**Advisory Group Progress Report for Commissions: April 2017**

At the March 6, 2017 meeting, the student achievement initiative review advisory group finalized recommendations for changes to the overall principles, principles for measurement, and achievement metrics as outlined below:

1. **Overall Principles for Accountability and Performance Funding:**

* The initiative supports improved educational attainment for students, specifically degree and certificate completion.
* The initiative allows colleges flexibility and supports innovation to improve student achievement according to their local needs.
* The initiative accounts for opportunity gaps for underrepresented students and provides incentive for colleges to close the achievement gap.

1. **Principles for Measurement:**

* Performance measures recognize students in all mission areas and reflect the needs of the diverse communities served by colleges.
* Performance measures must measure incremental gains in students’ educational progress irrespective of mission area.
* Measures are simple, understandable and reliable points in students’ educational progress.
* Measures focus on student achievement improvements that can be influenced by colleges.

1. **Recommended revised metrics :**
2. **Equity:** low-income, basic skills, and historically underrepresented students of color receive an additional point at the completion of the first 15 college credit milestone and at degree or apprenticeship attainment. The extra point is duplicative if students are a member of more than one of the historically underrepresented groups listed above.
3. **Basic skills:** revise basic skills points to reflect a greater emphasis on completion of critical milestone achievement and transition to college level work in this mission area.
   1. Federal level gains, completion of high school diploma or GED
   2. Transition to college level coursework in alignment with ability to benefit
4. **Precollege math and English:** shift the incentive from completion of the precollege sequence to completion of the associated college gatekeeper courses of math and English.
   1. Students beginning in precollege math and English receive a point after completing associated college level course within a year
   2. A new point for college level English/Communication is added for all students

At the April 10th, 2017 meeting, the advisory group reviewed and recommended edits to the principles for performance funding (item IV) and began a review of the analysis of the problem statements. The goal of the analysis was to identify the possible impacts to per student funding and change in SAI funding in the context of each problem statement and the principles, primarily college characteristics (such as program mix, student demographic distribution, size, etc.). The key findings from the analysis are listed under each problem statement in item V below.

1. **Principles for performance funding**

* Colleges are allocated funding for efficiency and productivity in student achievement.
* Colleges are treated fairly and consistently with recognition of varying student demographics, program mix and college characteristics.
* Performance funding rewards student success and becomes a resource for adopting and expanding practices leading to further success.
* The amount of performance funding is balanced between providing significant incentive without undermining the college’s ability to impact student success.

1. **Problem Statement Questions to Consider:**
2. *Should underrepresented students be given extra weight in the SAI funding model?*

* A basic analysis of shift in point distribution demonstrates that the extra point for historically underrepresented groups at the first 15 college level credits and for degree and apprenticeship attainment helps colleges serving a high percentage of historically underrepresented populations, which is the goal.
* This focus aligns with the overarching principles of raising educational attainment (specifically degree and certificate completions) and closing the achievement gap.

1. *Should all students count in SAI, or should it be limited to state funded only?*

* The group reviewed data that showed Running Start students, who make up nearly all of the non-state funded students in SAI, earn more points per student than other student groups. This is exacerbated in the new metrics as the focus shifts more towards college level points, where RS students traditionally do very well (especially in college English).
* Counting all students aligns with the goal of raising educational attainment for all Washingtonians. It also recognizes the effort and resources that are expended to support non-state supported students with state funds.
* However, the potential overweight of dual enrollment in the new metrics conflicts with the goal of increasing emphasis and incentive for serving more underprepared students as those most prepared earn a greater share of points. In addition, any increases in SAI funding will shift more money to colleges serving more non-state funded students in SAI.
* If all non-state funded students were removed from student achievement funding model, there would be a significant immediate impact to colleges with large populations of these students.

1. *Is efficiency, represented by points per student, an appropriate element of the SAI funding model? Is the amount of funding dedicated to completions significant enough? What is the impact to colleges with large populations of underrepresented students when completion value is increased?*

* Points per student helps to balance the size-based impact of total points and completions. However, because the metric is not related to the number of students served, it results in a larger per student funding value for smaller colleges. Consequently, lowering the amount of points per student funding would shift money from the smaller colleges back to the larger colleges relative to the current model.
* There is interest in increasing the amount of performance funds dedicated to completions as reflected in the overall principles. The group looked at the results of increasing the portion of SAI funding for completions with comparable decreases to the funding for total points and points per student. This had a modest positive effect on colleges with large populations of underrepresented students without having a significant effect on smaller colleges.

1. *Is the overall amount of funding dedicated to SAI significant enough (State Board priority)?*

* Increasing the amount of performance funding in the allocation model would require some changes to the current methodology in order to avoid favoring colleges who serve more non-state students in SAI. There are non-state-funded students in SAI who are not represented in the enrollment portion of the allocation, so performance funding would need to be limited to state funded students to be most similar to any enrollment funding being replaced.
* There would also need to be limits set for the points per student funding to not unevenly favor smaller colleges. The points per student funding in SAI currently makes up part of the base funding in the allocation model that does not depend on the number of students served. Points per student funding would need to stay close to its current level (2.25% of the total allocation) to not significantly redistribute money between the larger colleges and the smaller colleges.

The next meeting will be May 22, 2017 where the group will finalize recommendations for changes to the funding metrics to bring to WACTC for a first reading at their June meeting.