



## West Linn-Wilsonville School District

April 16, 2013

To: Members of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education:

Senator Rod Monroe, Co-Chair  
Representative Betty Komp, Co-Chair  
Senator Chris Edwards  
Senator Fred Girod  
Representative Lou Frederick  
Representative Sherrie Sprenger

From: Deputy Superintendent, Jane Stickney, Ph.D.  
Assistant Superintendent, Kathy Ludwig, Ed.D.

Re: Achievement Compacts

Chair Monroe and Chair Komp and members of the committee,

Thank you for inviting us to present our experience with the process and use of the Achievement Compacts in West Linn-Wilsonville. We are honored to be invited to share our observations about how the compact process is proceeding on behalf of the 8700 children in our schools.

### The Achievement Compact Advisory Committee Process

In accordance with Senate Bill 1581, the West Linn-Wilsonville School board appointed an Achievement Compact Advisory Committee in the fall. The committee includes teachers, members of the classified support staff, principals and members of the district leadership team. The committee met regularly throughout the fall to study student performance data, to consider areas of strength and areas for improvement. The committee examined the factors that contribute to performance and described a comprehensive set of strategic investments (see attached) that we believe account for student achievement. The committee prepared and presented a recommendation for Achievement Compact targets and Strategic Investments to the School Board on February 4, 2013 as is required.

The Achievement Compact process included several meetings with parents, community members, key communicators who offered guidance and support for the program

priorities and cohesive direction for the district. The Achievement Compact Advisory Committee process reflects the collaborative culture in the school district, capitalizing on the belief that one can't mandate what matters and one often can't even count what really matters. The collaborative leadership processes in West Linn Wilsonville recognize the need to engage and inspire excellent work in teaching, excellent work in leading, and excellent work in learning. In our rich collaborative culture, however, we believe that we create the conditions for administrators, teachers, students and their parents to engage in rigorous learning that leads to unprecedented results and courageous performances of excellence.

#### The Achievement Compact content and areas of challenge

West Linn-Wilsonville Schools are strong and successful by many measures included in the achievement compact and in other measures valued by our community. Our high schools post the highest graduation rate in the state for the 25 largest school districts and our drop out rate is 0.7, less than 1%. Our graduation rate for Latino students is the highest in the metropolitan area. Our district has earned a place on the AP Honor Roll two years running for increasing participation in challenging AP coursework, increasing participation in AP by students in traditionally underserved groups and simultaneously increasing student performance on the AP exams.

We continue to make improvements in the quality of learning and achievement of our children with special needs and our emerging bilingual student groups. The West Linn-Wilsonville School District has a long history of improving performance and a clearly stated commitment to all children, to each child, to every child.

The targets we set in our Achievement Compact record that commitment to continuous improvement toward the highest levels of performance. The Strategic Investments describe the comprehensive program that connects every child to a successful schooling experience.

#### Using the Achievement Compact

The Achievement Compact is primarily an accountability tool for the state. In West Linn-Wilsonville we enfolded the productive practices from our traditional school improvement process to comply with the Achievement Compact requirements. We have long believed that reviewing and examining data, setting challenging goals and planning strategies for improvement is an important key to high student achievement. We continue to pursue those practices within the Achievement Compact Advisory Committee. We know that engaging everyone in the school district in the mission by inspiring extraordinary efforts is what leads our district students and teachers to excellent performances. The Achievement Compact is a tool to capture some of the measures we value. Our budget funds the elements of our Strategic Investments including professional development and curriculum development. The Strategic Investments describe a comprehensive educational program we believe is necessary to

reach the goal that every child graduates ready to be successful in college and future careers.

#### Suggestions for Achievement Compact to OEIB

##### 1) Reporting of Achievement Data for English Language Learners (ELL)

In order to improve the use of the Compact, we recommend that it more accurately portray achievement data of disaggregated subgroups, namely, the data on ELL students. As it stands now, the subgroup measures the entire group of each year's identified ELL students--ranging from new arrivals with no English language acquisition to students with 5+ years of English language instruction. The data subgroup does not include former ELL students who have successfully learned English, exited the program and may have reached benchmark. Using the current data parameters continues the misrepresentation of the disaggregated achievement data of our ELL students—in our state report cards and now in the Achievement Compact—and perpetuates an unfair representation of their accomplishments to the public.

##### 2) Kindergarten Assessment and Reading Development

It is the hope of this district that the state's new Kindergarten Assessment, which is designed to measure *constrained* elements of reading proficiency (that is, letter identification and decoding versus vocabulary and comprehension), should not be considered causal or a predictor of a child's future reading success. This state Kindergarten Assessment is an example of a minimum competency approach to reading assessment and one that does not adequately assess a child's emerging use and control of literacy. There should also be recognition that bilingual children, unlike their monolingual peers, are acquiring literacy across two languages and come to us brilliantly ready to strengthen and apply both sets of language skills. Therefore, we ask OEIB to carefully and responsibly monitor how the data from this Kindergarten Assessment on the Achievement Compact are understood and interpreted so that misrepresentations and misuse are avoided.



## West Linn – Wilsonville School District Strategic Investments

1. Professional Development for Quality Teaching and Learning
  - a. Literacy: The district supports teacher learning to improve teaching of writing, reading, reading in the content areas including implementation of the Common Core State Standards
  - b. Mathematics: The district supports teachers learning to improve teaching of mathematics including implementation of the Common Core State Standards with workshops, course work, and studio learning experiences.
  - c. ELD Through Content: The district supports teachers learning to improve access to learning for students learning English as a Second Language with workshops and studio learning experiences.
  - d. Equity Study: The district entered a deep study of equity as an essential understanding and condition to support the learning of all students.
  - e. The district is preparing a Science Studio study to prototype professional development for middle school science teachers using Next Generation Science Standards.
  - f. The district invests in a relentless effort to increase expertise for leaders for instructional improvement with reading, collaborative study, studio study, and by bringing expert consultants to support the work.
  - g. The district attends to articulation of curriculum K-12
2. Effective Class size and classroom support
  - a. We will make every attempt to maintain class sizes and/or levels of classroom support for effective instruction and the use of quality instructional models.
3. Programming and Professional Development to Support Diverse Learners
  - a. English Language Learners
  - b. Students with Disabilities
  - c. Gifted Learners
4. Preschool
  - a. The West Linn-Wilsonville School District Early Childhood Program is provided for children from 12 months through age 4. Children age 12 to 36 months learn in the *First Teacher: Parents and Toddlers Together*

program. Parents are engaged in learning about child development through collaborative study, discussion and experience. Teachers engage three and four year old children in active learning experiences that enhance the social, physical and intellectual development of the child. The district preschool classes provide a context for head start qualified children to join the school community prior to kindergarten.

#### 5. Full Day Kindergarten

- a. All nine primary schools have full day kindergarten options for parents who choose to pay tuition or who qualify for scholarship to the program. Full day Kindergarten serves more than half the kindergarten population. We look forward to implementation of full day kindergarten for all as provided by the legislature in 2015.

#### 6. Full School Year

- a. Full school year is an essential priority of the West Linn Wilsonville School District. As the district emerged from 2010-2011, a year where 9 instructional days were lost, the district restored the 9 days and in addition added 2 days to the school year for all students. This new longer school year is now the standard.

#### 7. Enriched and Comprehensive Curriculum

- a. Libraries: The district provides richly resourced lively libraries at the center of each school with Teacher Librarians to help students become effective users of ideas and information.
- b. Music: The district provides a rich music experience for every primary school student. In the middle school and high schools, students participate in choirs, bands, and orchestras.
- c. Dual Language programs provide students opportunity to exercise linguistic strength and learn more about other cultures.
- d. Drama: The district provides performance opportunities for all primary students. The middle school musical is an epic event engaging all who choose to participate in a first class dramatic performance. High Schools produce excellent dramatic and musical plays in state of the art theaters.
- e. Arts: The district provides arts instruction and experience in all primary schools. In middle schools and high schools student participate in arts classes where they continue to develop skills with the elements of art in a variety of two and three dimensional art media.
- f. Wellness: The district provides wellness classes in all primary schools. All middle and high school students complete a wellness course each

year. Varied choices are available to give students multiple ways to pursue wellness through movement. A strong athletic program allows students to experience physical and mental wellness in team and individual pursuits.

- g. World Language: The district provides instruction in a second language for all primary school children in either Spanish or Mandarin Chinese. All middle school students study a language preparing them to enter high school with advanced language proficiency. High School students may continue in a language in AP and college credit bearing courses or they may begin another language.

#### 8. Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM )

- a. Science: A strong Science curriculum is designed to respond to the Next Generation Science Standards including the Scientific and Engineering Practices and Cross Cutting Themes.
- b. Mathematics: A strong Mathematics curriculum is designed to respond to the Common Core Standards including the mathematical practices that support mathematical thinking.
- c. Technology: Students and teachers have access to technology to gather information, analyze, interrogate, and synthesize new learning. Creative problem solving, hands on construction of prototypes and robotics experiences are threaded throughout the curriculum.
- d. CREST is the district Science Center giving teachers support in science education with field study. CREST provides connection to scientific experts to pursue Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics problems and classroom studies. Learning Gardens and a Learning Farm provide contexts for scientific research and STEM in the Garden. CREST staff leads explorations of the natural areas of Oregon, including the mountains, high desert and the coast, providing real world context for studying problems with complex interactions between science, mathematics, engineering and technology.
- e. CREST-Jane Goodall Science Symposium: The science symposium provides a showcase for the district ISEF Science Fair for high schools students. Students are supported to design and complete independent research and engineering projects inspired in their core Science and Mathematics classes. Students compete in the local fair for access to the State and International Science Fair. The Middle School science fair provides practice and experience for students in more formal scientific research and engineering projects. Independent scientific research

begins in the primary school classroom and in primary school based science fairs.

- f. FIRST Robotics: Our top performing high school Robotics Team inspires primary and middle school robotics teams who compete in regional, state and national Lego Robotics events.
- g. The District is a member of the South Metro-Salem STEM Center. The STEM Center is providing collaboration with business and universities and planning with other school districts for teacher development for rigorous STEM teaching.
- h. STEAM A commitment to integrating the Arts with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics in complex critical and creative problem solving challenges.

#### 9. Advanced Placement and Honors Courses

- a. AP Honor Roll: The district was named to the Second and the Third AP Honor Roll. This award recognizes the district high schools for increasing the number of students taking AP classes and also increasing the student performance on the AP tests.
- b. The district actively supports teachers preparing to teach AP courses and creates a culture of excellence for students to encourage participation and excellent performance in AP courses.

#### 10. College and Career Readiness Pathway

- a. The district gives grade 8 students the ACT Explore to provide information to students, families and teachers about the path of college readiness.
- b. The district gives grade 9 students the ACT Explore to create a checkpoint for students, parents, and teachers for the college readiness pathway.
- c. Each high school dedicates staff to supporting ninth grade students in staying on track during the 9<sup>th</sup> grade year.
- d. Middle Schools are providing accelerated pathway strategies in Academy classes that accelerate all learners while simultaneously bringing students with challenges onto the path for college and career readiness.

#### 11. Technologies

- a. Digital libraries
- b. Everywhere access
- c. One to one projects
- d. Display capacity with full internet access in every classroom
- e. Connections to global *Oba* platform
- f. Robust infrastructure and expert support staff