



## Performance Management FAQs Updated November 12, 2009

### General Questions on Performance Management

#### 1. What is the goal of performance management in Seattle Public Schools?

The District-wide performance management system will give us the information and data we need to continuously improve the quality of education and meet the District's *Excellence for All* goals. We are tracking both performance *and* growth in a system that has three objectives:

- Provide Seattle Public Schools staff and the community with clear definitions of performance goals at the District, school and individual levels;
- Hold Seattle Public Schools accountable to these goals by regularly measuring, reporting and taking action based on progress toward the goals; and
- Help Seattle Public Schools provide targeted support and tools to individual schools, principals, instructional staff, District staff and others so all students achieve.

#### 2. What are the tools being used to support the performance management system?

Seattle Public Schools will use multiple tools to track performance at all levels of the District to ensure that Seattle Public Schools is strong District-wide.

District Level	School Level	Individual/Staff Level
<p>The <b>annual scorecard</b> includes District-wide academic data as well as key operational metrics that show how District services, like transportation and maintenance, directly support schools. Many of these measures are being defined and tracked for the first time; all of them will be reported in the District scorecard in subsequent years.</p>	<p>In November 2010, we will release the first annual <b>school reports</b>, which will provide a snapshot of school performance on common academic measures. Schools will also use new <b>Measures of Academic Progress</b> assessments, which provide teachers, principals and students with real-time information on math and reading performance.</p> <p>School staff will be able to access this data through an <b>academic data warehouse</b> that will provide</p>	<p>New individual <b>performance evaluations</b> are being rolled out to many central office employee groups, and additional support for evaluating school-based staff is now available.</p> <p>These tools and processes will help us provide targeted support and interventions to ensure</p>

<p>We also will conduct <b>quarterly internal reviews</b> of our progress toward the key measures, allowing for mid-course adjustments.</p>	<p><b>dashboards</b> that track student growth on key metrics like academic performance, attendance and course completion and passage rates.</p>	<p>that Seattle Public Schools' staff is strong and highly capable at all levels across the system.</p>
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**3. How will you know when you have been successful?**

The first step toward success is the development and adoption of this new performance management system. This means we all have a clear understanding of our goals, and we can track our progress against these goals. For example, we have set ambitious and aggressive five-year performance goals for every academic measure. The District scorecard shows annual growth as well as where that rate of growth puts the District on target to meet its five-year goals.

**The District Scorecard**

**4. What story does the District Scorecard performance data tell us about Seattle Public Schools?**

The robust data in the District scorecard indicates significant gains in some academic performance but also reveals areas where we must continue to improve. Most notably:

- Significant gains have been made in percent of students *exceeding* standard in elementary math and reading; overall elementary performance has been relatively flat
- Middle school math performance is improving; the percent of students *exceeding* standard is growing
- High school math performance is flat, and despite gains in science, overall science proficiency is low
- Growth in measures that indicate college- and work-readiness is significant
- Significant gains have been made in closing the achievement gap among some groups, however wide achievement gaps remain

We also recognize that schools need excellent operational support. The scorecard requires us to begin tracking the operational measures that are the most important to supporting our schools.

**5. What is the District doing to address the areas where it is not making progress or not on-track to meet the 2013 goals?**

Seattle Public Schools is committed to ensuring District-wide improvements and supporting every school so that all students succeed. In core academic areas, we will strengthen course **content, instruction, and measurement tools.**

**Content focus includes:**

- **Literacy:** The District uses a variety of research-based literacy tools including an early focus on balanced literacy and strong writing emphasis through the Writers Workshop

model. We are aligning standards and materials to national college-ready expectations at the high school level.

- **Math:** We now have common math materials across every grade level. We are focused on ensuring that staff has the tools and support they need to use these materials to meet the needs of students at every performance level.
- **Science:** We have common science units K-8 that encourage an inquiry-based approach for students. At the high school level, the District is currently aligning high school standards to the new state standards and plans to adopt materials in the 2010-11 school year.
- **College-readiness:** We have a multi-pronged approach to strengthening college and work-readiness for all graduates. Our curriculum alignment and adoption work is a significant part of this work. We are focused on increasing college-level course offerings and providing student supports.

#### **Strengthening instruction includes:**

- **Professional development:** For the first time, the District and teacher's union have outlined required professional development for every subject and for every teacher. This will improve instruction in these content areas. Additionally, the District will support all school-based staff in conducting effective evaluations and will provide mentors to support teachers who are struggling to meet expectations.

#### **Increasing measurement tools:**

- The District has also implemented a new assessment system to help benchmark student progress in math and reading three times a year. These new assessments (Measures of Academic Progress or "MAP") are given in grades K-9. They provide teachers and principals with real-time data on students' knowledge and help identify areas where students may need additional, targeted support.
- Additional data reports on attendance and other 'early warning' indicators (credit accumulation, grades) are available to help schools effectively track student performance and make early interventions.

And finally, the District is working to close the persistent achievement gap between White and Asian students and non-White/non-Asian students. The District's aligned curriculum, required professional development, and common assessments will help us close these gaps. We are using targeted intervention strategies to ensure that struggling students can access materials at a level that is appropriate and culturally relevant.

Central office operations departments such as facilities, human resources and finance, have developed metrics to measure the services they provide to schools. For example, facilities will measure capital projects completed on time and within budget, and the extent to which we are reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**6. How were these particular measures selected and who provided input?**

The District scorecard is an annual progress report on all of the measures and specific data points provided in our strategic plan, *Excellence for All*. We developed these measures after extensive outreach to more than 2,200 stakeholders including teachers, principals, community and parent groups, school board, and others.

**7. Why isn't there data for every operational measure?**

We previously did not track performance improvements in some of our operational services, but we know this is important for school and District success. Moving forward, we will track more operational measures and will include in future scorecards. For example, every District department has now developed an internal scorecard to track their own improvement measures. We are also developing surveys to get feedback from students, staff and families on key District services, and we will share survey results in fall 2010.

**8. What does it mean for the District to be in Step 2 of District Improvement under the federal No Child Left Behind Act?**

Districts in Step 2 must work in collaboration with the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to address the targeted areas with reading and mathematics programs and instructional interventions that are effective in improving student learning. Once districts enter Step 2, they remain in this step until they make AYP across all tested grades for two consecutive years. Seattle's district improvement plan is on-line at [http://www.seattleschools.org/area/m\\_news/DIP2008.pdf](http://www.seattleschools.org/area/m_news/DIP2008.pdf)

**9. How does the District scorecard connect to individual schools' performance efforts?**

The new performance management system means we can better integrate performance efforts at the school level, among individual staff, and at the District level. For example, each school's annual improvement plan (available on [seattleschools.org](http://seattleschools.org)) is aligned with the District's scorecard, and District improvements are directly linked to each school's progress. The District will support every school in making performance gains by identifying needs and providing targeted support. Schools that are not making gains and have low performance on state measures will receive more structured guidance and support from the District than schools that are making significant gains and performing at high levels on state measures. In the fall of 2010, individual school reports (similar to the District's scorecard) will be released.

**10. What are specific strategies schools are using to improve performance?**

We will help schools that have struggled to make significant gains develop solid improvement plans, and we will work with schools to ensure that our interventions directly address areas where data show students are struggling. We will collaborate with the schools to identify the best use of school-based funds, district improvement funds, and federal Title I stimulus funds (given to schools where 55% or more of the student qualify for free or reduced price lunch). Improvement plans will address school and classroom leadership, instructional quality and rigor, and high quality materials. For example, Roxhill Elementary in West Seattle will hire two extra math teachers and extend the time that students and staff have to work together to strengthen their math skills. Additionally, Hawthorne Elementary in Rainier Valley is hiring two new teachers to provide small-group instruction in literacy and math during the school day.

## **Resources**

### **11. How is SPS funding this effort?**

Our new performance management system is being incorporated as part of our regular management process. Production of the district scorecard has been supported by the many departments impacted by and reflected in the scorecard. There is no incremental cost associated with its production this year. The design and development of the scorecard and subsequent individual school reports was supported by outside grants funded through the Alliance for Education.

Specific school improvement efforts are being funded through three primary sources: existing school funds, federal stimulus Title I funds, or district-level school improvement funds. The District will continue to look at how existing resources are allocated and ensure that time, support and resources for schools address school performance and other factors.