



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL

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October 18, 2012

Dear Friend:

This letter is to introduce ourselves to you and ask for your input.

The Washington State Legislature and Governor Gregoire worked jointly this year to enact legislation creating the new Washington Student Achievement Council. The Council membership was formally announced on August 7. A description of the Student Achievement Council's responsibilities, as well as brief biographies of each Council member, can be found on our website at www.wsac.wa.gov/AboutTheCouncil.

As you can tell from the posted information, our mandate is broad and challenging but the overarching theme is to improve the educational achievement of all Washington citizens. Our goal as a Council is to help ensure that all Washington educational institutions are aligned to provide students a best-in-world education that allows our graduates and our state to compete and succeed anywhere in the world. Families, students, and our communities as a whole must be involved and committed to this effort, and our schools, at every level, must have the very best educators, administrators and staff and must be inclusive, affordable, and accessible.

Our goals should be nothing less than substantially increasing the numbers of Washingtonians receiving higher education and ensuring that all students graduate our institutions having obtained the skills, knowledge, experience, and character required to participate in our civic life and contribute to our economic vitality.

One of the first responsibilities facing the Council is to submit a Strategic Plan for higher education to the Legislature by December 1 of this year. From the beginning of this process and in all our actions, the Council believes it is essential to involve and listen to stakeholders and institutions, both governmental and non-governmental. Toward that end, we are asking for your help.

We recognize that in the time available to us it is not possible to craft a credible comprehensive plan with detailed solutions. Nevertheless, we believe it is important to put forward a substantive and strong document that clearly identifies the key challenges and opportunities facing education in our state.

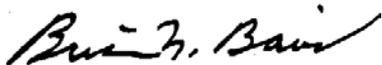
To help us do that, we are asking if you would prepare a **prioritized list of what you see as the four or five top challenges or opportunities facing higher education in our state**. By higher education we include all post high school education including four year (public and private non-profit institutions), two year and career and technical educational institutions, as well as accredited online programs.

In putting together your list it would be especially valuable if you identify those issues that are most relevant to your personal interest or that are the focus of your institution or organization. At this point, this need not be a lengthy document, at most two pages, but please do identify the issues, briefly describe why you think they are important, and, if you wish, indicate what you believe is or should be done about them. **It would be particularly helpful to the Council if you could provide your comments as soon as practical, ideally before November 7.**

Our goal at this point is to gather as much useful information as quickly as we can in order to offer to the Legislature a clear vision for what the key issues are. From there, we will proceed over the next year to explore each of the most important issues in detail with the aim of putting forth real, practical and visionary proposals that will get to the heart of what can, and should be done to enhance educational achievement in our state.

Thank you for the important work you already do for education in our state and thank you in advance for your input. Please send comments to Councilinput@wsac.wa.gov. And please contact us if you have any questions or desire any additional information about the work of the Council.

Sincerely,



Hon. Brian Baird, Ph.D.
Chair

Members of the Washington Student Achievement Council

Hon. Brian Baird, PhD, Chair, citizen member
Constance Rice, PhD, Vice Chair, citizen member
Ray Lawton, Secretary, 4-year private colleges
Scott Brittain, K-12 public system
Marty Brown, 2-year public college system
Jose Gaitan, citizen member
Lindsey Jahn, student member
Jay Reich, citizen member
Jane Sherman, PhD, 4-year public colleges

Attachments

- WSAC Overview
- Council Bios