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UPDATE: Innovation Schools and Zones

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Authorizing legislation: [RCW 28A.630.084](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.630.084)
(<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.630.084>)

Early Learning

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Executive Summary

In 2011, the Legislature passed [Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1546](#), which established an application process to create new Innovation Schools and Zones (groups of schools). The focus of the schools and zones was to be on the arts, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (A-STEM or STEAM), but non-A-STEM schools and zones also could apply.

The idea is to enhance the ability of the school or schools to improve student achievement and close the educational opportunity gap including by implementing programs that partner with the community, business, industry, and higher education and use project-based or hands-on learning.

This year, Riverpoint Academy (Mead), Toppenish High School & Middle School (Toppenish), River HomeLink (Battleground), Vancouver School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (Vancouver), and Three Rivers HomeLink (Richland) are all operating as “Innovation Schools.” Tacoma Public Schools is operating as an “Innovation Zone.”

Background

The Legislature created the Innovation Schools and Zones program to encourage districts to create new innovative programs, with a primary focus on A-STEM. An innovation zone could be designated if a group of schools share a geographical location or serve students sequentially through grades. The legislation directed Educational Service District Boards of Directors to review the applications and make recommendations to the State Superintendent regarding approval. No additional state funds were appropriated for these projects, but a limited number of waivers from specified state laws and rules were available. Partnerships with external funders were encouraged.

In January of 2012, school districts applied on behalf of programs within their districts. Each application included a plan that:

- Defined the scope of the school or zone and described how the designation would enhance student achievement and close gaps using community partnerships and project-based learning.
- Provided specific research-based activities and innovations.
- Justified requests for waivers of state laws or rules.
- Identified goals for student achievement and closing opportunity gaps.
- Provided a budget with anticipated sources of funding including private grants, if any.
- Listed technical resources needed and who will provide the resources.
- Provided written commitment from school directors and administrators to exempt the program from local rules, as needed.
- Provided written commitment from school directors and local bargaining units to modify local agreements, as needed.
- Identified multiple ways for measuring student achievement improvement, closures of gaps and overall school performance.
- Included written support from the school directors, superintendent, principal, school staff local employee associations, parent organization, individual parents, businesses, institutions of higher education and community-based organizations.
- Was approved by a majority of staff assigned to the school.

The table below includes a list of the Innovation Schools and Zones. The Odyssey School in the Highline School District was approved but was closed in 2013.

Existing Innovation Schools and Zones

ESD	Schools/District	School District	Grades
ESD 101 (Spokane)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riverpoint Academy 	Mead	11–12
ESD 105 (Yakima)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toppenish High School & Middle School 	Toppenish	6–12
ESD 112 (Vancouver)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> River HomeLink Vancouver School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics 	Battle Ground Vancouver	K–12 6–12
ESD 121 (Renton)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tacoma Public Schools (All – Innovation Zone) Baker Middle School Bryant Montessori First Creek Middle School Foss High School 	Tacoma Tacoma Tacoma Tacoma	K–12 6–8 K–12 6–8 9–12
ESD 123 (Pasco)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three Rivers HomeLink 	Richland	6–8

Progress Reports from School Districts

Following are the 2014 annual reports submitted by the school districts with Innovation Schools and Zones to OSPI.

Tacoma Public Schools

The Tacoma School District continues to maintain a strong focus on innovation. Not only are the innovative schools identified in 2012 thriving, but we have added additional innovative schools to create a varied portfolio of choices for our students. Additionally, we have put into place a strong infrastructure to support a continuing effort to add even more innovative schools to our portfolio. In the narrative below, we have described our new innovations, given a brief explanation of the success and status of our innovative schools identified in 2012 and provided an overview of the policies and initiatives that the Tacoma School District has put in place to inspire the creation of even more innovative schools that will increase student academic achievement.

I. New District Innovations since 2012

- A. The Next Move Internship Program (School of the Arts (SOTA), Science and Math Institute (SAMI), Mount Tahoma High School and Stadium High School): The schools work with the local Tacoma community to design meaningful internships for high school students in order to provide training and preparation for a potential profession. Each student-intern is able to gain increased enthusiasm for a possible career, as well as begin to acquire many of the skills and occupational expertise needed in their field of interest.
- B. Arlington Elementary Focused Technology School will provide tablets for each student in grades one through five. Teachers are receiving training on the Typing Club Software which will be used with students to teach keyboarding skills. Students will use the tablets to access the lessons and do on-line learning that addresses each student's individual needs. Once student skill deficits are identified through assessment the teacher can guide the student onto the Digital Learning Platform to get additional instruction and practice. Teachers will record "min-lessons" that students can access at any time using their tablet. In addition, Game Based Lesson Planning and an Extended Learning Computer Club are aspects of this program that are underway. A Smart Table has been placed in the school's resource center as another way for students to engage in visual learning and interactive learning.
- C. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) – With their new principal, Meeker Middle School has begun to get clearer about their STEM vision and what it means to be a STEM school in Tacoma. The Meeker team continues to engage with its community and various stakeholders to refine their STEM program. Their partnership with our Technology department has seen them launch initiatives such as "Transition to Tablets" and "BYOD/Bring Your Own Device."
- D. International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program – Foss High School is pursuing certification as an International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program for grades 9 and 10. Currently teachers are meeting to explore the program and begin to implement some minor aspects of it across different content areas.
- E. Lincoln Center 2.0: Because of the tremendous success of the Lincoln Center, Lincoln High School has fully adopted an extended school day model for the entire school. Students are in school one hour per day more than their peers at neighboring comprehensive high schools taking additional course work and receiving individualized tutoring.

II. Progress on Existing Programs Since 2012

- A. School of the Arts (SOTA) and Science and Math Institute (SAMI): These schools offer students a specialized education in an environment intentionally linked and immersed in the available community resources. SAMI is a 500-student high school housed within the boundaries of Point Defiance Park. The school offers a strong curriculum around science and math. Currently we are working jointly with Metro Parks to develop permanent housing for the SAMI program. SOTA is a 500 student high school housed in downtown Tacoma in three separate buildings with a strong emphasis on Arts Education.
- B. Bryant, Geiger Montessori Schools: Bryant Montessori serves preschool through eighth grade while Geiger serves preschool through fifth grade. The District expanded the Montessori method of instruction at Geiger two years ago to meet parent demand. The classrooms are mixed age, comprising three grades at a time. This approach cultivates concentration, leadership, self-motivation and a sense of community. Both schools are in full implementation. Bryant was identified as an Emerging school for the 12–13 school year and made improvements, coming off the list in June 2013.
- C. Foss International Baccalaureate Diploma Program: Foss is expanding the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program to include a 9th and 10th grade International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program that will be a natural feeder the McCarver Elementary Primary Years and the Giaudrone Middle Years Program. In addition, Foss has opened up its IB classes to all students at grade level.
- D. International Baccalaureate Zone – Primary Years Program (McCarver Elementary School, Middle Years Program (Giaudrone Middle School) and the Diploma Program (Foss High School): We have identified an aligned International Baccalaureate Program Pathway K–12. Teachers meet from all levels to discuss alignment of student work, curriculum, expectations, and teaching strategies. The teachers from all levels attend trainings together to collaborate the International Baccalaureate Program requirements.
- E. Baker Middle School – The staff at Baker recommitted to getting certified by The National Board and to fully implement the teaching strategies learned during the certification process. In Professional Learning Communities, Baker teachers are aligning the National Board work with the District’s Initiatives and developing common community agreements around the implementation of that work in each classroom.
- F. First Creek Middle School – Many of the initiatives that were identified in the initial application are still in place: lengthening the school day (extended learning opportunities), block scheduling, purposeful professional collaboration/planning, and school wide advisory. Although First Creek Students did make some gains in their academic growth, they were identified as a SIG school. In addition to continuing the

work listed above, the school has a new co-principal model, a new focus on successfully transitioning sixth grade students into middle school as well as on concentrated instruction, and an increased focus on specific instructional strategies across the school. First Creek also is engaging staff with the RULER program from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence which uses the power of emotions to create a more effective and compassionate society.

- G. Giadrone Middle School was an original School Improvement Grant (SIG) school. Since their time with SIG they have seen incredible growth as measured by the student growth percentiles provided by the state. Giadrone also incorporates an IB Middle Years Program.
- H. Grant Elementary – An Arts School, teachers at Grant continue to be trained in Arts Integration and routinely infuse arts into curriculum. Every student receives visual art, music and dance classes and every grade level presents an “art” program for the community. Every student receives Arts Enrichment every Wednesday at no cost to the family and there is an Artist in Residence who serves the entire school.
- I. Stafford Elementary continues to support innovative practices and has extended an arts focus to all grade levels. Cross grade level projects and family involvement is a priority. This year, Stafford, is adding more technology to the mix including flipped learning, game-based learning through Minecraft and other programs, 1:1 tablets for all students in the 4th grade, and infusing video production into student presentations. Stafford has a partnership with Microsoft and was the launch site for a product that allowed Stafford fifth graders to Skype with fifth graders in Mexico City.
- J. Stewart Middle School – As a newly identified Required Action District (RAD) school, Stewart has engaged in multiple activities that have streamlined their efforts and reorganized the school. They continue to support their STREAM efforts, however, they have scaled back this work and concentrated more on the STEM components of this initiative. There is a new principal and administrative team and instructional coaches work closely with teachers around effective teaching strategies.

III. Other Innovative Initiatives Since 2012

- A. Innovative Board Policies
 - i. Innovation for Achievement – Board Policy #0105 is the District’s vision for innovation. The policy states that “Tacoma School District 10 supports creative and bold innovations that enhance school performance and student achievement as an essential part of meeting the benchmarks of its Strategic Plan.”
 - ii. School Innovation – Board Policy #2015 provides autonomy and flexibility to Innovative Schools in the areas of staffing, district policies, curriculum and assessment, budgeting and more customized learning experiences for students.

- iii. Innovation School Designation/Adoption – Board Policy #2010 sets out a District Timeline that identifies the process by which Innovative Schools can be approved. Annually, in January, the Board will conduct a work study to review the portfolio of school options, the district benchmarks needs and determine if a Request for Proposal (RFP) is needed. The decision will be based on current budget capacity, current offerings, and data driven needs. In addition, innovative schools will be assessed annually using The Academic Performance Matrix which assesses the innovative school’s progress on each of the District’s Benchmarks tied to the District’s Strategic Plan.
- iv. Non-Discrimination and Equity – Board Policy #3111 acknowledges the need to provide for every student a quality education that includes appreciation and respect for human individuality, cultural differences and similarities that contribute to our democratic nation as a whole.
- v. Academic Acceleration – Board Policy #2406 provides opportunities to demonstrate mastery of standards and will include gaining credit through online courses, independent study, blended learning courses, performance on PSAT, SAT and ACT. In addition, students will be placed in advanced courses based on performance on state tests, College Board’s ReadinessStep and PSAT scores and students will have to “opt out” of those courses.

B. College Going Culture

- i. PSAT and SAT for all students at no charge.
- ii. Opt-out Policy – students at grade level are automatically enrolled in Advanced Classes.
- iii. All students can take AP and IB exams at no charge.

C. Aligned Professional Development

- i. Instructional coach in every building providing embedded coaching for all teachers.
- ii. Literacy, Math, and Science curriculum aligned PK–12.
- iii. The Five Dimensions of Teaching and Learning, The Teacher and Principal Evaluation Tool aligned and professional development around that alignment provided for teachers and principals.
- iv. Principals and their coaches attending Professional Development sessions together.
- v. District-level support differentiated to meet needs of individual buildings.

Tacoma School District: Academic Rigor Benchmarks

	2013	2014	2015
Percent of 11 th - & 12 th - Grade Students Taking "Rigor" Course	34%	46%	56%

Chart from our Academic Excellence goal that shows a three-year trend with the percentage of 11th- and 12th-grade students taking at least one rigorous course (AP, IB, College in the High School).

Number of AP Test Takers

	2013	2014	2-Year Growth
Student Count	705	1,167	40%

Number of Juniors Taking PSAT

	2013	2014	2-Year Growth
Student Count	574	1,265	55%

Number of Seniors Taking SAT

	2013	2014	2-Year Growth
Student Count	863	1,551	44%

Tacoma is trying to increase rigor and create a college going culture. Supporting this goal is the push to have more students take AP Classes which increases the number of students taking the PSAT and SAT. In just one year the progress toward these goals is impressive.

These data were compiled from OSPI:

2014 Results

- [School-Level 2014 College Board Results](#)
- [District-Level 2014 College Board Results](#)

2013 Results

- [School-Level 2013 College Board Results](#)
- [District-Level 2013 College Board Results](#)

Tacoma School District: Graduation Trend 2012–2014

	2012*	2013	2014	2012 to 14 Growth
District	67.6%	70.2%	78.3%	10.7%
Foss	62.2%	64.9%	74.1%	11.9%
Lincoln	60.9%	65.7%	79.0%	18.1%
School of the Arts	98.4%	91.4%	97.5%	-0.9%
Science and Math Institute	0%	97.0%	97.3%	N/A

Lincoln Center

	2012*	2013	2014	2012 to 14 Growth
Lincoln Center	94.4%	94.7%	97.1%	2.7%
# of Students	54	76	103	

Black/African American Students

Black/African American Students	2012*	2013	2014	2012 to 14 Growth
District	59.4%	67.4%	74.7%	14.4%
Foss	50.8%	60.0%	66.0%	15.2%
Lincoln	68.9%	75.8%	85.1%	16.2%
School of the Arts	N/A (N<10)	94.7%	100%	N/A
Science and Math Institute	N/A	100%	N/A (N<10)	N/A

* The 2012 graduation numbers do not correspond to data reported on the OSPI website. An ambiguity in the calculation related to some transfer students was identified, and Tacoma adjusted their own graduation rate for 2012. OSPI could not implement that change statewide until 2013.

Toppenish High School – Toppenish School District

Toppenish High School's proposed innovations were in the areas of improving academically, refining instructional practices, and establishing community partnerships. We are proud to say that significant progress has been made in each of these areas.

I. Improving Academically

Our application focused on five areas that would support and enhance the quality of education and promote additional student learning. These are were:

- A. STEM Capstone Class – We developed and implemented a STEM Capstone course where students applied skills learned from numerous different classes (Math, English, Engineering, Biomedical Science, etc...) to solve a real-world problem. We had proposed 'team-teaching' this course, but were unable to justify have two instructors teach a class of 20 students. Overall, this class was a tremendous success as students followed the engineering design process as they built prototypes and presented their findings to a panel of school and community members. We do have to report though that this class is not being offered this school year. With the demands of more rigorous graduation requirements, particularly state testing requirements, we have many students taking Collection of Evidence (COE) courses in Biology, Mathematics, and English. As a result, students do not have space in their schedule to take an elective STEM Capstone class. In addition, we do not have the teachers to teach this class because they are teaching the required COE courses.
- B. "Bilingual Medical Terminology/Translation" Course - We live in a rural, agricultural region of the state and have a high Hispanic population. There is a tremendous need for skilled, bilingual medical translators in our community. This class was developed and implemented to support the Biomedical Science program at Toppenish High School and to meet a need within our community.
- C. Technical Writing – It is with great joy that we can report Toppenish High School is offering a technical writing/applied communication course for the first time. It is currently being offered to juniors and seniors.
- D. STEM Diploma – A committee of teachers established standards students must meet to obtain a STEM Diploma. These standards were presented and approved by the school board. As a result of this concept, an unintended consequence has arisen: It is not recognized by industry of the post-secondary community. For this 'STEM Diploma' to take root and have meaning, it must be adopted and promoted by The State Board of Education, OSPI, and the HEC Board.
- E. STEM Showcase – The STEM Showcase has become a tradition and is one of the most well-attended events in the entire district. This event serves as a summative assessment for students in engineering and biomedical sciences courses. Students address a problem from their community or directly from the curriculum they have been studying. Students present the problem and their solution to parents, educators, community members, industry professionals, and representatives from higher education. This showcase requires students to not only display their understanding of the academic content, but to also effectively communicate that understanding to their audience.

II. Refining Instructional Practice

- A. Professional Learning Communities (PLC) – The entire high school staff has recently gone through PLC training. This has led to a refined focus for our school, where our School Improvement Team is actively working to establish a firm mission, vision, and direction. Department level PLC's are now focusing on analyzing and discussing evidence of learning to further refine instruction. PLC training will be ongoing throughout the year.
- B. Response To Intervention (RTI) – As students are struggling academically, Toppenish has several layers of intervention. The first starts with the classroom teacher and then progresses to the student's grade level advisor, who communicates with families on student progress. The next level is mandatory study hall. This is a new intervention this year, where students are required to go to after school study hall on Tuesday's and Thursday's if they are failing classes. Finally, if students are still struggling, an "all-hands-on-deck" approach is taken, where a team meeting takes place with key stakeholders (advisor, teacher, family, administrator, counselor, etc...) to determine an individualized approach.

III. Community Partners

- A. Career and Technical Education (CTE) Advisory Boards – Our CTE advisory boards are now very active. There is a General Board who oversees the entire CTE program and then each individual CTE program has their own board. These boards consists of industry professionals who advise us on our course offerings and current industry standards that should be incorporated into our classes.
- B. AB Foods – Our local beef slaughter house has been an instrumental partner to our biomedical science program. They have supplied numerous supplies for our students to examine, analyze, and dissect as part of the curriculum.

IV. Assessment Results

Toppenish High School's state exam baseline data

	EOC Biology	Reading	Writing
2011–12	38.5%	62.4%	87.2%
2013–14	42.3%	75.8%	80.0%

The baseline measures in the proposal stated “common grading and assessment material will be developed collaboratively.” This is and continue will be an ongoing process. New teachers have been hired and are in the process of developing common assessments. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, standards have changed. With the adoption of Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards, along with the change to Smarter Balanced Assessment, much of the work that went into developing common assessments must be revamped to meet the new standards and properly prepare students for the state required assessment.

We would like to note that Principles of Biomedical Science (PBS) students outperformed their peers on the End of Course Biology Exam by 11 percent. As a result of this data, all freshman at Toppenish High School take PBS.

Vancouver iTech Preparatory – Vancouver Public Schools

Vancouver iTech Preparatory's vision is to create an inclusive early college 6th–12th grade Liberal Arts STEM focused project, problem, and practice-based program. We strive to provide equal access to a diverse student body interested in a challenging academic program as preparation for various college options or a STEM career.

A primary goal is to increase the number of underrepresented and educationally disadvantaged students in STEM by providing a system for all students to have an equal opportunity to gain access to iTech Preparatory. We accept students through a blind lottery and base the number of seats available in each of the district's zip codes by the percentage of secondary students in those zip codes. Students complete a basic demographic application and attend an informational night for consideration in the lottery. The percentage of underrepresented students in STEM at iTech has grown, particularly when looking at the number of female students in our population. It has grown from 25 percent in 2012–2013 to 32 percent this year.

iTech uses an alternating eight-period A/B block with an Advocacy period Monday through Thursday. Every class meets on Friday with no Advocacy period. This structure affords students time to collaborate, design, create, and complete projects during the school day. The Advocacy period is a support mechanism used to mentor and progress monitor. Advocacy lessons infuse community and culture building components, math practice, technology skill building, and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) preparations.

We continue to approach district and state curriculum through highly integrated, interdisciplinary, and thematic projects. We loop middle school English and Social Studies, grades 7 and 8 Science, 9 and 10 English, and will loop grades 11 and 12 English. We utilize the Common Core State Standards in our work and include engineering design at every level. We infuse the arts with design principles in the 6th and 9th grade, participate in Gateway to Technology in 7th and 8th grade, and have Pre-Engineering Design in 10th grade. Our expanded offerings this year include robotics and digital photography along with a Research and Development class.

A flexible learning environment is imperative to facilitate a project, problem, and practice-based vision. Our flexible environment includes use of space and access to information. The flexible space is provided via a fabrication area for project work, smaller meeting areas for team work, and common spaces. Some furniture is moveable so students may conduct small group work in a variety of open areas. Flexible access to information is provided through one-to-one technology which has allowed unprecedented access for students to real time information. The technology includes a learning management system called CANVAS. Through CANVAS, teachers can download course work, rubrics, videos, podcasts; correct work on-line; and provide access to any information that assists students in accelerating their learning. Students may collaborate on-line, submit work, pose questions to the teacher or a group, and create projects among a host of other activities. Parents

have observational rights thus providing a more robust school-to-home communication effort. The integration of one-to-one technology has removed many barriers related to access of information and has truly expedited the learning process for all students.

The aforementioned initiatives funnel directly back to our mission of providing students with an innovative learning model that emulates the world of college and work and which develops within them the competencies necessary for success in the 21st Century. The term GRIT is often used to sum up certain qualities needed to succeed. Our model requires students to not only collaborate and communicate but to persevere, and become resilient in the face of difficulty or failure. To support our diverse learners we differentiate our projects and thematic problems based on skill levels. Our projects may extend over the entire school, be housed between a smaller set of curricular areas, or confined to a particular class. In this way, students have the opportunity to collaborate on some projects and work individually on others. Projects allow for student voice and choice in the final product as a means to demonstrate individual learning.

An example of our success in preparing students for college level work is evidenced by the growth in the number of our students who are currently taking college classes from Clark College and Washington State University Vancouver. Last school year, 27 percent of our students took at least one college class. This year 34 percent of our student population is currently enrolled in classes. This percentage is anticipated to rise over the year.

Beyond classroom support we offer a variety of opportunities for our students to excel. We offer before and after school tutoring sessions and “Saturday Study Sessions.” Our Saturday Sessions will continue to include events such as a STEM reading Library Day and EOC/SBAC boosts.

We constantly look for opportunities for students to engage with professionals in a variety of STEM fields. Engagement includes professionals as guest speakers, support for specific projects, field trips, and panel experts for “Demonstrations of Learning.” We have a STEM Partnership Coordinator that seeks out experts and professionals willing to partner with our school. The STEM Partnership Coordinator leads our Advisory Board which is composed of business and higher education professionals. These professionals help us network with experts in the community and provide guidance for our projects.

Our vision includes experiential learning in the STEM fields and internships are the perfect vehicle for such learning. Internships are advertised and available to students who have junior or senior standing.

Lastly, our vision includes helping our students understand the value of being a competent, responsible, compassionate leader. Our students participate in service clubs such as Key Club and National Honor Society. An addition to our service clubs this year is our WeAct Challenge Club. WeAct is a non-profit organization that challenges to schools to get involved in global and local community service projects. As a school, we are looking forward to participating in the volunteer events our club organizes to help support our community and the world.

River HomeLink – Battle Ground Public Schools

I. School Status

In January 2012, when River HomeLink (RHL) applied for the Innovative School grant, the school was a 290-student, parent-partnered school within the Battle Ground Public Schools. The school had a half-time administrator, 15 certificated staff, and was funded through the Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) WAC. Legislative changes eliminated the ‘parent-partnered’ descriptive so we are now a family-friendly, K–12 public school that serves students through site-based, remote, and online courses.

In May 2012, the district decided to merge another school, Battle Ground HomeLink, with RHL; and, over the summer, the two schools became one, serving students and families in six portable buildings on a K–8 campus. At the end of the 2012–13 year, the decision was made to move the school into an adjoining primary building. That summer the school moved to the former primary building and two portables. During the last two weeks of August 2013, 120 additional students registered to attend RHL. This year, the school continued to grow and added 17 certificated staff. Currently, there are two administrators, 51 certificated staff, and 985 students.

The distinctive focuses of our school are:

1. Significant involvement of parents in the learning process,
2. Ongoing, job-embedded, cohort staff development,
3. Students participate in regular consulting meetings,
4. Incorporating the community in the learning process, and
5. Flexible age grouping through a K–12 grade configuration.

For the first two years of the grant, the staff organized quarterly parent workshops, called “Parent Paloozas.” These 90-minute professional development activities for parents consisted of theme-based keynotes followed by breakout sessions. The Paloozas were held on three consecutive days during a given week in order to give parents multiple opportunities to attend. Attendance varied from 60 to 175 per week. The Palooza concept was changed for the 2014–15 year. This year a nine-week series, The Foundations of Homeschooling/Learning At Home, began. These one-hour sessions occur four days per week, and the sessions will be repeated throughout the year. In January, a second series of ‘resource specific’ workshops are planned. They will augment the Foundation series with a focus on accessing resources and teaching skills.

During the winter of 2013–14, the principal hosted two Town Hall meetings for parents. As a result, the parent groups from the two previous schools (BGHL and RHL) reorganized. They reformed into eight different interest-based groups with a leadership board overseeing the groups. As a result, a parent desk, staffed by parents, was established in the school library. With the new opportunities for parents to serve in their area of interest, the number of regularly involved parents has increased from 8–10 to 60–80. In addition, a new process was established to monitor parent attendance on campus. Again, parent presence/attendance on campus has doubled since initiating the grant.

The staff has continued to engage in a cohort model of staff development. Most recently, all of the K–12 math teachers attended the NCTM national conference. Several staff attended the National Board conference, and the majority of the staff attended the Washington Association of Learning Alternatives conference last spring. This year, the staff was divided into triads and quads for the purpose of engaging in classroom visits and deep collaboration. Staff were provided additional non-

scheduled time in order to visit classrooms and engage in reflective collaboration with their colleagues.

All students, and their parents, meet regularly with certificated staff. These certificated consultation sessions create a caring relationship between the students, their parents, and the staff. These sessions provide students the opportunity to reflect on their learning and to work on achieving success with the guidance of a caring staff member.

Finally, we continue to strive for authentic learning as students engage in real world learning through stream monitoring and multiple field trip opportunities in many subject areas. Technology instruction has evolved. Keyboarding and presentation skills are integrated into the K-8 core classes. Strands for Microsoft Office, digital visual communications, coding, a Lego progression, and a ninth grade technology class began this year. The district’s online learning program for grades 6-12, was added to the school. The rest of the programs are available to students in grades K-12.

II. Progress

With the significant changes of the school merge, move, and influx of a more than 200 new students, it is difficult to measure the progress of the former RHL students. Here are the results, though, from the state Report Card.

River HomeLink State Report Card

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
10 th Reading	92.5%	>95%	94.9%
10 th Writing	>95%	94.1%	>95%
HS Science	75%	65.9%	76.4%
4-year graduation rate	69.4%	90%	89.3%
5-year graduation rate	81.3%	72.2%	90.6%
Unexcused absence rate	.07%	0.1%	0.2%

During each of the last three years, greater than 10 percent of the graduating seniors have concurrently earned their Associate Degree from Running Start.

As a school of choice, another measure of success is the number of students who choose to attend RHL. The school began the grant with approximately 290 students. When Battle Ground HomeLink merged, the enrollment increased to 705, in September 2012. During the past two years, enrollment has risen from 705 to 985 – an increase of 280 students!

Riverpoint Academy – Mead School District

I. School Status

Riverpoint Academy is now in its third year of existence and has been hugely successful in implementing the foundational goals and instructional philosophies on which it was founded. The Academy focuses on 21st century readiness, with a strong emphasis in entrepreneurship and design thinking, in order to prepare students to enter a global economy that demands innovation, creativity, and intellectual agility of its citizens.

Partnerships with regional leaders in the biosciences, engineering, higher education, and entrepreneurship are a critical component to the success of Riverpoint Academy. These partnerships take on multiple forms, including internships for students, on and off-campus collaboration on projects, mentorship around current industry standards, student visits to local colleges, access to higher education science laboratories, visits from regional business leaders for panel discussions and project critiques, and monthly Advisory Board meetings to help guide curriculum and instruction. These partnerships offer connections to real-world challenges and allow students opportunities to apply critical thinking and problem-solving skills that enhance their preparedness for life after high school.

Collaboration remains fundamental for both staff and students alike. Teachers work in teams to facilitate the delivery of content in an integrated approach, connecting learning to an authentic problem or challenge that is brought to students from industry or the community. Students are provided with clearly defined outcomes along with rubrics that give specific feedback to students about their levels of achievement.

This form of challenge-based learning also requires students to work in highly collaborative learning groups. Students will work with their peers, the staff, and experts from the local community as well as experts virtually. Being a productive team member is an essential skill in the Academy. Students are expected to understand the benefits of teamwork, and reflect upon their contributions throughout the challenge-based learning process.

Since our first year of inception, several changes have taken place: Riverpoint Academy is now located in North Spokane in the Mead School District, which eliminates the barrier of transportation for students by allowing students to access Mead School District bus routes. Our higher education collaborative partnerships have not been impacted since our move out of the University District; we continue to collaborate with our local colleges by offering Running Start courses to students, and taking students on field trips to local campuses on a monthly basis.

Enrollment of the school has more than doubled in size, growing from 57 students and 3 teachers in the first year, to 137 students and 6.5 teachers in our third year. Interest in the school has increased and we continue to receive one to two applications from prospective students every week.

Every student has a mentor on staff who stays connected with the student during the entire Academy experience. This embedded form of Advisory provides each student with a highly personalized learning experience that requires students, with their parents or guardians, to develop and monitor a high school and beyond learning plan that ensures students have a seamless transition from high school to their college or career goals.

II. Indicators of Progress

Riverpoint Academy graduated 100 percent of its inaugural senior class in the spring of 2014. 100 percent of seniors who applied to college were accepted. Sixty-four out of 65 graduates either attended a college or joined the military.

The Academy has also been recognized publicly for the innovative teaching and learning happening within the school. Some designations we are proud of include:

- Being recognized as an Apple Distinguished School for innovation, leadership and educational excellence (a two-year designation from 2013–2015)
- Being recognized as a Washington STEM Lighthouse School
- Being designated as a member of the “International K–12 Network of Design Thinking Schools”
- Having two of our students win first and second place at the 2014 Inland Northwest Business Plan Competition
- Having one of our teachers awarded the Paul G. Allen Distinguished Educator Award
- Having one of our teachers receive the Spokane Teacher’s Credit Union “Teacher of the Year” award

We are also currently partnering with Washington State University to conduct a five-year longitudinal study on Riverpoint Academy graduates in order to collect data in the following areas: remedial courses needed in college, students declaring majors in STEM fields, college graduation rates, and entrance into STEM-related career paths.

The College and Work Ready Assessment (CWRA) was listed on our original application as one of the methods from which we would assess student outcomes. Our current seniors took an initial baseline exam of the CWRA in the fall of 2013 (as then juniors), and will complete the test again for a second data-point in the spring of 2015.

Current data show male/female enrollment ratio at 60/40. Riverpoint Academy’s free/reduced lunch percentage is comparable to that of the entire Mead School District at 30 percent. Current number of students with IEPs and/or 504 plans is also comparable to the larger school district at 10 percent.

Three Rivers HomeLink – Richland School District

“I was so worried that I wouldn’t be able to come to school today,” reported Haley on a cold and windy day at STEAM link recently. “Our truck isn’t working. I worried about how I’d get here all night long. But I made it!” Haley shook my hand and met my eyes with a smile.

STEAM class starts each morning at the door with a “three point check”: handshake, eye contact, and a word or two between each student and our teachers. At the beginning of the year some students struggle with the morning routine. Feet shuffle. Eyes are downcast or shifty, and sometimes students don’t know whether to shake with left hand or right. But the daily three-point routine quickly becomes a special time. All students deliberately make eye contact, shake hands with a firm but comfortable grip and share a greeting. Following our entry routine, 21st century skills are systematically presented and modeled in class, and build on each other throughout the school year. At the end of each STEAM day, students self-reflect by filling out a “success rubric” evaluating themselves on their timeliness, completion of work, attitude, and group contribution. Periodically teachers also assess students according to the same criteria. “I like the professionalism

time,” wrote Joseph in his daily reflection. “I’ve never felt so respected at school before, and I’m learning things that even my parents don’t know.” Our rubrics as well as our observations show remarkable student growth in these incredibly important 21st century skills.

STEAM link is a popular program within Three Rivers Homelink. Our approach centers around building an individualized learning plan for each student. Together with their families, students work with a certificated educational consultant to create a Written Student Learning Plan that takes into account individual strengths and needs of that student. Our learning plans are focused on goals and achievements. Every learning plan supports state standards and provides guidance through middle school and high school to higher learning and the workplace beyond. Our consultants, all certificated and experienced educators, continue to meet with families, building relationships, monitoring progress, and providing expert guidance throughout the school year.

Throughout the rest of the day, STEAM students work individually and in teams applying science, technology, engineering and math; but also integrating communication skills and art into everything that they do.

One project that stands tall for the community to see and admire is the Solar Stage at the Hanford Reach Interpretive Center. STEAM students studying the solar system created the concept for the stage and presented the idea to the Columbia Center Rotary Club. After the Rotary club decided they’d like to sponsor the student project, STEAM students worked with local architects and artist Joseph Rastovich to see the project come to completion. With the sun stage as an anchor, another project moving forward is to design a community geocache game where geocaches are planted along the orbit paths of each planet in the solar system. Students will design geocaches that teach; telling the story of each planet, and placing them to scale in the orbit of that planet. With our model sun at a diameter of 40 feet, the furthest “planet” out in the geocache game will be Pluto; about 40 miles away at the Hanford Reach Monument near the Hanford nuclear site, and represented at scale by a nearly microscopic “dot” inside the geocache. Intrepid geocachers who go the distance to find Pluto will have a solid understanding of why Pluto has been “demoted” as a regular planet.

This year students also plan to design, launch, retrieve and analyze a balloon powered “near space satellite” that will travel around 20 miles up to the edge of space. They will build and program modules that measure temperature, humidity and radiation data, and then use the APRS network to track their modules during flight, and retrieve them after descent. Then the task of interpreting and analyzing data will begin.

“Projects are better than books”, said Luke, an 8th grade STEAM link student recently. “I like figuring things out and making things cool. Actually books are good too, continued Luke, “but I like to learn things from books so that I can use math and science to get my brain pumped and do things.”

STEAM supports extracurricular activities. The Future City Team (STEM) at HomeLink won the state competitions in 2009 and 2010, going on to compete in the national competitions. Homelink's "STEAM rollers" robotics team swept two "Boebots" robotics competitions in Eastern Washington last school year. Our students have received awards in local and state science fairs, and many other clubs and activities.

Every student is a unique individual, and we believe that with the vast array of resources available, each one should have a top-notch and tailored-to-fit education. Teachers enjoy working in this environment, because we see our students engage in learning. Students are motivated to be present

and ready to learn. Based on family surveys, many of our students come from difficult or struggling educational backgrounds. In STEAM, individual student growth is visible and obvious. MSP Math passage increased by 30 percent from 6th to 7th grade in this cohort (students that have been in the program all three years). MSP Reading score averages went from 408.17 (6th) to 415.84 (7th).

Students who have been in STEAM link for 6th and 7th grade, and have continued this year into 8th grade have an attendance rate of 94 percent.

Here's some feedback from students and families:

“Our son’s STEAM participation has elicited a lot of really good conversations around the dinner table. It is.....fun, hands-on and innovative. Plus, it requires a healthy amount of critical thinking-something that state testing really can’t measure and is vital to the success of anyone planning on furthering their education and being a meaningful participant in the workforce.”

Kathy Perlot

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