



## NEXT STEPS IN EDUCATION REFORM — BUILDING ON STRENGTHS AND FILLING THE GAPS

Washington's education reform efforts have steadily sharpened our work on student achievement. Governor Chris Gregoire's 2010 education agenda builds on the work our state has done and applies research and data findings to areas in need of attention.

### INTERVENTION IN LOWEST PERFORMING SCHOOLS/DISTRICTS

As we concentrate on improving opportunities for all students, we must focus on those schools in which students have not grown academically as we would expect. Despite voluntary efforts and supports from the state, there are schools in which student achievement remains considerably below state standards and has shown no gains. We cannot have this continue. Legislation proposed by the Governor will allow the state to remedy this situation.



- » Using indicators of academic attainment, schools with the lowest performance over time will be required to engage in an improvement process overseen by the state. Schools will participate in an audit to identify academic-related issues, develop a plan that includes adoption of one of four federal models as permitted by the state and set expectations for significant student academic achievement improvement within three years.

### UNIFIED FOCUS ON INSTRUCTION'S ROLE IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

National research identifies high-quality instruction as the most important component of an effective education system. Washington has become a national leader for building and recognizing certification programs that require teachers to provide evidence of student learning that results from quality instruction. The same is true for school building leadership.

- » **Teacher and principal evaluation** – The teacher evaluation statutes have not been significantly reviewed for more than 20 years. Additionally, there are no evaluation statutes that directly address the leadership and practice expected of principals. The Governor's legislation creates modern, instructional-focused criteria for teacher and principal evaluations; develops evaluation models that use multiple measures to determine effectiveness; links student growth measures as appropriate to evaluation considerations; and allows districts and their employees to develop evaluation processes and tools based on the state criteria. Of particular note, new teacher and principal evaluation systems will be implemented at the same time in school districts to compound the attention to high-quality instruction and student success.

» **Attaining continuing status** – When teachers enter the profession, they have provisional status for the first two years in the classroom. The Governor’s legislation lengthens the provisional period to three years to allow teachers sufficient time to demonstrate their skill. However, there is an opportunity for new teachers to complete the provisional period after two years if they receive great evaluations.

» **Alternative routes to teacher and principal certification** – Historically, institutions of higher education have provided routes to teacher certification that include partnerships with districts and are focused on classroom experiences. Yet, there are no alternative routes for principal certification. The legislation will expand preparation opportunities for those seeking teacher and principal preparation by allowing other organizations to offer teacher and principal preparation programs. Additionally, our higher education institutions are being asked to provide flexible preparation program completion opportunities to better meet the needs of students.



## **MATH AND SCIENCE GROWING INTO STEM (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, MATHEMATICS)**

Our state’s future is based in large part on the capacity of our citizens to apply math and science knowledge – in their everyday world and in their careers. The legislation will encourage school districts to use local available funds to pay teachers for developing innovative STEM programs.

## **COMMON CORE STANDARDS**

Washington is participating in a national project to strengthen our nation’s standards for mathematics and English/language arts instruction. The Governor’s legislation will specify criteria for adoption of the Common Core standards as part of Washington’s standards in mathematics and English/language arts.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

School districts will invite parents and community members to provide feedback on their experiences with their children’s school.