



2011 POLICY PRIORITIES

Our Premise:

Education creates opportunity. All kids can learn. High expectations and support are critical.

Our Goal:

Achieve meaningful education reform that will increase student achievement, close the growing achievement gap and prepare all students to be college and career-ready.

Our Priorities:

ESN can achieve these goals by pursuing the broad policy areas outlined below.

- 1) *College and Work Ready Standards, Assessments and Graduation Requirements:*** Washington state has an obligation to ensure all students graduate ready to succeed in college and work.

To ensure college and work-readiness, ESN supports:

- Adoption and implementation of the Common Core State Standards, which will provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn so that teachers, parents and afterschool and youth development programs know what they need to do to help them.
- Adoption and implementation of the Common Core Assessments, which will allow for comparison across students, schools, districts and states; create economies of scale; provide more information and support for effective teaching and learning; and prepare students for college and work.
- The State Board of Education's "Washington State's Graduation Requirements: Career and College Ready" proposal to create a meaningful high school diploma to ensure every public school graduate is ready to succeed in college and careers.

- 2) *Effective Teaching:*** The research is clear: an effective teacher is the most important factor in raising student achievement.

To ensure an effective teacher is in every classroom, ESN supports:

- A comprehensive evaluation system that includes student learning – the goal of our education system – as a significant factor. This system should allow for rewarding and retaining effective teachers, as well as meaningful, targeted professional development when needed.
- Performance as a significant factor in staffing decisions, including placement, transfers, reduction-in-force situations and dismissals.

- Equitable distribution of high-quality, culturally-competent teachers.
- Recognize and reward high-quality teachers for pursuing additional responsibilities and specialized training such as National Board Certification and Beginning Educator Support Team full-time teacher mentors.

3) Effective Principals – The research is clear: effective schools have effective leadership.

To ensure an effective leader is in every school, ESN supports:

- Expansion of alternative route certification for principals.
- A comprehensive evaluation system that includes student learning – the goal of our education system – as a significant factor.
- Performance as a significant factor in staffing decisions, including placement, transfers, reduction-in-force situations and dismissals.
- Authority to manage human capital decisions including hiring, assigning, reassigning and dismissing building staff.

4) Innovation: Research shows us, and common sense concurs, that the flexibility to innovate locally combined with accountability creates a powerful framework for desired results.

Specifically, ESN supports:

- Developing a policy framework for school innovation and high-quality charter schools.

5) Accountability Index: We support a statewide accountability framework that is transparent, easily accessible to the public and designed to ensure all students receive an excellent and equitable education.

To ensure statewide accountability, ESN supports:

- A standards-based accountability index that is transparent and easily accessible to the public.
- A system that measures and monitors college- and career-readiness for each student.

Excellent Schools Now Coalition is comprised of the following organizations: Alliance for Education, ArtsEd Washington, Black Collective, Black Education Strategy Roundtable, Coalition for Equal Education Rights, College & Work Ready Agenda, College Spark, College Success Foundation, Communities in Schools of Seattle, Executive Council for a Greater Tacoma, King County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, League of Education Voters, New Futures, Pacific Science Center, Partnership for Learning, Powerful Schools, Rainier Scholars, Schools Out Washington, Seattle Biomedical Research Institute, Seattle Breakfast Group, Social Venture Partners, Stand for Children, Tabor 100, Technology Access Foundation, Technology Alliance, WashACE, Washington Alliance of Black School Educators, Washington Global Health Alliance, Washington Roundtable, Washington State PTA, and Washington Technology Industry Association. You can learn more Excellent Schools Now Coalition at www.excellentschoolsnow.org