

July 2003

A young boy with dark hair, wearing a dark blue turtleneck, is looking intently at a teacher's hand. The teacher's hand is raised, showing fingers spread. The background is a classroom with a pink wall and a wooden desk.

MORE CHANGE,
LESS CHARITY

Strategic Support of Washington Schools

Key Findings and Recommendations from a Seminar of Educators, Community Leaders, Philanthropists and Policymakers



Executive Summary

Washington state, like most states, has committed to an ambitious effort to improve student achievement in public schools.

Its plan – adopted a decade ago by the Legislature and Governor – begins with higher expectations, both for the skills and knowledge all students should be learning and for the effectiveness of schools in helping more students reach high levels of achievement. And, increasingly, the plan is forcing schools to investigate more deeply what students are learning, what gets in the way and which strategies are most successful.

Grantmakers, policymakers and school advocates are important partners as schools work to be as effective as possible. With their careful investments of time, resources and money, they can reinforce good work, build capacity and talent in the school system and spread innovative ideas to other schools.

But when their investments are not applied strategically, outside support of schools can prove distracting or serve merely as a temporary "band-aid" over deeper problems.

In November 2002, Grantmakers for Education, Partnership for Learning and Philanthropy Northwest sponsored the "Strategic Support of Washington Schools" seminar to examine the challenges facing schools as they work to boost student achievement and how the support of outside investors and advocates can be most strategic.

This report summarizes the seminar's key findings and recommendations:

1. **Make sure all children start school ready to learn.**
2. **Get the best teachers to the schools with the greatest need.**
3. **Help all schools develop a more rigorous curriculum.**
4. **Ensure teacher professional development is deliberate and effective.**
5. **Connect high school learning to higher education success.**



The unique role of private philanthropy

Private philanthropy addresses public needs, and – in education – it can advance improvement efforts in unique ways:

- Focus on results: Help educators define what will be accomplished, how new resources will help and what outcomes for student learning should be expected.
- Take a "long view" to solutions (beyond political election cycles) and bring an element of neutrality to situations that have been politicized.
- Take risks to fund promising practices or experiments in the system that need further development and field testing.
- Play a convening role to bridge institutional divisions that block innovation or make the system incoherent.
- Support research and evaluation to build and refine new models, to help bring promising practices to scale and to disseminate information to influence the field.
- Provide opportunities for well-crafted research to influence federal, state and local education policies.
- Encourage systems to support schools risking change.
- Consider issues of sustainability: What will happen to a promising project beyond a single grant or beyond the two-year state budget cycle?

Ten Years of Progress in Washington:

High expectations for student learning have been an essential starting point—but more schools need greater knowledge and capacity to make progress

In Washington and other states, the starting point for school improvement efforts has been the development of clearer and more ambitious standards for student achievement and meaningful assessments to measure progress in reaching these standards.

These standards and assessments are designed both to clarify and to focus the work of schools, making explicit the skills and knowledge students are expected to learn in essential subjects such as reading, mathematics and science. The standards also are intended to level the playing field and ensure all children – not just children in the most affluent schools – are challenged to excel. A set of statewide standards begins to counter the reality that what children learn too often has varied from school to school and even classroom to classroom.

But standards and assessments are just a framework for making improvements: They make clear what students should be learning, and they tell us how well students and schools are doing. But, schools and school systems must determine the exact strategies and steps they will take to improve.

Many schools have made steady progress in boosting student achievement and ensuring that, each year, more and more students are meeting Washington's standards. But too many schools are making uneven progress or no progress. And too many students – in elementary school, in middle school and especially in high school – still are far away from meeting standards in all subject areas.

While common expectations and better data about student achievement have been enough to help some schools and districts succeed, many others lack the capacity, energy and skill to make sufficient progress.

The public's insistence on change and improvement is essential, even if progress is difficult.

Thus, Washington's statewide school improvement plan creates opportunities for innovation and leadership, but also opportunities for frustration and uneven progress in schools that lack the capacity and knowledge to move forward.

For all these reasons, how, when and why outside resources and philanthropic investments are invested in schools make all the difference.

These added investments – which provide more resources to schools and school systems – range from volunteer time to philanthropic grants to state assistance.

In November 2002, Grantmakers for Education, Partnership for Learning and Philanthropy Northwest convened more than 200 key government, philanthropic, school and community leaders in Washington. The gathering – the "Strategic Support of Washington Schools" seminar – sought to draw on the best thinking of educators and philanthropists about how to help create a more seamless and effective system of schooling from the early years through higher education.

While Washington is unique in some ways, in many other ways its policies, expectations and approaches for schools are not too different from those in other states. After ten years of focus on standards, its schools are struggling with the same issues as others around the country:

- How to analyze data and close achievement gaps among students from different backgrounds
- How to make middle and high schools more relevant and effective
- How to ensure well-qualified teachers are in every classroom
- How to connect early education with K-12 with higher education

This report summarizes key recommendations and discussions from the seminar. As schools in every state – and not just in Washington – are expected to raise standards and improve student performance, we think important ideas emerged that are worth sharing.



High Standards for All Students Raise the Bar Both for Educators and Investors:

Investments of resources, time and advice should help schools build capacity for improved teaching and learning

A divide remains between Washington's higher expectations for schools and the ability of schools and teachers to deliver. While clear standards, better data about what's working and community pressure for improvement have been enough to help some schools take steps to succeed, many others still lack the capacity, knowledge and skill to make progress. It is in these schools that philanthropic investments ought to be focused – and in very deliberate, strategic ways.

The "Strategic Support of Washington Schools" seminar drew on insights about best practices and next steps from current and former governors, experts in international education and school finance, teacher education reformers, school district innovators, higher education leaders and creative philanthropists.

Their advice to Washington grantmakers, school advocates and state leaders for helping many more schools and students make progress fell into five areas:

1. Make sure all children start school ready to learn.

Children's readiness for school is a critical component in their success at school. Many poor and minority children already show marked differences in knowledge and language use as they enter school, and these gaps can persist throughout children's school careers: 88 percent of the first grade students who are poor readers remain poor readers in the fourth grade. To improve the odds that all children can reach high expectations, kindergartners must arrive at the doorstep with strong cognitive, motor and social/emotional skills.

Research also shows that the groundwork for school success is laid in the first years of life. The quality of nurturing care that children receive in the first years strongly influences how the brain develops. "The early years of a child's life are so important," explained Bridgett Chandler, vice president and chief programs officer at Seattle's Talaris Research Institute, "because the rate and nature of brain growth then is unparalleled compared to any other time in life. Sights, tastes, smells, sounds and human touch all stimulate growth of neural connections, and communication between neurons is the process of storing and retrieving memories – which we can also call making meaning, or learning."

While the rate of brain growth and neural connection is largely under genetic control, what gets connected is a matter of environment. Children learn from and model their behavior on the people around them—and humans do this

from birth as a matter of survival. Only minutes after birth, children are capable of imitating the facial expressions of the people who are there to greet their arrival. Children begin to form their understanding of themselves and how the world works in these early years based on their experiences. Research shows that raising children in an environment that is consistently warm and supportive and that provides lots of exposure to oral and written language gives children the solid foundation they need for school and for life.

In other words, students can be well-prepared to succeed in school before school even begins, if they are nurtured, provided appropriately stimulating learning environments and encouraged to develop critical literacy skills.

"The K-12 experience begins early, and everything along the way affects the outcome. Preschool kids need an awareness of skills and abilities young students should bring to school when they enter kindergarten," argued Governor Gary Locke. "Our kids have the opportunity to begin a lifetime of learning in high-quality preschool programs. There are 19,000 three- and four-year-olds in government funded preschool programs in our state today. But that's only 60 percent of eligible kids. We need to get the assistance to the kids who need it most."



WE NEED TO COLLECTIVELY FOCUS ON THE SAME CRITICAL ISSUES AND PROGRAMS. OUR EFFORTS MUST BE INTEGRATED. THE POWER OF OUR PARTNERSHIP FAR SURPASSES THE POWER OF AN ASSORTMENT OF INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMS.

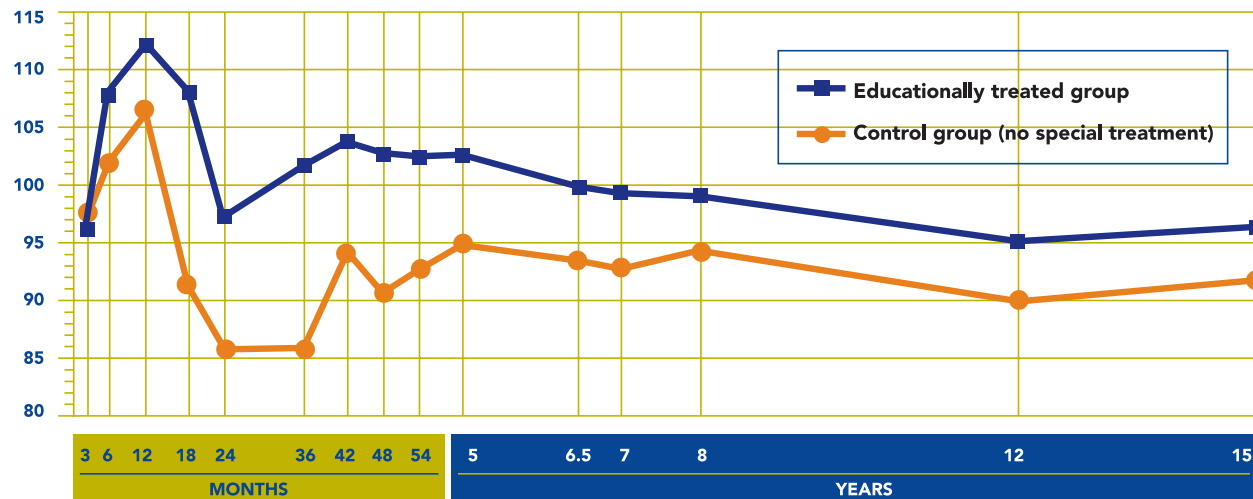
– Washington Governor Gary Locke

School readiness: How can philanthropy help?

- Through research and advocacy, help policymakers understand that greater access to high-quality early childhood care and education for all parents is an essential strategy for boosting student learning.
- Help focus the public will to create new resources for high-quality early care and education, rather than compete for already scarce education resources in the K-12 and higher education systems.
- Deepen public and professional awareness of the fundamental relationship between early social and emotional skills and success in school and life.
- Help early childhood teachers – in both early education settings and in the primary grades – gain skills and knowledge for developing literacy and teaching reading.
- Support early learning programs and elementary schools in purchasing and using reading programs with track records of success.
- Reinforce that parents are their child’s most influential teacher and support all parents with information and resources they need to experience greater competence and joy as parents.



Proven link between early learning and school success



Source: The Carolina Abecedarian Project, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The Carolina Abecedarian Project was designed as a randomized, controlled trial. The project recruited 111 children and their families, and then divided the pool into two groups. Both groups received nutritional supplements during the first years of life, and social service referrals when needed throughout the first eight years of life. But children in only one group participated in year-round, all-day educational childcare/preschool programs emphasizing the development of cognitive, language and adaptive behavior skills. The cognitive testing instruments used to assess learning differences includes such assessments as the Bayley Scales of Infant Development, the Mental Development Index and the Stanford-Binet IQ test.

2. Get the best teachers to the schools with the greatest need.

Training enough teachers is not the problem: By their fifth year in the profession, 32 percent of teachers in Washington have left the classroom (about half of these teachers have moved into other positions in education). Making matters worse, the best and the brightest still in the profession have usually gravitated away from the poorest schools, leaving these schools to be staffed by the least prepared teachers. Thus, all the talk about the short supply of teachers misses the point: The real problem is keeping the very best teachers in the most at-risk classrooms.

"We must come to grips with the economics of high teacher turnover and attrition and not accept it as standard operating procedure," said Tom Carroll, executive director of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

Not surprisingly, low-performing schools – schools with large numbers of struggling students – are the least attractive schools for well-qualified teachers: 34 percent of core academic courses in high schools with large numbers of students in poverty are taught by teachers lacking even a *minor* in the subject area (vs. 19 percent of core academic courses in low-poverty schools). Or, as researchers at the University of Washington's Center on Reinventing Public Education have found, low-income schools have the least-experienced, and thus lowest-paid teachers: Schools in wealthier neighborhoods can receive more than 100 applications for a teacher vacancy, while schools in poor neighborhoods might receive only one or two.

"For schools serving the poorest children, this means three things," Paul Hill, director of the center, has written. "They have almost no choice of whom they employ; classes there are always taught by green teachers and those who have no alternative; and the academic year begins every fall with a new group of teachers who have never worked together."

This "churn" in teachers, Carroll argued, is a lost public investment in teacher preparation. Because it creates unneeded costs for recruitment, training, replacement of teachers and it creates unneeded costs to performance and organizational effectiveness, said Carroll, "school reforms are undermined, teaching quality declines and student achievement suffers."



Five questions investors and advocates ought to ask of schools:

Is there leadership?

Change depends on leadership and then the will and skills to change. The difference between successful initiatives and failing initiatives starts with whether a school or school system has strong leaders and change agents. Efforts to continuously improve a school need to be guided by individuals who are committed to change and have the energy, talent and authority to keep pushing for improvements.

Is the focus on improving instruction and student learning?

We know that teachers matter most when it comes to whether students are learning, so – fundamentally – efforts to help students reach higher standards need to help educators become high-quality teachers. Decisions about instruction, school organization and use of resources should be based on data about student achievement – and implementation should be followed by reflection and evaluation.

Is there a plan and clear theory of action?

A school community should be able to articulate the steps it is taking and why exactly it thinks these steps will lead to improved student learning. How would an infusion of new resources in the school lead to higher student achievement? How will school leaders (and grantmakers and advocates) know if these efforts are successful?

Is there rigor?

All students need more opportunities to be challenged by rigorous curriculum and courses. Examples include added algebra courses and more Advanced Placement course offerings. However, every course needs to be guided by a curriculum with logic and sequence: one that ensures students master the "basics" in early grades and then build on (and not merely repeat) skills and knowledge in later grades. Classrooms should be organized to engage and push both highly capable students and students with the greatest academic deficits (and all the students in-between). Teachers need solid backgrounds in the subjects they are teaching.

Is the school creating a learning community?

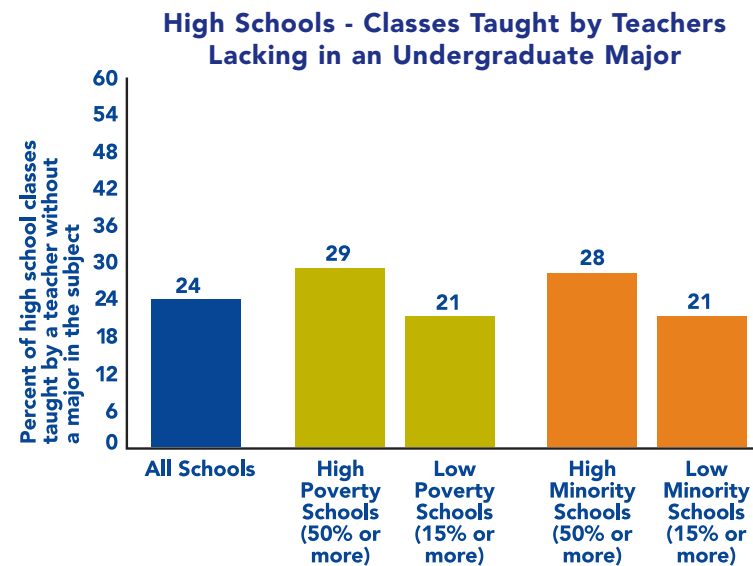
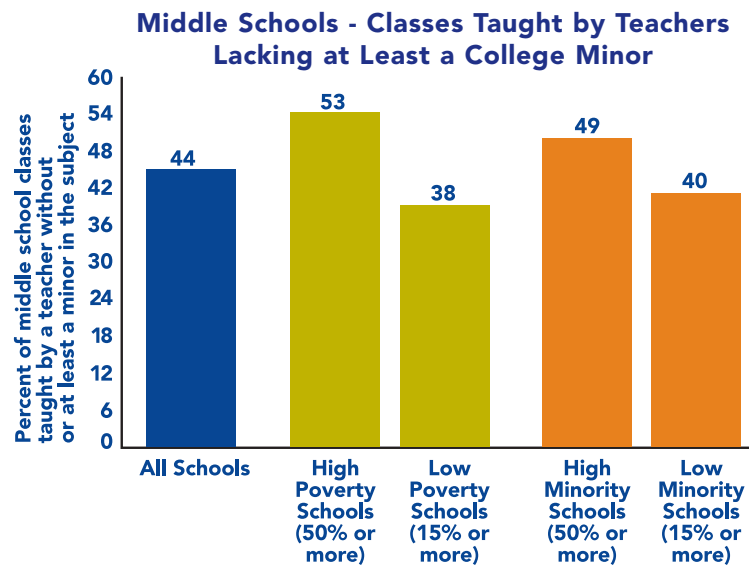
Are students, staff, parents and community all engaged – and committed to – the school's improvement process? A sense of community is important to learning. Smaller, well-focused and supportive environments can help students connect with adults and actively engage in their learning. A poor learning environment negatively impacts both students and teachers.

Better teaching: How can philanthropy help?

- Tackle the problem of inexperienced teachers in at-risk schools: Offer scholarships to current out-of-field teachers and paraprofessionals to boost skills in their assigned field and help schools "overstaff" struggling schools so teachers can focus their efforts on fewer students.
- Help principals learn how to retain excellent teachers, work with struggling teachers and challenge all teachers to improve.
- Tackle the problem of high teacher turnover by ensuring that teacher preparation programs are top-notch, that new teachers are supported by high-quality mentors and take on limited non-teaching assignments in their early years.
- Help create a more rewarding, more professional "career ladder" – from induction to accomplished teaching – that provides different opportunities and challenges for teachers to stay in the classroom but keep growing professionally.
- Support and encourage teachers to pursue the rigorous National Board certification process. Provide extra cash incentives for these highly accomplished teachers to teach in low-performing schools.

Middle Grades Are a Mess...But High Schoolers Suffer Too

Out-of-field teaching reaches crisis proportions in middle grades, where half of the core academic classes in high-poverty and high-minority schools are assigned to someone lacking even a minor in the subject being taught. But high schools continue to rely on the practice far too much as well.



NOTE: Figures are for core academic courses only.

Sources: Richard M. Ingersoll, University of Pennsylvania. Unpublished analysis for Ed Trust of 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey

-All Talk No Action: Putting an End to Out-of-Field Teaching, The Education Trust, 2002.

3. Help all schools develop a more rigorous curriculum.

Setting rigorous expectations for the skills and knowledge every student is expected to learn – as Washington has done – exposes an awful reality in many schools: few students have access to the high-level courses, rich curriculum and high-quality teaching that prepares them for meeting standards. Nationally, for example, only 25 percent of students are taking algebra courses by ninth grade (according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress), even though research shows that algebra is the "gateway" course because it determines whether children proceed in high school on a college-bound track or not.

"We must increase the depth and focus of what kids are learning," argued William Schmidt, U.S. research director for the Third International Math and Science Study and a professor at Michigan State University. Middle schools, he said, are especially prone to watered down instruction. Suffering from the phenomenon of curriculum that is "a mile wide and an inch deep," too much math instruction in grades five through eight is replete with repetitious and non-challenging material. That means students lose an important opportunity to begin mastering important content and knowledge in the subject area.

The other problem – facing both middle and high schools – is that even when courses with rigorous content are offered, too few students have opportunities to take them. Schmidt's work to benchmark math and science instruction in the U.S. with what other countries around the world provide has revealed that one of three middle school students cannot take algebra courses – because their school doesn't even offer the class. In other words, a significant number of students doesn't even have the *opportunity* to be challenged by courses like these.

Classroom rigor: How can philanthropy help?

- Make math and science – where the United States' poor performance is well-documented and well-understood – a priority for improvement in middle and high schools.
- Help disseminate aligned curriculum and instructional materials to teachers and support opportunities for teachers to deepen their content knowledge. Educators are feeling the demands from state standards and testing for more rigorous coursework for all students. They need in-depth knowledge about the subjects they are teaching paired with instructional materials that offer proven tools for teaching to high standards.
- Support efforts to eliminate "general" or "consumer" math courses in middle and high schools. More often than not, these courses offer a "dumbed-down" version of mathematics, and students in these courses are poorly prepared to meet high standards. Push schools to create more opportunities for advanced work in mathematics (minimum 3 years at the high school level) taught by teachers who are well-prepared to teach math.
- Help expand Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate and other rigorous college-prep programs, especially in rural and low-income schools where these programs are rarely sponsored. Sponsor students (especially in low-income communities) to take AP exams.

Too Few Students Graduate with Advanced Coursework

U.S. high school seniors reported taking these types of classes during their high school careers. More advanced courses were available in most schools, but the vast majority of students did not enroll in them. Analyses of other data indicate that this course-taking pattern appears to have changed little since the mid-1990s.

Minimal Standards (?)

- **One course in each: Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics**
- **Algebra II/Biology/Chemistry/Physics**
 - Less than 30% of ALL Students
 - Less than 5% of Voc/Tech Students
 - About 15% of General Academic Students
 - About 40% of College Preparatory Students

College Preparatory Standards (?)

- **Pre-Calculus/Biology/Chemistry/Physics**
 - Less than 20% of ALL Students
 - Less than 2% of Voc/Tech Students
 - About 10% of General Academic Students
 - About 30% of College Preparatory Students

Source: Grade 12 Cohort, Third International Mathematics and Science Study. U.S. National Research Center for TIMSS at Michigan State University, 2002

4. Ensure teacher professional development is deliberate and effective.

If we expect students to begin meeting higher academic standards, then we need teachers who understand and can teach the skills and knowledge in these higher standards.

However, too much professional development and support for teachers in schools today is scattershot and delivered during one-day "in-service" workshops. It is not connected to what needs to change in the classroom and it is not ongoing. Schools' efforts to help teachers develop new skills and knowledge need to be related to a school's overall strategy for improvement and embedded in what teachers do everyday.

To be the most effective, teachers themselves need time to learn– to study new and promising teaching strategies, to discuss different strategies with colleagues and to reflect on their practice.

Judith Rizzo, former deputy superintendent for Tacoma Public Schools and now director of the James B. Hunt, Jr., Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy, offered these "design criteria" for high-quality teacher professional development:

- Focused on school or district goals
- Helps teachers successfully teach to Washington's standards for student learning.
- Emphasizes continuous improvement and collaboration.
- Research-based.
- Sustained over time.
- Reflective.



These criteria should guide all professional development activities undertaken at the school/district level or supported financially by policymakers and philanthropists.

Effective teacher training: How can philanthropy help?

- Provide teachers with opportunities for peer coaching, mentoring and grade level planning.
- Link teacher professional development directly to student achievement needs – so that teachers develop skills, knowledge and strategies that help them teach more students more effectively. Support only those teacher professional development activities that are designed around and help teachers make progress towards school or district goals for improved student achievement.
- Encourage school systems to build time into the school day/week/year for regular opportunities for teachers to meet together and compare and design effective instruction strategies. Help build public support for teacher professional development, planning time and reflection time.
- Insist that any professional development activity include data about what students in the school are and are not learning – and how these results relate to teacher professional development needs. Help teachers learn how to regularly use student achievement data – including which assessments and tests to use for which purposes, how to analyze results and how to use data to make adjustments to their teaching.
- Design staff development programs with elements that we know help adults master new skills – rather than programs that rely on one-time-only presentations. Rich design elements could include the use of case studies, readings, small/large group discussion, coaching/internships and tools for reflection. Professional development activities should meet the design criteria outlined by Judith Rizzo.

OUR GIVING MUST SUPPORT CHANGE,
NOT JUST PUT A BAND-AID
OVER A BROKEN BONE.

- Deanna Oppenheimer
President, Washington Mutual

5. Connect high school learning to higher education success.

The latest statistics about student success in Washington colleges are grim: About a third of freshmen in Washington's four-year public colleges and

state standards in reading, writing and math as measured by the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) to earn their "Certificate of Mastery." Students also must complete a rigorous "culminating project," create a plan for getting to high school graduation and beyond and earn at least 19 academic

MANY STUDENTS WILL STILL NEED MOTIVATION TO DO THEIR BEST WORK. THEY NEED POSITIVE INCENTIVES RELATED TO THEIR NEXT STEPS IN LIFE. THIS IS WHERE WE NEED ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUPPORT FROM OUR COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES, OUR UNIVERSITIES AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

-Terry Bergeson, Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction

universities require remedial work in English or math their first year. In Washington's community and technical colleges alone, 51 percent of all first-year students – who recently finished high school – need at least one remedial class. And the college graduation rates of African-Americans (45 percent), Hispanics (53 percent) and Native Americans (49 percent) lag far behind the state average of 60 percent.

Washington's system of standards and testing – and especially its new graduation requirements that begin with the class of 2008 – is working to improve these outcomes. Students in the class of 2008 will be expected to meet the

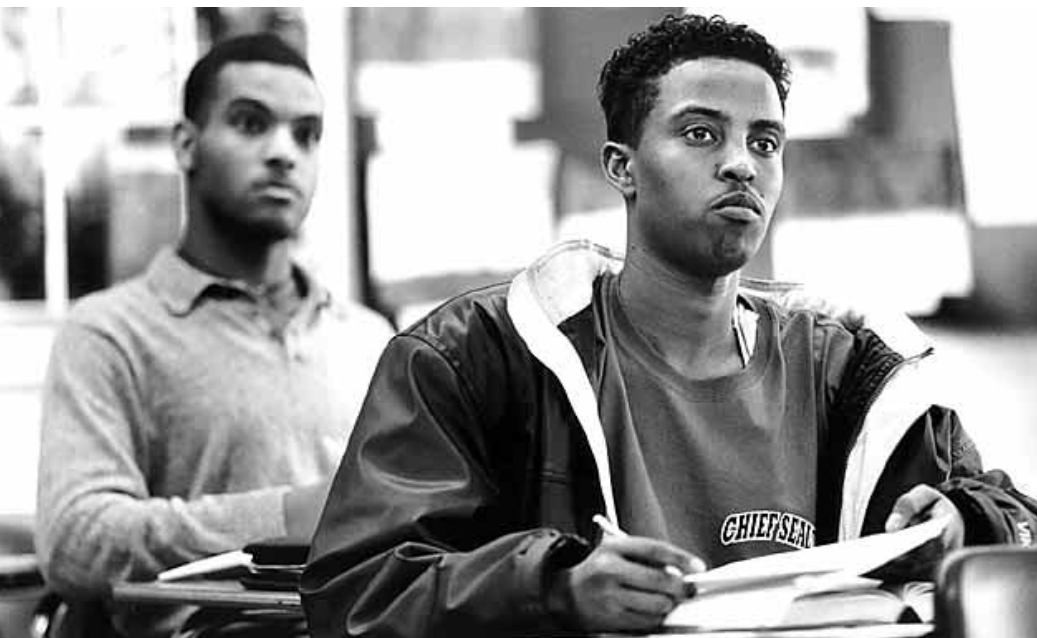
credits. Meeting standards on the science WASL will be required starting with the class of 2010.

Washington policymakers and higher education leaders recently agreed to consider using the 10th-grade WASL as one factor in placement for college classes, college scholarships and admissions decisions.

While the 10th-grade exam does not measure all of the content that college-bound students will need, all students who meet these standards have certain fundamental skills and knowledge in mathematics, reading, writing and, eventually, science. These students are more likely to be ready for college-level work than students who have not met the standards.

Grades can still be a useful predictor for college success, but higher education officials report that grades for the same type of classroom work vary widely from school to school and are insufficient to know if students are prepared for college-level work. That's why using WASL results as a criterion in college entrance and scholarship decisions will help admissions officers make better decisions about who is ready for college.

"K-12 is not an end in itself. It is a preparation for life, for work, for future learning in our community and technical colleges and for our four-year universities. If our colleagues in higher education recognize K-12 standards and send the message to high school students that skills count for access to Running Start and other dual-credit programs, for Promise scholarships and as a part of admissions, students will come to them better prepared," said Superintendent Bergeson.



Success beyond high school: How can philanthropy help?

- Look for opportunities to stress the importance of grades, academic performance and scores on the 10th-grade Washington Assessment of Student Learning – including making performance on the exam a criterion for any college scholarships.
- Prod schools to create a rigorous, common core, college-preparatory curriculum for all students (rather than just a few), beginning in middle schools, with high standards and well-qualified teachers that are blind to race and class.
- Support creative work in schools to help students develop their "culminating project" and "high school and beyond plan." Both of these will be statewide graduation requirements starting in 2008, and schools and students can use help to design high-quality projects.
- Actively involve parents as partners in helping middle and high school students to do well in school and to understand college admissions procedures.
- Support efforts between middle and high school and high school and college educators and administrators to better coordinate. These groups should be working more closely together to ensure that students are learning what they need to be successful at the next level of schooling. For example, college faculty who teach introductory courses in core subjects should be involved in efforts to shape high school curriculum.

In conclusion

Using a statewide framework to focus on what exactly students ought to be learning and how well they are learning it, schools in Washington are working mightily to improve student achievement. But they don't need charity to help.

What they do need are strategic investments that encourage them to focus on efforts that will bring the greatest positive changes and to identify, test and scale-up the best approaches to improved performance.

Washington's School Improvement Plan

Schools statewide are working hard to improve student achievement. Their common-sense strategy has three components:

- *Clear and challenging academic standards* – developed by Washington teachers, parents and community members – that spell out what students are expected to know and be able to do as they advance through school. These standards help schools and communities ensure students learn the skills and knowledge they need to pursue their future interests successfully.
- *Statewide assessments* that measure whether students are meeting the standards. The Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) measures student performance in reading, writing, listening, mathematics and science.
- *Accountability for what really matters:* student learning. Schools are expected to continuously improve, and students will be expected to show they can meet the standards before graduating.

Strategic Support of Washington Schools Seminar November 2002 Seattle, Washington Speakers

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Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction

Tom Carroll
Executive Director,
National Commission on Teaching and America's
Future

Bridgett Chandler
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Grantmakers for Education is a national network of foundations working to improve educational outcomes for students from early education through higher education. It works to advance excellence and effectiveness in educational philanthropy.

Partnership for Learning works to increase public awareness and understanding about Washington's efforts to improve the quality of education for all its students. It is an independent, nonprofit organization supported by nearly 60 businesses and community foundations committed to improving public schools in the state.

Philanthropy Northwest, formerly the Pacific Northwest Grantmakers Forum, creates stronger Northwest communities through effective philanthropies. Its core purpose is to strengthen the philanthropy of members located in or funding throughout Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington.

“ I CAN TAKE YOU TO 100 POOR AND RACIALLY-DIVERSE SCHOOLS ACROSS THIS STATE WHERE ALMOST ALL KIDS ARE ACCELERATING AND THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP IS DISAPPEARING. THESE ARE SCHOOLS FACING INCREDIBLE ODDS SOCIALLY, ECONOMICALLY, ACADEMICALLY. BUT THEY ARE EXCEEDING ALL EXPECTATIONS, AND THEIR CHILDREN ARE LEARNING. THERE IS NO SILVER BULLET TO SOLVE THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP PROBLEM, BUT THERE ARE SYSTEMATIC APPROACHES AVAILABLE TO HELP SCHOOLS HELP THESE CHILDREN. WE KNOW WE CAN ACHIEVE ASTOUNDING RESULTS. IT WOULD BE A TRAVESTY TO FAIL TO ACHIEVE THOSE RESULTS EVERYWHERE. ”

- Terry Bergeson, Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction

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A GOOD EDUCATION IS A UNIVERSAL RIGHT.
IT MUST NEVER DEPEND ON CIRCUMSTANCES OF ECONOMIC OR SOCIAL STANDING.
ACHIEVEMENT GAPS REFLECT AN INJUSTICE WE MUST NOT CONDONE.
IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CLOSE THE GAPS.
WE'LL DO THAT NOT JUST BY IDENTIFYING THE DISPARITIES,
BUT ALSO BY TARGETING THE STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS THAT NEED OUR HELP.
AND WE'LL CLOSE THE GAPS BY ENGAGING OUR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES
TO STEP FORWARD AND WORK HARDER.



-Washington Governor Gary Locke

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