K-12 Education Data Governance: Preliminary Report

Report to the Legislature

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November 2009

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Executive Summary

Legislative Background
The 2009 Legislature established its intent to create a comprehensive K-12 education data improvement system for financial, student, and educator data. The objectives of this system are to monitor student progress, have information on the quality of the educator workforce, monitor and analyze the costs of programs, provide for financial integrity and accountability, and have the capability to link across these various data components by student, by class, by teacher, by school, by district, and statewide.

In addition to establishing the Legislature's overall vision for the data system, Part 2 of Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2261:

1) Identified twelve specific components that the Legislature intends to have included in the system (e.g., educator information, student information, common coding of courses, linking educator information with student information);

2) Created a K-12 Data Governance Committee to identify critical research and policy questions, identify needed reports, conduct a gap analysis that analyzes the current status of the data system compared to the Legislature's intent, and define the operating rules and governance structure for K-12 data collections;

3) Identified specific financial, student assessment, data accuracy, and class size reports that the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is to post on the internet; and

4) Required OSPI to submit a preliminary status report to the Legislature in November 2009, and a final report in September 2010 that includes a proposed phase-in plan and preliminary estimate of a comprehensive data improvement system.

Status of Required Actions
As a result of the legislation, the following actions have been accomplished. For more information regarding each action, please refer to the report.

1) Members of the K-12 Data Governance Committee were appointed. The committee consists of 18 members who represent state education agencies, the Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program Committee, the Education Research and Data Center, the Washington Institute for Public Policy, school districts, and other organizations that utilize K-12 data. Selected school district, state agency, and data-user representatives have expertise in financial, educator, and student data.

2) The committee has met on four occasions since August, and has:

   a) Reviewed the **current status of the K-12 education data system**;

   b) Explored the **data and information needs of principals and teachers**, including what state-produced reports and tools they currently use, how these reports/tools could be improved, and what new reports/tools would be helpful;

   c) Reviewed the recruitment announcement for a **K-12 Data Governance Coordinator**. A candidate has been selected and is slated to begin in December 2009;

d) Reviewed and distributed a **"Request for Proposals"** to identify a contractor who will assist the committee in identifying **critical policy and research questions and conducting the required gap analysis**. A contractor has been selected and work is scheduled to commence in late-November;

e) Prepared a draft **Data Governance Manual** that contains a process and evaluation criteria for considering new data requests. A final version is scheduled to be adopted in December 2009;

f) Created a **summary of the Legislature's expectations** for the K-12 Education Data Improvement System and the current status of each expectation;

g) Reviewed and discussed the draft outcomes for a **P-20 Longitudinal Data System grant** that is being prepared by the Office of Financial Management's (OFM's) Educational Data Research and Data Center; and

h) Created a **Web site** that provides the public, educators, and others information regarding the committee's responsibilities, products, and meetings. It may be accessed at: www.k12.wa.us/K12DataGovernance/default.aspx.

In addition, OSPI has initiated a process to identify the data and formulas necessary to post the **required financial, student assessment, and other reports** on the internet.

Future Actions

In the coming months, the Data Governance Committee and staff from OSPI, with the assistance of the consultant, will identify the critical policy and research questions; identify and prioritize new reports and tools that will be developed; conduct the gap analysis required in the legislation; and prepare the phase-in plan and cost estimate for a comprehensive data improvement system.

I. Introduction

Historically, state-level education data collections and systems have been used almost exclusively to determine funding allocations, to monitor compliance with state and federal regulations, to document educator certification, to meet federal reporting requirements, and for fiscal accountability. These systems have expanded in the past decade to include the results of state-wide student assessments.

These data collections for individual programs, such as certification and school district apportionment, were created and maintained in different, isolated data systems in which linking and jointly analyzing data was impossible.

With improvements in computing systems, it is now technically possible to collect, transmit, store, analyze, and report student, financial, and educator data in ways that would have been hard to imagine twenty-years ago. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is using this new technical capacity in the development and implementation of the "Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS)", which was inaugurated in August 2009. This system will allow OSPI to collect additional student-level data that can be linked with financial and educator data for purposes of reports and analyses.

In the absence of classroom-oriented reports from OSPI, districts have relied on other sources for analyses and presentation. Numerous reports and tools are being developed by school district assessment directors using data from the state and from their own student information systems; by consultants, including those who have been hired by school districts or are on contract with state-initiated school improvement efforts; and by information system vendors.

While these efforts have provided significant progress for some districts, there is enormous potential for improving data reporting and information systems in ways that will improve state, school, district, and classroom decision-making. This fact was recognized by the Washington State Legislature when it adopted Part 2 of ESHB 2261 in 2009, and is embodied in the guidelines for federal "Race to the Top" grant funding.

Both the state Legislature and federal government have clearly stated what types of data elements are to be collected, and that educators, policy-makers, and the public are to have access to the data. In addition, new tools and reports are to be created that incorporate financial, educator, and student data for purposes of improving instruction, improving the cost-effectiveness of programs, and increasing accountability.

This transformation from a state-level "allocation and compliance" data system to an "education improvement" data system requires identifying what type of information is most useful, improving the quality of currently available data, technical enhancements in software design, collecting additional data, and tackling an array of other funding, policy, and technical challenges.

II. K-12 Education Data System Legislation

In 2009, the Washington Legislature established a vision for a comprehensive K-12 education data improvement system and a roadmap for tackling the challenges inherent in this data system transformation.

Vision

Part 2 of ESHB 2261 established a vision for a comprehensive K-12 data education data improvement system that will include financial, student, and educator data. According to the legislation, the objectives of the data system are to:

- ✓ monitor student progress;
- ✓ have information on the quality of the educator workforce;
- ✓ monitor and analyze the costs of programs;
- ✓ provide for financial integrity and accountability; and
- ✓ have the capability to link across these various data components by student, by class, by teacher, by school, by district, and statewide.

Components of the System

The legislation also specified 12 components that the Legislature intends to have included in the system. These include:

(a) **Comprehensive educator information**, including grade level and courses taught, building or location, program, job assignment, years of experience, the institution of higher education from which the educator obtained his or her degree, compensation, class size, mobility of class population, socioeconomic data of class, number of languages and which languages are spoken by students, general resources available for curriculum and other classroom needs, and number and type of instructional support staff in the building;

(b) The capacity to **link educator assignment information with educator certification** information such as certification number, type of certification, route to certification, certification program, and certification assessment or evaluation scores;

(c**) Common coding of secondary courses** and **major areas of study at the elementary level or standard coding of course content**;

(d) **Robust student information**, including but not limited to student characteristics, **course and program enrollment, performance on statewide and district summative and formative assessments to the extent district assessments are used, and performance on college readiness tests;**

(e) A subset of student information elements to serve as a **dropout early warning system**;

(f) The capacity to **link educator information with student information**;

(g) **A common, standardized structure for reporting the costs of programs at the school and district level** with a focus on the cost of services delivered to students;

(h) **Separate accounting of state, federal, and local revenues and costs**;

(i) Information **linking state funding formulas to school district budgeting and accounting**, including procedures:
   (i) To support the **accuracy and auditing of financial data**; and
   (ii) Using the **prototypical school model** for school district financial accounting reporting;

(j) The **capacity to link program cost information with student performance** information to gauge the **cost-effectiveness** of programs;

(k) **Information that is centrally accessible and updated regularly**; and

(l) An **anonymous, nonidentifiable replicated copy of data** that is updated at least quarterly, and made available to the public by the state.

Data Governance Committee
To assist in the design and implementation, the Legislature created a K-12 Data Governance Committee within OSPI. Membership in the committee includes representatives of OFM's Education Research and Data Center, OSPI, the Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program committee, the Professional Educator Standards Board, the State Board of Education, school district staff, the Washington School Information Processing Cooperative, the Washington Institute for Public Policy, the University of Washington, the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession, and the Center for School Effectiveness. A list of members is included in the Appendix.

The legislation requires the committee to:

(a) Identify the **critical research and policy questions** that need to be addressed by the K-12 education data improvement system;

(b) Identify **reports and other information** that should be made available on the **internet;**

(c) Create a **comprehensive needs requirement document** detailing the specific information and technical capacity needed by school districts and the state to meet the **Legislature's expectations** for a comprehensive K-12 education data improvement system;

(d) Conduct a **gap analysis of current and planned information compared to the needs requirement document**, including an analysis of the strengths and limitations of an education data system and programs currently used by school districts and the state;

(e) Focus on **financial and cost data** necessary to support the **new K-12 financial models and funding formulas;**

(f) Define the **operating rules and governance structure for K-12 data collections**, ensuring that data systems are flexible and able to adapt to evolving needs for information, within an objective and orderly data governance process for determining when changes are needed and how to implement them. Strong consideration must be made to the current practice and cost of migration to new requirements. The operating rules should delineate the coordination, delegation, and escalation authority for data collection issues, business rules, and performance goals for each K-12 data collection system, including:
    (i) Defining and maintaining standards for **privacy and confidentiality**;
    (ii) Setting **data collection priorities**;
    (iii) Defining and updating a **standard data dictionary**;
    (iv) Ensuring data **compliance with the data dictionary**;
    (v) Ensuring **data accuracy**; and
    (vi) Establishing **minimum standards for school, student, financial, and teacher data systems**.

Data elements may be specified "to the extent feasible" or "to the extent available" to collect more and better data sets from districts with more flexible software. Nothing in RCW 43.41.400, this section, or section 202 of this act should be construed to require that a data dictionary or reporting should be hobbled to the lowest common set. The work of the K-12 data governance group must specify which data are desirable. Districts that can meet these requirements shall report the desirable data. Funding from the legislature must establish which subset data are absolutely required.

Reports on the Internet
In addition, the legislation specifies a list of data accuracy, fiscal, student, and class size reports that OSPI is to post on the internet. These reports are to include, to the extent data is available, the following:

(a) The **percentage of data compliance and data accuracy** by school district;

(b) The **magnitude of spending per student**, by student estimated by the following algorithm and reported as the detailed summation of the following components:
(i) An approximate, prorated fraction of each teacher or human resource element that directly serves the student. Each human resource element must be listed or accessible through online tunneling in the report;
(ii) An approximate, prorated fraction of classroom or building costs used by the student;
(iii) An approximate, prorated fraction of transportation costs used by the student; and
(iv) An approximate, prorated fraction of all other resources within the district. District-wide components should be disaggregated to the extent that it is sensible and economical;

(c) The **cost of K-12 basic education**, per student, by student, by school district, estimated by the algorithm in (b) of this subsection, and reported in the same manner as required in (b) of this subsection;

(d) The **cost of K-12 special education services per student**, by student receiving those services, by school district, estimated by the algorithm in (b) of this subsection, and reported in the same manner as required in (b) of this subsection;

(e) **Improvement on the statewide assessments** computed as both a percentage change and absolute change on a scale score metric by district, by school, and by teacher that can also be filtered by a student's length of full-time enrollment within the school district;

(f) **Number of K-12 students per classroom teacher** on a per teacher basis;

(g) **Number of K-12 classroom teachers per student** on a per student basis;

(h) **Percentage of a classroom teacher per student** on a per student basis; and

(i) **The cost of K-12 education per student** by school district sorted by federal, state, and local dollars.

Data Accuracy/Disclosure
Another component of the legislation involves the issue of data quality. The legislation specifies that reports are to contain data to the extent it is available, and that reports are to include documentation of which data are not available or are estimated. It also states that reports must not be suppressed because of poor data accuracy or completeness, and that reports may be accompanied with documentation to inform the reader of why some data are missing or inaccurate or estimated.

Avoiding Unfunded Mandates
In recognition of the fact that collecting and reporting new data elements can require significant costs for personnel to collect the data, for data systems to be modified, and for data entry, the Legislature stated that it was its intent that school districts collect and report new data elements to satisfy the requirements of the legislation only to the extent funds are available for this purpose.

Reports to the Legislature
Lastly, ESHB 2261 requires OSPI to submit a preliminary status report to the Legislature in November 2009, and a final report in September 2010 that includes a proposed phase-in plan and preliminary estimate of the comprehensive data improvement system envisioned by the Legislature.

III. Context of K-12 and P-20 data collections

The K-12 education data improvement system is a component of a "P-20" longitudinal data system in our state that is being created by the Education Research and Data Center's (ERDC), which is located in the OFM. When creating the center, the Legislature directed state education agencies and the Department of Employment Security to share data with the ERDC. The center is compiling data that will link individual student information from pre-school through higher education and the workforce. The focus of the ERDC's research analysis will be on the transitions between the various levels of education.

IV. Status of Required Actions

The legislation was signed by Governor Gregoire on May 19, 2009, and funds were available to be expended on July 1, 2009. In the four months in which funds have been available, the following actions have occurred.

Data Governance Committee: Members of the K-12 Data Governance Committee were appointed by State Superintendent Randy Dorn. The Committee is chaired by OSPI's Assistant Superintendent for Public Policy and Planning, acknowledging that data governance is an agency wide priority, and not simply a technology activity.

Committee Actions: The committee has met on four occasions since August and has:

a) Reviewed the current status of the K-12 education data system. The review included a history of our current data system; the current status of the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS); plans and progress in creating a data warehouse; the currently available elements of eCert, which is an educator database and information tool; and OSPI's current and planned data system enhancements. A copy of the PowerPoint that was used to present information on the current status of the system is available at: www.k12.wa.us/K12DataGovernance/Meetings/DGMeeting071609.pdf#StatusPPT

b) Explored the data and information needs of principals and teachers. Two separate panels of teachers and principals were asked to provide information to the committee regarding what state and school district-produced reports and tools they currently use, how these reports/tools could be improved, and what new reports/tools would be helpful. Their observations and recommendations were summarized and will be used as the committee begins to identify new reports and tools that should be created. A summary of these comments is available at: www.k12.wa.us/K12DataGovernance/Meetings/Oct21Mtng/PrincipalPanelandTeacherPanelRecommendationsSummary10-21-09.pdf . A panel of superintendents will make a similar presentation at the November 18, 2009 meeting.

c) Hired a K-12 Data Governance Coordinator. With funds appropriated by the Legislature, OSPI has hired a Data Governance Coordinator who will be responsible for working with the Data Governance Committee and OSPI program staff to create the K-12 Education Data Improvement System.

d) Selected a national consultant to identify policy and research questions and conduct the gap analysis. The consultant will assist OSPI and the committee in identifying the "critical policy and research questions" and conducting the required gap analysis. Work is scheduled to commence in late-November pending approval of the OFM.

e) Prepared a draft "Data Governance" Manual. A draft of a Data Governance Manual was discussed by the committee at its October meeting and the final version is scheduled to be adopted in December 2009. The draft manual tackles the issues of K-12 data governance through four major actions:

- **Prioritizing Data Collection and Reporting**

The manual describes the Data Governance Committee's role in helping to prioritize the research and policy questions that OSPI's data collection and reporting need to address, and, in filtering the myriad of suggested data collection ideas that come from individuals and organizations.

- **Ensuring Data Quality**

The purpose of Washington's Data Governance System is to improve the quality of the data collected, analyzed and reported by OSPI. Education reform is an ongoing process in our state and across the country. Education reform requires accurate, reliable, useful, high-quality educational data. The manual describes issues related to data quality, and the data governance system's strategies for addressing them.

- **Managing Change Systematically**

The process to achieve quality data and quality reporting of Washington's education data is a coordinated partnership of the Data Governance Committee and the Data Management Committee (mostly OSPI program managers and district representatives). The manual frames the mechanisms by which changes to OSPI's data collection and reporting requirements will be determined and communicated. The data management components include technical infrastructures, defining data elements, schedules and timelines, identifying and resolving issues and privacy and data security.

- **Including Data Stakeholders**

There are many stakeholders interested in the education data collected and reported by OSPI. This manual describes various stakeholders and how the data governance process will ensure their voices are heard.

f) Created a status report on the Legislature's expectations for the data system. As noted earlier, the Legislature created a vision for a K-12 education data improvement system, and identified the components that it intends to have in the system. It then directed OSPI to identify the current capacity of school districts and the state to implement each of the specific components, and develop an implementation plan designed to address the gaps and implement the system.

Summarized below is a list of each expectation, and the current status of its implementation:

Legislative Expectation	Current Status
1) Comprehensive educator information:	
a. grade level taught	Collected at individual teacher level, in CEDARS, beginning Oct. 2009.
b. courses taught	Collected at individual teacher level, in CEDARS, beginning Oct. 2009.
c. building or location	Has been collected on S-275. Now also collected in CEDARS, beginning Oct. 2009.
d. program	This is currently collected by employee on the S-275 reporting.
e. job assignment	The S-275 collects for each individual employee the building, program, and activity that the employee is assigned to. Specific teaching assignment (which course and which students) collected in CEDARS beginning Oct. 2009.

Legislative Expectation	Current Status
f. years of experience	Years of experience is collected on S-275. S-275 identifies what is counted as years of experience.
g. the institution of higher education from which the educator obtained his or her degree	Not collected. The highest degree is collected, but not the institution of higher education.
h. compensation	Teacher salary denoted as base salary, supplemental salary and total final salary is currently collected for each individual reported in the S-275.
i. class size	Average class size has been determined by school enrollment and teacher count. Now individual teachers' class sizes can be calculated with course and teacher data first being collected in CEDARS in Oct. 2009.
j. mobility of class population	Can be calculated with course and teacher data first being collected in CEDARS in Oct. 2009.
k. socioeconomic data of class	Percent of students eligible for Free/Reduced Meals has been determined from individual student records, but only summarized at the school level. Now percent of students eligible for free/reduced meals within an individual class can be calculated with course data first being collected in CEDARS in Oct. 2009.
l. number of languages and which languages are spoken by students	Within an individual class, or for a given teacher, the number of and which languages spoken by students can be determined with course and teacher data first being collected in CEDARS in Oct. 2009.
m. general resources available for curriculum and other classroom needs	No data collected at state level.
n. number and type of instructional support staff in the building	The current data as reported on the S-275 currently provides this information as of October 1 of each school year.
2) Link educator assignment information with educator certification. Capacity to link certification number to:	
a. type of certification	Maintained in e-CERT database for certifications.
b. route to certification	No. OSPI does not key in information but may reside in teacher file.
c. certification program	Maintained in e-CERT database for in-state certifications.
d. certification assessment	Teacher testing (WEST-E, WEST B) is maintained in e-CERT database for certifications.
e. evaluation scores	Not collected, and it is not clear what specific data is expected.
3) Common coding of secondary courses	State course codes, based on NCES Secondary Classification of Educational Data, will be phased in over the course of 2009-10 for all HS credit courses: Nov. 2009: Math and Science courses Mar. 2010: English/Language Arts, Social Studies and Foreign Language courses May 2010: All other courses
4) Major areas of study at the elementary level or standard coding of course content	Elementary students' "schedule" is only listed as "Elementary Curriculum" in CEDARS in 2009-10.
5) Student information	
a. student characteristics	Collected at individual level since Oct. 2001.
b. course and program enrollment	Collected at individual student level, in CEDARS, beginning in Oct. 2009.
c. performance on statewide and district summative and formative assessments to the extent district assessments are used	Statewide assessments: Collected District assessments: No data collected at state level except DIBELS for Reading First programs.
d. performance on college readiness tests	Collected at individual level for ACT and SAT.
6) Dropout early warning system	A system is being piloted that was created in cooperation with the Shelton School District, ESD 113, and WSIPC.

Legislative Expectation	Current Status
7) Capacity to link educator information with student information	Projected completion date: Early 2010.
8) A common, standardized structure for reporting the costs of programs at the school and district level. To have a focus on the cost of services delivered to students.	The Accounting Manual for Washington Public Schools – a joint publication of OSPI and SAO provides a standardized structure for reporting costs of programs at the district level. It does not address building level accounting and reporting of costs. In the spring of 2009, OSPI submitted a budget request item to address this requirement.
9) Separate accounting of state, federal, and local:	
a. revenues	All current revenues codes are defined as state, local or federal.
b. costs	The current costs structure aligns most expenditures back to the designated revenue stream as appropriate. Where it fails to make this connection is when the revenue stream may be expended for general district operations at the district discretion. These revenue streams do not have dedicated costs areas and subsidize the other dedicated revenues streams for programs such as basic education, special education, etc. OSPI is currently exploring options that would align each expenditure coding to a specified revenue stream.
10) Linking state funding formulas to school district budgeting and accounting, including procedures:	
a. To support the accuracy and auditing of financial data;	The prototypical school model has not yet been finalized. OSPI will address this area upon legislative adoption of the new prototypical funding formulas.
b. Using the prototypical school model for school district financial accounting reporting;	The prototypical school model has not yet been finalized. OSPI will address this area upon legislative adoption of the new prototypical funding formulas.
11) Link program cost information with student performance information to gauge the cost-effectiveness of programs	For the major categorical programs (e.g., Learning Assistance Program, special education), district-level achievement and fiscal information is available and analyses can be completed. For smaller programs, the tracking of which students received services may not be available and the actual program costs difficult to ascertain.
12) Information that is centrally accessible and updated regularly	Report Card: http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/summary.aspx Research/Reports: http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/default.aspx Funding information: http://www.k12.wa.us/safs/reports.asp Annual Expenditure information: http://www.k12.wa.us/safs/PUB/FIN/0708/fs.asp http://www.k12.wa.us/safs/FiveYearReports.asp

13) Anonymous, non-identifiable replicated copy of data. To be updated at least quarterly and made available to the public by the state	De-identified individual record data sets are available upon request for the following:
	   a. Monthly demographic/enrollment files
	   b. Statewide accountability assessment scores
	   c. Language proficiency assessment scores
	   d. Annual Enrollment Status files (used for graduation/dropout/mobility studies)
	A data sharing agreement is required to ensure compliance with the small cell size constraints that protect individual privacy.

14) School districts have the capability to collect state-identified common data and export it in a standard format	Almost all school districts have successfully submitted all CEDARS data files.

g) Reviewed the draft P-20 Longitudinal Data System grant application. The Educational Data Research and Data Center, which is part of the Office of Financial Management, is preparing a grant application to the federal government for the continued development and implementation of a data system that includes students beginning in early learning programs through post-secondary education and employment. Staff from the data center presented an overview of their draft proposal, including the major outcomes they are considering.

h) Initiated work on the required data reports. Agency personnel have initiated a process to compile the data and created the formulas that will be needed for the data accuracy, compliance, fiscal, student, and class size reports that OSPI is to post on the internet.

i) Created a Web site. A Data Governance Web site has been created and can be accessed through the OSPI home page which includes the committee's responsibilities, meeting handouts, committee membership, time and locations of future meetings, committee work products, and other information. It may be accessed at: www.k12.wa.us/K12DataGovernance/default.aspx.

V. Future Actions
In the coming months, the Data Governance Committee and staff from OSPI, with the assistance of the consultant, will identify the critical policy and research questions; identify and prioritize new reports and tools that will be developed; conduct the gap analysis required in the legislation; and prepare the phase-in plan and cost estimate for a comprehensive data improvement system.

Ongoing activities include continual review and prioritization of research and policy questions, review and consideration of requests for new data collections, and recommendations for strengthening data quality, analysis, and reporting.

VI. Appendix

Washington's
K-12 Data Governance Committee

Name	Organization	E-mail Address
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