

**The Washington Professional Educator Standards Board:**  
*Scope of Authority and Governance*

Madeleine Thompson  
with  
Edie Harding and Barbara McLain

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**Washington State Institute for Public Policy**

110 East Fifth Avenue, Suite 214

PO Box 40999

Olympia, WA 98504-0999

Telephone: (360) 586-2677

FAX: (360) 586-2793

URL: <http://www.wa.gov/wsipp>

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## Background

The Washington Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) was created in 2000 legislation<sup>1</sup> to oversee new teacher assessments, recommend alternative methods of certification, and advise the State Board of Education (SBE), the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and the legislature on issues pertaining to preparation and professional development of educators.

The Legislature directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Institute) to study the scope of authority and governance of the PESB.<sup>2</sup> The role of educators in governing educator quality was examined in all 50 states. Eight case study states were researched in detail to gain more in-depth information.

## Findings

- **The main impetus for the creation of professional educator standards boards has come from educators, primarily teachers.** Educators have promoted the creation of standards boards to obtain responsibility for developing policies governing their profession, similar to other professions such as health care.
- **Eighteen states, including Washington, have delegated some type of policymaking authority to an educator standards board.** The remaining states have standing or ad hoc advisory committees of educators and utilize their advice and expertise on issues of preparation and development.
- **Washington's PESB is similar to most other educator standards boards in size, method of appointment, length of term, and types of professions regulated.** Washington's PESB has 19 members appointed by the governor for four-year terms and one ex officio, non-voting member, the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The PESB oversees teachers, educational staff associates, and principals.
- **Washington's PESB differs from most other educator standards boards in scope of authority and level of decision-making responsibility.** Washington's PESB has decision-making authority for new teacher assessments only. Most professional educator standards boards with responsibility for assessments also have responsibility for setting standards for certification. The most common areas of responsibility assigned to professional educator standards boards are setting standards for certification, establishing assessments for initial certification, and setting criteria for continuing certification.

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<sup>1</sup> Engrossed House Bill 2760 was signed into law as Chapter 39, Laws of 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Engrossed House Bill 2760.

**Washington's PESB also differs from most other educator standards boards in nomination of members.** Although a few states involve legislative leadership in appointing members, only Washington's PESB has four of its eight teacher representatives nominated by the legislative caucuses.

- **The eight case study states are equally engaged in efforts to improve educator quality regardless of the model of governance they use.** Research is limited on the effectiveness of one governance model over another. However, all eight case study states demonstrated significant efforts in the last five years to create rigorous systems of educator preparation and development with high levels of input from educator professions.
- **The case studies highlighted the following issues for policymakers as they consider alternative models of scope of authority and governance for Washington's PESB:**
  - ✓ What role should educators play in policymaking?
  - ✓ Would assigning the PESB decision-making authority for certain core issues create more consistent standards and expectations for educators?
  - ✓ Should the PESB *improve* or *police* educator professions?
  - ✓ How valuable is PESB involvement in decisions made primarily at the local level?
  - ✓ Are resources (funding and staff) sufficient to fulfill PESB responsibilities?

## **Options for Washington's PESB**

Three options are outlined for the scope of authority and governance of Washington's PESB. Each option differs in how it addresses the issues for consideration raised by the case studies.

- **Option A** represents the scope of authority and governance under the **current statute**. The PESB has **advisory authority over a wide range of issues and decision-making authority for only one issue**, new teacher assessments.

**Implications:** This model limits educators' decision-making role regarding core issues of educator preparation and certification and splits responsibility for these issues between the PESB and the SBE. The PESB's scope of authority covers a wide range of issues, including educator discipline and locally determined employment issues.

- Under **Option B**, the **PESB's advisory authority for core issues of preparation and certification of educators could be converted to decision-making authority** in addition to its current responsibility for teacher assessment. Decision-making authority over certain professional development issues could also be assigned if resources permit. Option B removes the advisory role of the PESB for educator discipline and suggests either an advisory role, or no role, in other employment issues.

**Implications:** Option B grants educators a higher degree of decision-making authority over the core issues of preparation and certification. Consistency in standards and

expectations for educators might be improved. However, this would reduce the SBE's decision-making responsibility for these issues. OSPI's responsibility would also be diminished if the PESB made decisions for certain professional development issues. The PESB could focus on improving, rather than policing, educator professions by allowing a current advisory committee on educator discipline to continue.

- **Option C** assigns the PESB **decision-making responsibility for the same issues as Option B**. However, the **SBE could be authorized to review PESB decisions regarding educator preparation and certification**. The SBE could reject PESB decisions on educator preparation and certification and send them back for amendment.

**Implications:** While educators are given more decision-making authority over the core issues of preparation and certification, the SBE review provides an additional check and balance. However, the process of review could delay action on decisions.





# INTRODUCTION

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## Background

The 2000 Legislature created the Washington Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB).<sup>3</sup> The Legislature also directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Institute) to examine the new board's scope of authority and governance issues pertaining to certification, licensure, and preparation of educators in Washington State.

The PESB was created to oversee new teacher assessments, recommend alternative methods of certification for teachers, and advise the State Board of Education (SBE), the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and the legislature on issues pertaining to preparation and professional development of educators.

## Institute Task

The Institute was asked to examine issues of scope of authority and governance for the Washington Professional Educator Standards Board. For purposes of this report, *scope of authority* is defined as the different issue areas assigned to the board, such as assessment or certification. *Governance* is defined as the level of policymaking responsibility, either advisory assistance or decision-making and rule-making responsibilities.

The Institute reviewed research literature, Washington State statutes and administrative rules, and information from other states regarding the development of standards for teachers and the scope of authority of professional educator standards boards. Seventeen other states have created educator standards boards since 1973.<sup>4</sup> Eight states with differing governance models were selected as case studies to provide in-depth information on workload, funding, scope of authority, and recent changes in policies pertaining to teacher preparation and development.

This report examines the following five questions:

- 1) How is Washington's PESB organized?**
- 2) Does research support particular models for policymaking regarding educators?**
- 3) How do other states tap the expertise of educators?**
- 4) What lessons can be learned about policymaking from other states?**
- 5) What additional policymaking options exist for Washington's PESB?**

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<sup>3</sup> Engrossed House Bill 2760 was signed into law as Chapter 39, Laws of 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Professional educator standards boards, composed primarily of educator professionals, are modeled after regulatory boards for nurses, physicians, engineers, and other professionals.



# HOW IS WASHINGTON’S PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR STANDARDS BOARD ORGANIZED?

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## Membership

The law creating the Washington Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) also specified its composition (see Table 1).<sup>5</sup> The governor appoints members for four-year terms, with four of the eight public school teachers selected from legislative caucus nominations. Appointments are subject to Senate confirmation. There are 19 voting members and 1 ex officio, non-voting member, the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

*Table 1*  
**Washington Professional Educator Standards Board Membership**

MEMBER TYPE	NUMBER	QUALIFICATIONS	VOTING	EX-OFFICIO
SCHOOL TEACHERS	8	7 public, 1 private	✓	
PUBLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS	4	3 principals (2 public, 1 private) 1 district superintendent	✓	
EDUCATIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATES	2	2 public	✓	
EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS	3	2 public, 1 private	✓	
PUBLIC	2	1 parent 1 member of the public at large	✓	
SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION	1			✓

## Role of the PESB

Two important issues are to be considered regarding the role of the PESB: scope of authority and governance.

**Scope of Authority: What are the areas of PESB responsibility?** The PESB has been assigned a number of areas of responsibility ranging from educator preparation to governance (see Table 2).

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<sup>5</sup> Chapter 39, Laws of 2000. See excerpt in Appendix A.

*Table 2*  
**Washington’s PESB Scope of Authority Under Current Statute<sup>6</sup>**

	AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY	ROLE OF PESB
<b>PREPARATION AND CERTIFICATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Basic Skills and Content Assessment (including test selection and setting cut scores)</li> <li>• Teacher Pedagogy Assessment</li> <li>• Principal Assessment</li> <li>• Certification (including alternative routes to certification)</li> <li>• Preparation (including approval of programs)</li> </ul>	} Decision-Making  } Advisory to SBE
<b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring and Support</li> <li>• Professional Growth</li> <li>• Teacher Evaluation (including peer evaluation)</li> </ul>	} Advisory to OSPI
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Recruitment</li> <li>• Hiring</li> <li>• Retention</li> <li>• Revocation and Suspension of Licensure (including ethics and standards of practice)</li> </ul>	} Advisory to SBE and OSPI
<b>GOVERNANCE</b>		Advisory to Legislature

**Governance: What level of policymaking responsibility does the PESB have?** Under the current law, the PESB will serve as:

- The sole advisory board to the State Board of Education (SBE).<sup>7</sup>
- An advisory board to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).
- An advisory board to the legislature.
- The decision-making body for creating new basic skills and content assessments for prospective teachers.

<sup>6</sup> The table reflects the duties of Washington’s PESB as described in RCW 28A.410.210. See Appendix A.

<sup>7</sup> Before the PESB was created, the SBE relied on several advisory committees for decisions about educator certification including the Professional Education Advisory Committee, the Washington Advisory Council for Professional Teaching Standards and the Vocational-Technical Professional Education Council.

## DOES RESEARCH SUPPORT PARTICULAR MODELS FOR POLICYMAKING REGARDING EDUCATORS?

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More states are formally delegating policymaking responsibilities regarding issues of educator preparation and development to boards composed primarily of members of educator professions. The Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, established in 1973, was the first professional standards board for teachers. Since that time, 17 other professional educator standards boards have been created, six of those since 1995. The main impetus for creating these boards has come from teachers who want the responsibility of regulating their profession in a manner similar to other professions, such as health care or engineering. However, research provides little evidence regarding outcomes of standards boards.

Much of the literature on professional educator standards boards consists of advocacy positions either in support or opposition to their creation.<sup>8</sup> Only one study examined the outcomes of standards boards.<sup>9</sup> The study found that states with professional educator standards boards were hiring more teachers who were fully certified, had a college major or minor in the subject area taught, and had more student-teaching hours. These indicators of teacher quality were then associated with higher student test scores. However, the measurable effect of standards boards on the indicators of teacher quality was quite small and the study did not identify whether the professional educator standards board or another state entity was responsible for initiating the policies that led to hiring more qualified teachers.

### Summary

Since little research exists on the possible outcomes of creating a professional educator standards board, examining how other states tap the expertise of educators could provide insights for policymakers who are considering how to shape the Washington PESB's role in decision-making.

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix B for a summary of this research literature.

<sup>9</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond, "Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: A Review of State Policy Evidence," *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 8(1) (2000), <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v8n1/>



## HOW DO OTHER STATES TAP THE EXPERTISE OF EDUCATORS?

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### Governance in the 50 States

All states seek input, advice, and expertise from teachers, principals, and other educator professionals concerning issues of certification and professional development. However, states differ in the governance role assigned to these groups of educators. States tend to have either an independent professional educator standards board or an advisory committee reporting to a state board of education or department of education.

Eighteen states have boards composed primarily of educators (professional educator standards boards). Thirty-four states rely on advisory committees of educators to obtain input before the state board of education or department of education makes decisions.<sup>10</sup> Most of these states (26) have created standing advisory committees, while the remainder convene ad hoc committees to deal with particular issues, such as revising licensing standards (see Table 3).

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<sup>10</sup> Alaska and Florida use a standards board for educator discipline (license revocation or suspension) and a separate standing advisory committee for other issues.

**Table 3**  
**How States Seek Educator Input on Certification Issues\***

<b>STATES DELEGATING DECISION-MAKING RESPONSIBILITY TO PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR STANDARDS BOARDS (TOTAL = 18)</b>		<b>STATES RELYING ON ADVISORY COMMITTEES (TOTAL = 34)</b>	
<b>Responsible for Most Issues</b>	<b>Limited Decision-Making Responsibility**</b>	<b>Standing Advisory Committees</b>	<b>Ad Hoc Advisory Committees</b>
California Georgia Hawaii Indiana Iowa Kentucky Minnesota North Dakota Oklahoma Oregon Wyoming	Alaska* Florida* Maryland Nevada North Carolina Texas <b>Washington</b>	Alabama Alaska* Colorado Connecticut Delaware Florida* Idaho Kansas Louisiana Michigan Mississippi Montana Nebraska New Hampshire New Jersey New Mexico New York Ohio Pennsylvania South Dakota Tennessee Utah Vermont Virginia West Virginia Wisconsin	Arizona Arkansas Illinois Maine Massachusetts Missouri Rhode Island South Carolina

\* Alaska and Florida appear twice because they have both a standards board for educator discipline (license revocation or suspension) and a separate standing advisory committee for other issues.

\*\* Appendix C describes limitations of certain standards boards' responsibilities.

### **States With Professional Educator Standards Boards**

Sixteen of the 18 professional educator standards boards were analyzed in greater detail regarding (1) board membership and appointment, (2) professions regulated, (3) budget and staff, (4) scope of authority, and (5) governance. (See Appendix D for a comparison of these boards.) Alaska and Florida are omitted because their standards boards deal only with educator discipline.

**Board Membership and Appointment.** Membership ranges from nine to 25 members. Nine of the 18 standards boards, including Washington's, have between 15 and 20 members. Both



the governor and legislative leadership are involved in member appointments in Washington, North Carolina, and Oklahoma. In Wyoming, the superintendent of public instruction appoints board members. Seven states, including Washington, require Senate confirmation of members. Terms are usually three or four years. Members of the standards board in Texas have the longest term at six years.

**Professions Regulated.** Most standards boards (12, including Washington) regulate all educator professions: teachers, counselors, psychologists, principals, etc. The boards in Hawaii, Maryland, and North Carolina oversee teachers only. In Minnesota, principals and superintendents fall under the purview of the Department of Children, Families and Learning.

**Budget and Staff.** Standards boards received different funding levels for fiscal year 1999-2000, depending largely on the board's scope of authority and the number of teachers regulated. For example, California received \$29 million, while Nevada's board was funded through a \$10,000 line item in the budget of the Department of Education. Maryland's board received no dedicated funding. Professional educator standards boards with large staffs and greater decision-making authority had significantly higher budgets.

The number of staff hired by boards ranges from two (North Carolina) to 165 (California). Boards also rely on administrative staff in state departments of education to provide support and implement board policies. Only two of the boards (Maryland and Nevada) do not have their own staff.

Seven states (California, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Texas) pay for the activities of the professional educator standards board using a combination of certification fees and state general fund appropriations. In three states (Hawaii, North Dakota, Wyoming), the board is funded entirely through fees. Three states (Georgia, Minnesota, North Carolina) fund the board exclusively from the state general fund. Washington's PESB is mainly funded through a general fund state appropriation, although approximately 10 percent of the fiscal year 2000 budget is derived from certification fees.

**Scope of Authority.** *Scope of authority* is defined as the range of responsibilities falling under a board's purview regarding educator preparation, professional development, and employment. The following nine topics were reviewed for each of the 18 states with professional educator standards boards:

***Preparation and Certification***

1. Standards for certification
2. Approval of teacher preparation programs
3. Assessments for initial certification
4. Alternate routes to certification
5. Continuing certification

***Professional Development***

6. Beginning teacher support
7. Professional development/evaluation

***Employment***

8. Educator discipline
9. Recruitment/retention

The most common areas of assigned responsibility are setting standards for certification, establishing assessments for initial certification, and setting criteria for continuing certification. The responsibilities for beginning teacher support, professional development/evaluation, and recruitment/retention show the most variability among states. These issues are often under the control of local school districts (see Table 4).

**Table 4**  
**Scope of Authority and Governance**  
**of Professional Educator Standards Boards<sup>11</sup>**

PESB Responsibilities	Washington's PESB	Standards Boards in Other States
<b>Preparation and Certification</b>	Advisory for 80% of issues	Decision-making for 80% of issues
<b>Professional Development</b>	Advisory for 100% of issues	Decision-making for 52% of issues
<b>Employment</b>	Advisory for 100% of issues	Decision-making for 55% of issues

**Governance.** *Governance* is defined as a board's level of policymaking responsibility: advisory, decision-making, or no role at all. (The results of this analysis are also illustrated in Table 4.)

Nine states have standards boards with decision-making responsibilities over a broad scope of authority (covering at least eight of the nine topics examined): California, Indiana, Kentucky, Minnesota, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, and Wyoming. Washington's board lies at the other end of the spectrum with decision-making responsibility over a single topic: assessments for initial teacher certification. Standards boards in Alaska and Florida have decision-making responsibility regarding only educator discipline, including revocation and suspension of licenses.

Although they are granted some decision-making responsibilities by statute, in practice the standards boards in Maryland and North Carolina tend to function in an advisory capacity because the State Board of Education may reject or amend their decisions. The State Boards of Education in Nevada and Texas may also limit the authority of their standards boards, but to a lesser degree.<sup>12</sup>

## Summary

Washington is now one of 18 states with a degree of policymaking responsibility over educator quality delegated to a board composed primarily of educator professionals.

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix E for greater detail comparing scope of authority and governance of educator standards boards.

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix C for further explanation of how the governance role of these boards is limited.

**Board Membership and Appointment.** With 19 voting members appointed for four-year terms, Washington's PESB is similar in size and term length to most other standards boards. Although the governor appoints the members of most other educator standards boards, Washington is one of three states where legislative leadership provides some role in the appointment process. Washington is the only state where each legislative caucus can nominate board members.

**Professions Regulated.** Like most states, Washington's PESB is responsible for providing advice about *all* educator professions: teachers, educational staff associates, and principals.

**Budget and Staff.** Like most other professional educator standards boards, Washington's PESB has authority to hire its own staff but will also rely heavily on support from OSPI staff. At present, the PESB is supported through a general fund state appropriation with a limited amount of funding from certification fees. Most other states fund their boards through a combination of state general funds and certification fees.

**Scope of Authority.** Most boards with authority over teacher assessment also have responsibility for setting standards for initial certification and requirements for continuing certification.

**Governance.** Washington's PESB has decision-making responsibility over only one aspect of educator certification, teacher assessment. In seven other states, the boards' authority is limited by either a state board education option to reject proposals (Maryland, Nevada, and Texas) or through a narrow legislative mandate (Florida, Alaska, and Hawaii). North Carolina is limited in both ways.



# WHAT LESSONS CAN BE LEARNED ABOUT POLICYMAKING FROM OTHER STATES?

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## Case Studies

Comparisons of how states involve educators in regulating educator professions are useful but provide little information about the comparative effectiveness of various models to improve educator preparation, support professional development, or monitor educator quality. Eight states were selected as case studies in order to obtain more in-depth information.

States with differing policymaking models were selected based on whether they have actively addressed teacher quality issues since 1995. Five of the case study states have a professional educator standards board (see Table 5); three rely on standing advisory committees for educator input and expertise to advise the state’s department of education or the state’s board of education (see Table 6). Complete case studies on all eight states plus Washington (for comparison purposes) are found in Appendices F through N.

Topics reviewed with officials in each state include the role of the standards board or advisory committee in recent policies, the relationship of the board or committee to other education agencies in the state, workload, funding, and recent accomplishments in improving teacher quality.

**Table 5**  
**Case Study States With Professional Educator Standards Boards**

STATE	SCOPE OF AUTHORITY	BOARD HIGHLIGHTS
OREGON	Broad Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Longest standing professional standards board.</li> <li>• New standards require teachers to demonstrate skills in improving student achievement prior to initial certification.</li> </ul>
INDIANA	Broad Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restructured teacher licensing and developed new standards and process for approval of preparation programs.</li> <li>• Operates with large committee structure to increase involvement of educators.</li> </ul>
MINNESOTA	Broad Decision-Making (Previously Advisory)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed new standards for preparation program approval based on national standards.</li> <li>• Established committees at the local level to oversee professional development.</li> </ul>
OKLAHOMA	Broad Decision-Making, Excluding Educator Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised licensure categories and standards to align with national standards.</li> <li>• Implemented new state assessments in subject area and pedagogy.</li> </ul>
TEXAS	Decision-Making Limited by State Board of Education Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented new standards for preparation program approval.</li> <li>• Initiated rating system for preparation institutions based on percentage of graduates who pass assessments.</li> </ul>

**Table 6**  
**Case Study States With Standing Advisory Committees**

STATE	ADVISORY TO	ADVISORY COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS
<b>CONNECTICUT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Board of Education</li> <li>• Governor and Legislature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed nationally recognized performance-based initial certification and beginning teacher support programs.</li> <li>• Two standing committees for teachers and administrators review and comment on documents that have been developed by the Department of Education.</li> </ul>
<b>OHIO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Board of Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convened an ad hoc advisory committee to assist the standing advisory committee in redesigning standards and certification.</li> <li>• Will issue preparation institution “report cards” based on percentage of graduates who pass assessments.</li> </ul>
<b>WISCONSIN</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Department of Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testing new three-stage certification system assessed by local professional development teams.</li> <li>• Requires student teachers to teach full-time for one semester with four observations and submit a portfolio.</li> </ul>

### **Indicators of Effective Scope of Authority and Governance**

Based on research literature and discussions with educators, three indicators of effectiveness were formulated: (1) vision and follow-through, (2) collaborative decision-making, and (3) rigorous and consistent standards.

All three indicators of effectiveness were present in the case study states regardless of the policymaking model in place. Each of the eight states have made significant efforts in recent years to create and implement new and rigorous systems of teacher preparation and development, with high levels of input and advice from members of the educator professions. (See Appendix O for more information and examples.)

However, information on educator preparation and development was more readily available and easier to access from professional educator standards boards than from advisory committees. Since this was the case for researchers, it may also be the case for educators or members of the public.

## Issues for Policymakers to Consider

Officials from the eight case study states and educators in Washington highlighted several issues that Washington State policymakers might want to consider.

### 1) What role should educators play in policymaking?

States have created professional educator standards boards to allow educators responsibility for standards and policies governing their profession. Currently, Washington's PESB has decision-making responsibilities in one area, teacher assessment. In other areas, the PESB serves solely in an advisory capacity.

Legislation creating the PESB established it as the sole advisory committee to the SBE, disbanding the six previous committees composed of educators that were advisory to the SBE. Under current statute, the role of the PESB appears very similar to the role played by those previous committees.

Professional educator standards boards in other states have greater decision-making authority than Washington's PESB. Providing additional decision-making responsibility to the PESB for educator preparation and certification would require diminishing the role of the SBE for these responsibilities. Policymakers could expand the decision-making role of the PESB for the core issues of educator preparation and certification and, if an additional check and balance is required, the SBE could be authorized to review these PESB decisions.

### 2) What are the best ways to ensure consistency in standards and expectations for educators?

Work is underway in Washington State to revise the state standards, assessment, and accountability criteria for teachers and principals. A previous report by the Institute found that, for teachers, these items were not consistent across different stages of a teacher's career.<sup>13</sup> Separate advisory committees to the SBE had worked on setting standards for educator preparation and certification at different times. OSPI, rather than the SBE, oversaw beginning teacher support, professional growth and evaluation. Another committee, the Washington Advisory Council for Professional Administrator Standards, was working on standards for principal certification at the time the PESB was created. The involvement of multiple entities in the area of preparation and certification could contribute to inconsistency in standards and expectations for educators through overlapping and obscuring functions.<sup>14</sup>

One question policymakers may wish to consider is whether continuity and consistency might be better ensured if a single entity, such as the PESB, has decision-making responsibility for establishing standards for both teachers and principals as well as

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<sup>13</sup> Edie Harding, Barbara McLain, and Sue Anderson, *Teacher Preparation and Development*, (Olympia, WA: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, August 1999).

<sup>14</sup> Margaret Plecki, *Conditions of Education in Washington State 1997*, (Seattle: University of Washington Management and Analysis and Planning Associates, January 1997), 62.

establishing policies for the core issues of teacher preparation, initial certification, assessment, alternative routes to certification, and continuing certification.

**3) Is the primary mission of a professional educator standards board to *improve* educator professions or *police* them?**

The 18 states with professional educator standards boards have made a clear distinction about the primary role of their standards board. Six boards focus solely on improving educator professions through standards for certification and policies for professional development. Two states assign only a policing function (addressing issues of educator discipline and potential license revocation) to the board.

Although it is possible for a standards board to have responsibility for both improvement and policing (as ten boards do), policymakers may want to consider what the primary mission and focus of the Washington PESB should be. Currently, there is an Admissions and Professional Conduct committee composed of educators that advises both the SBE and OSPI on informal appeals of proposed licensing actions and other issues regarding educator discipline. One option is to remove the PESB's advisory role for educator discipline, thereby narrowing the PESB's scope of authority.

**4) Should a state board oversee issues that are largely determined at the local level?**

A professional educator standards board is a state-level entity whose policies will tend to be somewhat broad and general due to the diversity of local school districts and colleges of education. Some responsibilities are shared by state and local entities. These include mentoring and professional growth, hiring, retention, and evaluation. The state may have a policymaking function for aspects of these issues, but local districts decide how to implement them, particularly when they pertain to employment.

These are areas where standards boards in other states are less likely to have full decision-making responsibility and sometimes play no role at all. Policymakers may want to consider to what extent the Washington PESB should focus its efforts on issues largely determined at the local level. Policymakers could maintain or remove the PESB's advisory authority for certain responsibilities related to professional development and employment.

**5) Are resources sufficient to fulfill the responsibilities listed under the current PESB statute?**

Analysis of standards boards in other states shows that boards responsible for a larger number of issues have a larger workload, more staff, and bigger budgets. Professional educator standards boards with a broad scope of authority, even in an advisory capacity, revealed little activity when budget and staff were comparatively low. Most states with professional educator standards boards rely on the boards as a forum for discussion and policymaking rather than assigning them responsibility for implementation. These states suggest that involvement in implementation diverts



standards boards from the issues and decisions that draw on their expertise as educators.

To meet its objectives, a professional educator standards board with a broad scope of authority requires a significant time commitment from its members, support from advisory committees, and/or a large administrative staff, either its own or from the department of education. In particular, there is concern about placing too large a burden on individual board members who are also practicing professionals with responsibilities to their schools. If policymakers expand the responsibilities of Washington's PESB, it will require additional funding. Workload and cost are factors policymakers might want to consider if they alter the scope of authority and governance of Washington's PESB.

## Summary

Regardless of the governance or policymaking model in place, the eight case study states have made significant efforts in recent years to create and implement new and rigorous systems of teacher preparation and development, with high levels of input and advice from members of the educator profession.

Case studies and discussions with educators in Washington highlighted the following issues for policymakers as they consider alternative models for scope of authority and governance of Washington's PESB:

- 1) What role should educators play in policymaking?
- 2) Would assigning the PESB decision-making authority for certain core issues create more consistent standards and expectations for educators?
- 3) Should the PESB *improve* or *police* educator professions?
- 4) How valuable is PESB involvement in decisions made primarily at the local level?
- 5) Are resources (funding and staff) sufficient to fulfill PESB responsibilities?



## **WHAT ADDITIONAL POLICYMAKING OPTIONS EXIST FOR WASHINGTON'S PESB?**

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This section outlines three options for scope of authority and governance for the Washington Professional Educator Standards Board. Each option differs in how it addresses the issues for consideration that were raised by the case studies.

In Option A, the current model, the PESB retains a primarily advisory role. Option B would increase the decision-making authority of Washington's PESB while narrowing its scope of authority. This option, however, would require a decrease in the scope of authority for the State Board of Education. Option C expands the PESB's governance role and narrows its scope of authority in the same way as Option B but allows the SBE to review PESB decisions on educator preparation and certification. Table 7 outlines the three options; a discussion of the implications of each option follows.

**Table 7**  
**Three Options for Washington’s PESB: Scope of Authority and Governance**

<b>AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>A (CURRENT MODEL) LIMITED DECISION- MAKING/ BROAD ADVISORY</b>	<b>B DECISION-MAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR STATE POLICIES TO IMPROVE EDUCATOR PROFESSIONS</b>	<b>C DECISION-MAKING WITH SBE REVIEW</b>
<b>PREPARATION AND CERTIFICATION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Basic Skills and Content Assessment</li> <li>• Teacher Pedagogy Assessment</li> <li>• Principal Assessment</li> <li>• Certification (incl. alternative routes to certification)</li> <li>• Preparation (incl. approval of programs)</li> </ul>	} Decision-Making  }  } Advisory	Decision-Making	Decision-Making but SBE may reject PESB proposals
<b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring and Support</li> <li>• Professional Growth</li> <li>• Teacher Evaluation (incl. peer evaluation)</li> </ul>	Advisory	} Decision-Making (with resources) or Advisory  } Advisory	} Decision-Making (with resources) or Advisory  } Advisory
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Recruitment</li> <li>• Hiring</li> <li>• Retention</li> <li>• Revocation and Suspension of Licensure (incl. ethics and standards of practice)</li> </ul>	Advisory	} Advisory or None  } None**	} Advisory or None  } None**
<b>GOVERNANCE*</b>	Advisory	None	None

\* This responsibility is not defined in current statute.

\*\* OSPI and the SBE currently rely on an Admissions and Professional Conduct advisory committee composed of educators to review informal appeals of licensing actions.

## Option A (Current Model): Limited Decision-Making, Broad Advisory

Currently, the PESB has decision-making responsibility over the new basic skills and content assessments for prospective teachers and serves as the sole advisory board to the SBE and OSPI on a wide range of other issues pertaining to teacher preparation and development.

**Current Model: Implications.** The statutory list of issues falling under the advisory responsibility of the PESB is very broad. Some of the issues are largely determined at the local level rather than the state level. Decision-making responsibility for standards and activities covering different educator professions and the different stages of an educator’s career would continue to be split between the SBE, OSPI, and the PESB, which could contribute to a lack of consistent standards.

Developing and overseeing the first statewide teacher assessments in Washington is a major task that could take most of the PESB’s attention for several years. However, the PESB will also need to focus on other areas of responsibility. How much time they can devote to the wide range of responsibilities within their scope of authority is uncertain. At the time of the PESB’s creation, the SBE was developing a new professional certification for teachers, as well as a performance-based certification for principals. Because the PESB is required to be the sole advisory committee to the SBE on these issues, the work of several previous advisory committees has been discontinued.

Table 8 illustrates the implications of Option A compared to the issues raised in the case studies.

**Table 8**  
**Implications of Option A (Current)**

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION	OPTION A (CURRENT)
ROLE OF EDUCATORS IN POLICYMAKING	Primarily advisory.
CONSISTENCY OF STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS	May lack consistency since responsibility is divided.
IMPROVING OR POLICING THE PROFESSION	Advisory role for policing function. Uncertain status of existing committee that advises OSPI and the SBE on policing function.
INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL ISSUES	Advisory on wide range of state and local issues.
SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO FULFILL RESPONSIBILITIES	Current budget assumes primarily advisory role of PESB.

## Option B: Decision-Making Responsibility for State Policies to Improve Educator Professions

The PESB could be assigned decision-making responsibility over the core state policies pertaining to educator preparation and certification: preparation program approval; initial, alternative, and continuing certification; and assessment. If resources permit, the PESB could also oversee mentoring, support, and professional growth. The PESB could either play no role or an advisory role regarding such issues as recruitment, evaluation, and hiring. These are largely issues where policies are made at the local level or where a state-level board such as the PESB could do little more than provide general advice to OSPI, the SBE, and the legislature. To focus the PESB on improving rather than policing educator professions, the current Admissions and Professional Conduct advisory committee could continue its work for OSPI and the SBE regarding educator discipline.

**Option B: Implications.** Because a single agency would be responsible for policies for all educators across all stages of professional development, the likelihood of creating rigorous and consistent standards may be enhanced. However, this assignment would represent an expansion of the governance responsibilities, workload, and budget of the PESB. It also represents a decrease in the role and scope of authority of the SBE for issues of educator preparation and certification. If the PESB were assigned decision-making responsibility for professional development, OSPI's role in these areas would be reduced. Table 9 illustrates the implications of Option B.

**Table 9**  
**Implications of Option B**

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION	OPTION B
<b>ROLE OF EDUCATORS IN POLICYMAKING</b>	Decision-making for preparation and certification (and aspects of professional development if resources permit).
<b>CONSISTENCY OF STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS</b>	Increased consistency over Option A since one entity oversees core issues of preparation and certification.
<b>IMPROVING OR POLICING THE PROFESSION</b>	Emphasis on improving since policing removed from scope of authority.
<b>INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL ISSUES</b>	Advisory or no role, particularly for employment issues.
<b>SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO FULFILL RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	Requires additional funding and staff support due to increased level of decision-making responsibility.

## Option C: Decision-Making With SBE Review

As in Option B, the PESB could be assigned decision-making responsibility over core state policies pertaining to educator preparation and certification, and, if resources permit, the PESB could also oversee mentoring, support, and professional growth. However, the SBE could fulfill an additional oversight function over the decisions of the PESB related to educator preparation and certification. For example, the SBE could be authorized to reject a PESB proposal.

**Option C: Implications.** This option would allow the SBE to maintain an oversight role and provide a form of check and balance to the PESB’s decisions on educator preparation and certification. In addition, SBE oversight could encourage alignment between policies for educator professions and policies related to other K-12 issues. However, the process of review could delay action on decisions. Table 10 outlines the implications of Option C.

**Table 10**  
**Implications of Option C**

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION	OPTION C
<b>ROLE OF EDUCATORS IN POLICYMAKING</b>	Decision-making for preparation and certification (and aspects of professional development if resources permit). Check and balance of SBE review.
<b>CONSISTENCY OF STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS</b>	Increased consistency over Options A and B. One entity oversees core issues of preparation and certification while the SBE monitors alignment of educator preparation with other K-12 issues.
<b>IMPROVING OR POLICING THE PROFESSION</b>	Emphasis on improving since policing removed from scope of authority.
<b>INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL ISSUES</b>	Advisory or no role, particularly for employment issues.
<b>SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO FULFILL RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	Requires additional funding and staff support due to increased level of decision-making responsibility.





## CONCLUSION

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### Findings

- The main impetus for the creation of professional educator standards boards has come from educators, primarily teachers. Educators have promoted the creation of standards boards to obtain responsibility for developing policies governing their profession, similar to other professions such as health care.
- The Institute found little research or evidence of what constitutes the most effective governance system regarding issues of educator preparation and development.
- All states seek input, advice, and expertise from teachers, principals, and other educator professionals when dealing with issues of educator certification and professional development.
- The 18 states that have professional educator standards boards have assigned these boards quite different levels of decision-making responsibility and scope of authority.
- Each of the eight case study states were engaged in similar activities to develop rigorous standards for certification and licensure of teachers regardless of the model of governance in place.
- The case studies highlighted issues that policymakers could consider in relation to the PESB's scope of authority and governance:
  - ✓ What role should educators play in policymaking?
  - ✓ Would assigning the PESB decision-making authority for certain core issues create more consistent standards and expectations for educators?
  - ✓ Should the PESB *improve* or *police* educator professions?
  - ✓ How valuable is PESB involvement in decisions made primarily at the local level?
  - ✓ Are resources (funding and staff) sufficient to fulfill PESB responsibilities?

### Options for Washington's PESB

Three options are outlined for the scope of authority and governance of Washington's PESB. Each option differs in how it addresses the issues for consideration raised by the case studies.

- Option A represents the scope of authority and governance of Washington's PESB under current statute. The PESB has decision-making authority for one responsibility, beginning teacher assessments, and advisory authority for a wide range of issues related to educator quality.

- Under Option B, policymakers could convert the PESB's *advisory* authority for preparation program approval and initial, alternative, and continuing certification of educators to *decision-making* authority, in addition to its current responsibility for teacher assessment. This additional decision-making authority would require additional funding for the PESB. Moreover, the SBE's decision-making responsibility for issues related to educator preparation and certification would be removed. Responsibility over a limited number of other professional development topics could be assigned to the PESB if resources permit. OSPI's role would be diminished if the PESB assumed certain professional development responsibilities.
- Option C provides an additional check and balance over an expanded decision-making role for the PESB by including a review of PESB decisions on educator preparation and certification by the SBE.