



Making Washington Competitive for Race to the Top

Reaction to SB 6696, HB 3035, HB 3038 and HB 3059

This legislation takes steps in the right direction, but falls short of truly addressing the reforms called for by Race to the Top. Washington is starting behind in the Race to the Top, due to our lack of policies such as charter schools and teacher performance pay. Other states have gone farther, faster and are better positioned for federal dollars. Programs to improve college and career readiness, revamp teacher compensation and intervene in low-performing schools will advance education quality and maximize Washington's chance to succeed in Race to the Top. These reforms are needed to accelerate student performance and this opportunity cannot be missed.

Partnership for Learning urges lawmakers to:

I. Embrace the governor's proposals regarding standards and assessment.

- Direct OSPI to adopt the Common College and Career Ready Standards currently being developed by Washington and 48 other states plus Washington D.C., Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. This is a threshold requirement for Race to the Top.
- Direct OSPI to work with other states to create aligned assessments, curriculum and formative assessment tools for all districts.

II. Establish a clear approach to measuring student academic growth that is consistent across all school districts.

- Direct OSPI to develop one set of statewide measures of student growth and mandate its use by all districts.

III. Overhaul teacher and principal evaluation to include student growth data and ensure it is used as the primary factor in all staffing, tenure, retention and compensation decisions.

- Student growth data must comprise at least 50% of teacher and principal evaluations, and be used as the primary factor in all staffing, tenure, retention and compensation decisions.
- Require all districts to use the student growth model for all students in tested and untested subjects and grades as soon as it is developed and adopted.
- Require OSPI to develop one four-tiered evaluation model that all districts must use. If necessary, districts can obtain approval for an alternative evaluation model.
- Place teachers who receive a performance rating in the bottom two tiers of the evaluation system for two years in a row back on provisional status for one year. At the end of that third year, if the principal deems the teacher has not improved sufficiently, and providing that evaluation has been externally validated, the teacher loses his or her continuing contract.
- Provide differential pay and other incentives to top-evaluated teachers and principals, as well as teachers and principals who work in high poverty, high minority or low achieving schools and hard-to-staff subject areas (such as math and science), and who demonstrate effectiveness – closing the achievement gap and raising student performance.

IV. Enact governor's proposal to expand alternative routes for teachers.

- Create alternative routes for principals.

V. Enact the governor's proposal to turn around low-performing schools.

- Ensure "required action" for low-performing schools actually translates to bold and meaningful changes in these schools—including replacing 50 percent of school staff, extending the school day and instituting performance-based evaluation and compensation systems.

VI. Authorize high quality charter schools.

VI. Maintain math and science graduation requirements.