority over teacher evaluations and significantly increasing their paperwork burden.
 - The federal government is requiring states to pass teacher and principal evaluation bills as a condition of granting Washington a waiver from No Child Left Behind requirements.
 - The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction will issue “instructional frameworks” and “leadership frameworks” upon which evaluative criteria are based, and which school districts must use. This unclear language may encroach upon local district control over curricula.

Teacher Evaluation Bill, continued

SB 5895, continued

- Requires student growth data to be considered in teacher evaluations, but this data can be based upon tools developed in the classroom, school or district, and does not have to be based on a standardized, objective test. Student achievement can be a “substantial factor” in only three out of eight subjective measures of teacher performance. “Substantial factor” is not defined.
- Requires districts to “implement the employee notice of discharge under RCW 28A.405.300” for teachers who have two consecutive years of unsatisfactory performance evaluations. This notice is only one of the many steps in the discharge process, and is not the same as an actual discharge. Subsequent steps allow teachers rated unsatisfactory multiple opportunities to be reinstated. The process can cost \$200,000 to \$250,000 in legal and other costs, and acts as a serious disincentive to districts seeking to improve the quality of their teacher workforce.

Teacher Evaluation Bill, continued

SB 5895, continued

- If teachers get one of the top two evaluation ratings in the second year of teaching, the district may remove them from “provisional” status, which gives them RCW 28A.405.300 protection from dismissal, extending and strengthening teacher tenure.
- Allows evaluation results to be used as one of multiple factors in deciding teacher assignments and layoffs, though collective bargaining is allowed to determine how the multiple evaluation factors are used.
- Does not streamline the excessively burdensome process in RCW 28A.405.300 for dismissing unsatisfactory teachers.

What Does Washington Policy Center Recommend? Unshackle the School Principal



Washington Policy Center Recommends: Put the School Principal in Charge

Put great principals in charge of:

- Their budgets in actual dollars
- Their staff
- Their educational programs

Hold them accountable for student learning

Washington Policy Center recommends: Give parents more choices

- Increase parent choice
 - Allow charter public schools
 - Allow tax credit scholarships so low-income parents can choose a private school
 - Create a student educational grant or voucher to give parents the money the state provides to use in a public school or in a private school

Provide competition to traditional public schools and they will improve

Want more info?

Four resources to improve Washington's public schools

- [*Eight Ways to Reverse the Decline of Public Education*](#), Washington Policy Center, December 2008
- *Outrageous Learning, An Education Manifesto, Foundational Thoughts on Reforming our Public Schools*, by Scott Oki, Washington Policy Center, 2009
- *The Secret of TSL (Total Student Load): The Revolutionary Discovery that Raises School Performance*, by William Ouchi, Simon and Schuster, 2009
- *An Option for Learning: An Assessment of Student Achievement in Charter Public Schools*, by Liv Finne, Washington Policy Center, January 2011