



Recommendations to the Basic Education Finance Task Force

July 8, 2008

1.0 Introduction

Sen. McAuliffe dropped a courageous bill last session, asking for the State to start from scratch and completely rewrite education law. In our proposal, we are inviting you to do something equally courageous.

We are not going to ask you to fund a silo approach; rather we are going to ask you to change the driving principles behind funding to provide equitable opportunity for all students.

We have inherited an education model that never included everybody to begin with. Property rights and a business approach rather than human rights and student potential have traditionally been the distinguishing factors in the development of education funding. (See Harris 1993)

Although we have existing Washington State Law which would suggest human rights and student potential be the underlying principles of funding, our State education funding structure has never been built on these principles. Take a look at our State constitution and the definition of basic education.

Washington State Constitution: ARTICLE IX Education

Section 1: Preamble

It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of **all children** residing within its borders, **without distinction or preference on account of race, color, caste, or sex.**

The Constitution clearly articulates our State's position on human rights and student potential, but this position was not fully articulated in the previous definition of basic education. Rep. Santos saw the need to more fully include, articulate and sponsor additional language that aligned the definition with the intent of the constitution.

Definition of Basic Education RCW 28A. 150.210

The goal of the Basic Education Act for the schools of the state of Washington set forth in this chapter shall be to provide students with the opportunity to become responsible and respectful global citizens, to contribute to their

economic well-being and that of their families and communities, to explore and understand different perspectives, and to enjoy productive and satisfying lives. Additionally, the state of Washington intends to provide for a public school system that is able to evolve and adapt in order to better focus on strengthening the educational achievement of all students, which includes high expectations for all students and gives all students the opportunity to achieve personal and academic success. (June, 2007)

Before alignment, lawsuits were the only recourse citizens had to bridge the gap between constitutional intent and legislative rule. Unfortunately, most of the education lawsuits which have challenged the system have been upheld by the courts, but not enforced by the State. For example:

Seattle School District v. State 90 Wn @d 476, 585 P. 2d 71, at pgs. 517-51

"The State's **constitutional duty goes beyond mere reading, writing and arithmetic**. It also embraces broad educational opportunities needed in the contemporary setting to **equip our children for their role as citizens** and as potential competitors in today's market..."

You have heard testimony that more than 80% of basic education dollars go to teacher salaries and administrative costs. This means what you are really talking about is the 20% or less of the total education dollars which go to the children. This is why what we ALL want is in conflict with what we do. What EOC is advocating for is an approach which would fund 21st Century Education where student potential is the priority.

2.0 21st Century Education

In order to visualize the future, it is important to understand where we are. We have a powerful constitution whose intent only recently became part of the definition of basic education. We are in need of a funding system which is driven by the same principle.

EOC is not unique in having identified this need. In the final report from Washington Learns *World Class, Learner Focus, Seamless Education*, Section 3 begins, "A world-class system would prepare today's students to be tomorrow's citizens, capable of competing in the rapidly changing global economy and (while) engaging thoughtfully in communities at home." 2006, p. 16

To illustrate, we are going to use a theory of human development created by Dr. Caleb Rosado called Spiral Dynamics. The system of Spiral Dynamics builds on and illuminates Maslow's "hierarchy of needs" to include a level of diversity in thinking called "GlobalView."¹ (See <http://rosado.net/spiralhtml> Mission: Creating Caring Communities)

In the Spiral Dynamic System, there are eight levels of understanding that drive human development. For the purposes of this paper, we will focus on three levels: Level 1 "SurvivalSense"; Level 5 "StriveDrive"; Level 8 "GlobalView." If we apply this model to our education system, the problem with our funding structure becomes

¹ Dr. Clare Graves created a theory of levels of human existence which Rosado used as the basis for Spiral Dynamics.

clear. Today's education system is being funded at a survival level which in Spiral Dynamics and Maslow is assigned Level 1.

Level 1 SurvivalSense²: Applying Spiral Dynamics to our education system, we see education funded at the level of skill building rather than that of fully developing student potential. The focus is on reading and writing which pushes assimilation of all differences in color, gender, status, language, physical feature, culture, values, worldviews, national origin and conflict resolution. Students performing differently are evaluated as deficient, dropout of school and are often pushed into the prison pipeline. At this level, incarceration is funded at a higher percentage than education success.

Level 5 StriveDrive³: Even before Rep. Santos rewrote the definition of education, there was a clear goal to empower students toward economic viability. Focusing on this goal fosters competition and an emphasis on differences in color, gender, status, language, physical feature, culture, values, worldviews, national origin and conflict. The economic goal leads to a strong emphasis on math and science, career/technical education and technology. Students performing differently are evaluated as losers and put into minimum wage jobs and subsistence opportunities.

Yet, until recently, economics have not been the driver for education funding in our State. You only need to take a look at the problems with Math to understand the truth in this statement. More recently stakeholders within the education system have been working to see the economic goal more fully implemented. Strong efforts have been made to get more funding in math for teacher training, curriculum redesign, 21st Century assessments etc. At the same time, another stakeholder has managed to obtain funding for career and technical education.

Level 8 GlobalView⁴: EOC believes Level 8 articulates the system identified in Washington Learns. It is the level from which we must fund in order to prepare students to be world-class global citizens, 21st Century Citizens.

Level 8 emphasizes interdependence and cooperation among differences/color, gender, status, language, physical feature, culture, values, worldviews, national origin and conflict. For example, students performing differently are seen as assets, creative problem solvers, entrepreneurs, visionaries, artists, philosophers, and philanthropists. They move comfortably through the ambiguity of learning, being willing to accept there are things in this world which they don't know they don't know. At Level 8 continual learning – being open to concepts and principles which lie outside your frame of reference – communication, self-care, and relationship and engagement within all facets of the community including the environment would be given priority and drive funding.

In order to fund the new definition of education which includes providing students "the opportunity to become respectful global citizens" and to implement the goals of Washington Learns, our education system must be funded at the level of the GlobalView, Level 8.

² The value system of Level 1 is "group bands together to stay alive." <http://edu-cyberpg.com/iec/caleb.html>

³ The value system of Level 5 is "entrepreneurial, materialistic, success-driven <http://edu-cyberpg.com/iec/caleb.html>

⁴ The value system of Level 8 is "harmony, holism, spirituality <http://edu-cyberpg.com/iec/caleb.html>

3.0 Recommendations

The new education model would require placing students and their families first, thus tapping into a user friendly system of supports that allow for multiple education pathways. This system would require funding for flexible supports around the student to assist them on their educational journey, instead of placing students into slots according to eligibility by funding silos or to meet ratio requirements. This would transform the current system from a bureaucracy based on funding streams (silo approach) into a public education service.

We recommend that the Basic Education Funding Task Force change the funding formula to fund our education system at Level 8 "GlobalView." We recommend that they create a new framework for funding which is student driven and allows students to work towards becoming global citizens. The funding system would be driven by concepts of interdependence and cooperation that empower, transform, align and connect, motivate, inspire and are sustainable without the imprint of institutional racism and classism.

We are asking you to fund complexity instead of silos in state driven programs.

- We are asking you to fund for the expectation of change – continuous improvement
- We are asking you to fund for interdependence
- We are asking you to fund for cooperation

The students will always be winners in this new system. Indeed, Washington State will always be a winner by funding for global success.

4.0 Conclusion

We are not telling you anything which hasn't been said before. In their final report, Washington Learns eloquently put it this way:

While economic necessity drives these recommendations for education reform, we must never forget that a healthy democracy depends on educating citizens. More than ever before, our education system must prepare world citizens who respect cultural differences, who understand political differences, and who can make informed choices among different policies. Our democracy must be free and strong, and our citizens must be informed and engaged, if we are to set an example for the rest of the world. (2006)

"Today's students arrive at school with greater needs than ever before." (WSPTA Position Paper for Washington Learns, 2006) You have a new piece of clay which you can mold in any way that will lead to higher student potential. We don't have all the answers, and we don't expect you to have all the answers right now. We are simply asking for you to look inside yourselves and envision the greater picture. In their position paper, the PTA discusses the strategies that we need to move to a learner focused education system: a world-class system with parent involvement, community engagement, and equity and access as integral components of the process. Their introduction ends, "Be bold – define basic education in a way that reflects today's world and today's students."

Being a teacher means more than reflection, learning processes, and mentoring. It also means embracing broad educational opportunities needed in the contemporary setting to equip our children for their role as citizens. A teacher's job is to create global citizens rather than merely teach skills such as algebra. With teachers such as these, we believe students will feel valued, respected, motivated, challenged, inspired to stay in school and will know that learning is important, evolving over their lifetimes. These teachers are creating children who will take our place on earth.