



ACCELERATING THE LEARNING CURVE BY BUILDING A STUDENT-CENTERED EDUCATION SYSTEM

Governor Gregoire asked a group of business, nonprofit and government leaders to help her transform Washington government. She posed eight questions to guide the committee's deliberations. With advice and input from the committee and from citizens across the state, the Governor recommends the following actions to build a student-centered, seamless public education system. Her proposal addresses the question "Are there more cost-effective, efficient ways to do the activity?"

Our students deserve a world-class education at every step in the process — in preschool, elementary through high school, an apprenticeship program or college. Their future and personal success rely on it. Our economy and way of life depend on it.

But we do not have an education **system** today. In fact, our multiple education entities — including early learning, kindergarten through 12th grade and higher education agencies — spend too much time trying to coordinate work and connect policies. Priorities are often not shared. Because of this, students are not at the center of every decision made and every action taken.



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

By creating one Department of Education focused on students and student learning, Washington will build a cohesive **system** with common goals, shared priorities, coordinated efforts and linked outcomes. We will save time and money by operating an efficient **system** built on expertise. Students will be better served because the **system** will be focused on what they need.

Summary of the Governor's legislation

Governor Gregoire will focus on student achievement by providing a seamless, state-level education **system** from early learning through career training. Authority now held by numerous early learning, K-12 and higher education agencies will be consolidated in one cohesive, Cabinet-level Department of Education to:

- » Focus on students and student learning.
- » Promote coordinated, innovative, flexible student-centered services.
- » Eliminate duplication and provide more efficient administration.
- » Provide clear lines of authority and responsibility to increase accountability.
- » Provide a "one-stop education shop" for the public.

The department will have full authority to run the entire Washington state education **system**.

Led by a Secretary of Education who is relentless about the focus on students, the department will institute evidence-based, student-centered best practices. The department will provide the leadership and communication required to support those practices in all classrooms and learning settings — from a student’s earliest days through career development.

LAUNCH YEAR

Now more than ever, high school students and their parents recognize that a fulfilling and prosperous future depends upon career preparation in high school, whether through developing career and technical skills or acquiring an advanced degree. Research backs this:

- » In 2009, the average unemployment rate for Washingtonians with only a high school diploma reached 10.5 percent — a rate significantly higher than 7.7 percent for those with some college or an associate degree. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate for Washingtonians with a bachelor’s degree and higher was 4.6 percent.

Many of our students are ready to launch their life’s path during their senior year of high school and should have the opportunity to begin their future. These students need relevant opportunities to begin that journey. For many students, the senior year may be fun, but we can use the 12th grade to launch a career:

- » Approximately 35 percent of seniors take less than a full load of classes their senior year.
- » Approximately 25 percent of high school students capable of succeeding in college-level work do so.

A student earning college credit or beginning an apprenticeship program in high school, as examples, can obtain a diploma or certificate more quickly and at a lower cost. This means taxpayers save money too. This is a **system** connection that needs to be strengthened.

Summary of the Governor’s legislation

Three steps are taken to make 12th grade the launch year, during which students begin to realize their careers:

- » Expect that high schools offer career and college course opportunities that advance student career readiness, preparation and skill development.
- » Consistently recognize advanced work done by high school students and award credit for that work in community and technical colleges and universities.
- » Ensure career guidance is provided throughout a student’s high school career.

The purpose of high school has to be more than getting a diploma that represents courses completed, standards achieved and tests passed. That diploma must mean accomplishing what it takes to begin the next chapter in the student’s life. Twelfth grade will become that year.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Between 2008 and 2018, new jobs that require training and education beyond a high school diploma are expected to grow by at least 250,000 in Washington state. To ensure a high-quality work force is trained to help our businesses succeed, preparing Washington students is job one. To target scarce resources in this sluggish economy, the Governor appointed leaders from the business and education sectors to:

- » Develop a long-range funding strategy that provides Washington students with affordable higher education opportunities; and
- » Recommend improved accountability and performance measures to ensure we get the highest value for the state’s and student’s investment.

The task force set targets for awarding more bachelor's degrees. By 2018, Washington's six public universities are expected to annually graduate at least 6,000 more Washington resident students with bachelor's degrees than they do in 2010, with at least 2,000 of those degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM. While increasing overall degree attainment, the public universities are directed to boost the number of degrees completed by Washingtonians from historically under-represented groups to at least 19 percent of the total degrees awarded.

Summary of the Governor's legislation

The Governor is introducing legislation to give our public colleges and universities more flexibility in tuition-setting authority as well as increase their accountability and performance. Sufficient investment is fundamental in providing an affordable and accessible, high-quality education for Washington's citizens and in meeting 2018's degree and access goals. Universities will have tuition-setting authority within reasonable limits, and a percentage of increased tuition will be dedicated to financial aid. To lift quality and remain competitive, per-student funding, which is composed of state support and student tuition, will be benchmarked against the universities of the Global Challenge States (California, Colorado, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Virginia and Washington). If state funding decreases, tuition could increase.

With this flexibility providing stability through good times and tough times, universities can help students get the best possible education, maintain or increase access, and provide courses that students need to graduate on time.

Through clear accountability measures, enhanced performance and recognition of credits earned, students will be better served.

Accordingly, the Governor's legislation will:

- » Adopt the National Governors' Association "Complete to Compete" measures as state-wide accountability metrics. Universities and the state will collect comparable data to make better policy decisions, pinpoint areas for improvement and measure success.
- » Establish an incentive system for improved accountability and performance to reward progress toward meeting the state's baccalaureate degree completion targets.
- » Require the universities to develop plans with their own innovative ideas to meet goals to educate Washington's students and reduce costs on their campuses.
- » Recognize student credit for academic college-level work completed at a high school, a community college or another four-year university. This **system** connection will apply to:
 - Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs, as well as Running Start and College in the High School programs.
 - Credits earned when a student transfers.
 - Skills demonstrated through proficiency exams.
- » Help low- and middle-income Washington students earn a bachelor's degree by creating the Washington Pledge Scholarship Program funded through voluntary individual and business donations. Federal and state tax laws provide an incentive.

STRATEGIC EDUCATION REFORM PLAN

In 2005, the Governor's Washington Learns initiative set forth the imperative that we must educate our people to achieve higher levels of education.

All sectors of education have been working on strategic plans to improve student achievement.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board developed a master plan for higher education. The Department of Early Learning developed a plan for children from birth to third grade. The Quality Education Council developed recommendations on K-12 funding. The offices of Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Board of Education, Professional Educator Standards Board and the Governor developed a Race to the Top plan and refined K-12 system goals and strategies upon which to base a reform plan to improve student learning.

It is time to break down the individual silos and bring the years of work of educators, stakeholders and citizens together to ensure a high-quality, seamless learning experience for students from early learning through career. It is time to pull together a system-wide plan.

Summary of the Governor's legislation

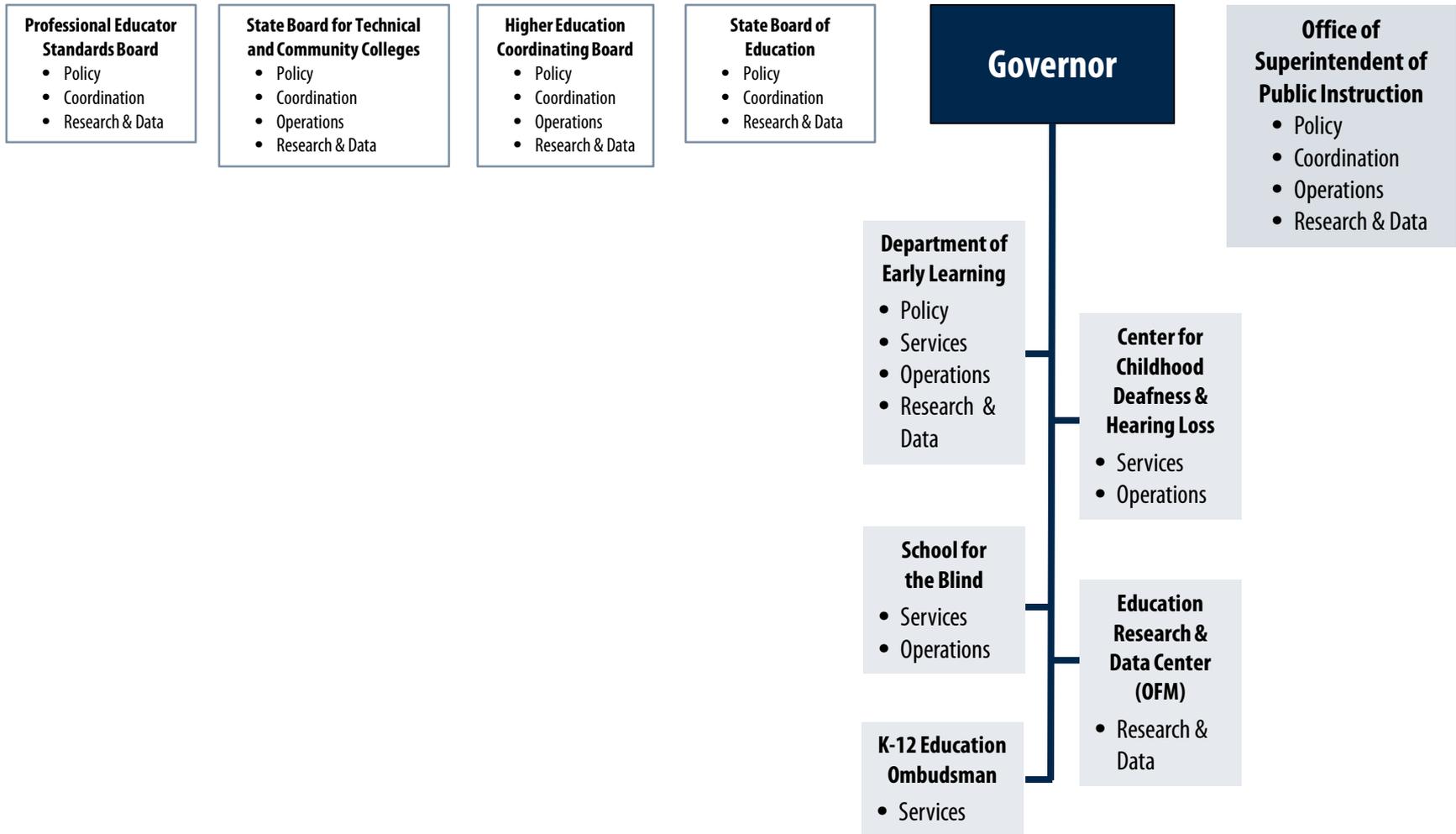
The Governor proposes that the Legislature approve the following student-related targets for a seamless education **system**. By focusing high-quality instruction and leadership on these targets, the policy and priority framework of the new Department of Education becomes student centered:

- » All students will enter kindergarten prepared for success in school and life.
- » All students will compete in mathematics and science nationally and internationally, and more students will graduate with degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
- » All students will attain high academic standards regardless of race, ethnicity, income or gender, and more students from under-represented groups will earn bachelor's degrees.

- » All students will graduate able to succeed in college, training and careers, and more students will graduate with bachelor's degrees from Washington institutions of higher education.

The new Department of Education will use these adopted targets to form a strategic plan to deliver Washington's world-class, student-focused, seamless education **system**.

Current Washington State Education Organization



Proposed Washington State Department of Education

