

Enhancing Native Student Achievement: What Works?

By

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***Abstract:** Shortly after the Federal “No Child Left Behind Act” (NCLB) was enacted, the Neah Bay High School on the Makah Indian Reservation was in the lowest fifth percentile of achievement for Washington State Schools. It was categorized as a “Priority School...in need of substantial improvement in whole school proficiency and growth...” by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Intensive support was requested of the school district and OSPI. Neah Bay High School’s low achieving status prompted the official label of a School Improvement Grant 1 school. With this label Cape Flattery School District (CFSD) and Neah Bay High School were required to file School Improvement plans each year. This case explores the steps taken to turn a failing school system into a success.*

History

On the beautiful, wild and windswept Northwest coast of Washington State lies the isolated Makah Indian Reservation. Among thick forests, vast sandy beaches and the jutting mass of Cape Flattery live the qʷidiččaʔatxiq, People of the Cape. Within the reservation is the village of Neah Bay whose population fluctuates from around 850 to 2000 plus depending on local activity and season. During the off season, when tourism drops off sharply, children of the community attend the local K-12 public school. Makah Tribal members Luke and Ada Markishtum graciously deeded 20 acres for a public school which opened in 1931, the same year the one-way-in, one-way-out road was built connecting the reservation with the rest of the State. This ensured that Makah children would be able to receive an education at home instead of being sent hundreds of miles away to boarding schools as they had been in the past. The Cape Flattery School District (CFSD) now includes two school compounds: Neah Bay Schools located on the Makah Indian Reservation and Clallam Bay Schools 19 miles east of Neah Bay. CFSD offices are located one mile west of Clallam Bay Schools. As of May 2014, the Neah Bay Schools served 323 students and the Clallam Bay Schools served 138. This case focuses on the Neah Bay Schools. The majority of the students are American Indian.

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After the Treaty of 1855, the Makah became subject to the slow grinding machination of the United States government. It took several years for any of the government “promises” in the treaty to come through. When finally delivered, many of these services were inadequate or oppressive casting distrust and discontent toward state and federal agencies (Webster, 1862). Many of the subsequent social problems that became prevalent under the negative virtues of assimilation befell school age children, producing unique educational challenges that affected the community as a whole. Despite this challenging history, the students, faculty, community members, and Tribal government have demonstrated their resilience and resourcefulness in turning their failing schools into models of educational success.

Early Education Reforms in Washington State

The Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) had already been in use for five years when the federal “*No Child Left Behind Act*” was enacted on January 8, 2002. The WASL tests produced a collective report card for the State’s public school districts. Testing at Neah Bay High School showed that they were failing. Neah Bay Schools were also subject to Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) sanctions under the law because of serving two target populations: a large American Indian/Alaskan Native student body as well as a large student body in Title I poverty status.

In 2003, a preliminary on-site assessment at Neah Bay High School of everyday school function occurred with the help of a School Improvement leadership team sent to the school by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). This team was organized by OSPI to take a research-based intervention model to use as a resource to assist with the School Improvement Process. Using the “*Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools*” (OSPI, 2003) they were able to compare the school’s functioning based on the following criteria:

- clear and shared focus,
- high standards and expectations,
- effective school leadership,
- supportive learning environment,
- high levels of community and parent involvement,
- high levels of collaboration and communication,
- frequent monitoring of teaching and learning,
- curriculum, instruction and assessment aligned with standard, and
- focused professional development.

The team made observations and conducted focus groups with community members, high school students, certified and classified staff, and administration. The intent of this group was to collect local data on the school dynamics so rudimentary changes could be put in place to jump start positive efforts with the new mandates. A spin off of this event was the implementation of a school improvement team comprised of faculty, administrative personnel, community representatives, and classified staff under the direction of George Holmgren, School Improvement Facilitator for OSPI. From the data compiled came a Priority School Improvement Plan which would be utilized by the community, school staff, and district personnel.

Several problem areas were identified by the team of specialists that were within the daily routine that students, school staff and community had grown accustomed to. Tardiness was widespread, homework was rarely given or turned in, classrooms were chaotic, bullying was common, and students roamed the hallways at any given time. The school was entrenched in a dysfunctional culture with practices contrary to learning.

When Dr. Ann Renker was appointed principal in 2005 she was able to gain traction on implementing the changes with buy-in from all of the school staff from teachers to lunchroom assistants. Renker had already developed a deep relationship with the Makah community as the Makah Cultural and Resource Center's director, Makah Head Start director, and as a teacher for Neah Bay schools. Using the "*Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools*" as a template for action, the following changes were implemented to get students to the first steps of teachability:

- shorten the five minute transfer time between classes to three minutes
- greet students and steer them to class by being at the door during class/transition
- provide an entry task to be completed by the end of the first five minutes of class
- utilize time restricted bathroom passes only one at a time and between the 20 and 40 minute mark of class start
- prevent students from loitering in hallways during class time by implementing consequences

An additional focus was put in place with ongoing, embedded professional development for the teachers that aligned with best practice research. Dr. Renker joined in a partnership with Western Washington University that is still ongoing.

It was important to keep the students fully engaged during the entire class period, otherwise referred to as "bell-to-bell teaching." Part of this responsibility was to have teachers submit principal-approved monthly teaching plans that were extensive. This also ensured that substitute teachers could facilitate the same lesson if the teacher was absent. Further, no passes were to be given to students under any circumstances to go to the library, the gym, or any other destination. Another strategy already in use by the athletic director, teacher and coach, Ron Johnson, was to determine athlete's ability to play sports by their weekly grades. This practice was made universal and extended to all students. Students were to receive weekly progress reports from each of their teachers, signed by their parent or guardian, and brought back within the same week.

It was recognized by staff that in order to make any type of headway the learning environment of the school would need to be changed from the inside out. Part of this change was to hold regular staff meetings on the school improvement process, making everyone aware of the changes occurring and the need for total buy-in.

Federal Efforts at Educational Improvement: No Child Left Behind

While Neah Bay Schools were getting a grip on absenteeism and tardiness and producing a positive learning environment, educators across the State were also facing the realities of the new federal mandates through the No Child Left Behind Act 2001 (NCLB) which was the most recent

iteration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1065 (ESEA), the major federal law authorizing federal spending on programs to support K-12 schooling.

The law's requirements for testing, accountability, and school improvement receive the most attention. NCLB requires states to test students in reading and mathematics annually in grades 3-8 and once in grades 10-12. States must test students in science once in grades 3-5, 6-8, and 10-12. Individual schools, school districts and states must publicly report test results in the aggregate and for specific student subgroups, including low-income students, students with disabilities, English language learners, and major racial and ethnic groups.

NCLB required states, school districts, and schools to ensure all students are proficient in grade-level math and reading by 2014. States define grade-level performance. Schools must make "adequate yearly progress" toward this goal, whereby proficiency rates increase in the years leading up to 2014. The rate of increase required is chosen by each state. In order for a school to make adequate yearly progress (AYP), it must meet its targets for student reading and math proficiency each year. A state's total student proficiency rate and the rate achieved by student subgroups are all considered in the AYP determination. (New America Foundation)

Outlined in the 2003 *Summary Report of the Washington State Tribal Education Summit "Leave No Indian Child Behind,"* (Indian Education Office, 2003) the school improvement process states that schools not meeting adequate yearly progress achievement (AYP) goals for two consecutive years must 1) develop an improvement plan and receive technical assistance, 2) dedicate 10% of funding for professional development, 3) notify parents of school improvement status, and 4) schools must make public school choice available within district and pay transportation costs. If the school thereafter failed to meet achievement goals for subsequent years more intensive provisions would take place. A Step 5 sanction, the severest, could include the possibility of a complete restructuring and hiring of new staff with a complete take-over by the state.

What did this mean for Neah Bay High School? Unable to meet federal targets for two consecutive years and receiving Title I funds for a large population of American Indian students, Neah Bay High School was deemed in need of School Improvement strategies. Subsequently, if either of these categories fail proficiency, then the school fails altogether. This is a critical point and one that would impact Neah Bay schools over the years and "...explains how test scores can improve generally without meeting the measurements imposed by 'No Child Left Behind'..." the way the law is written "...a school or district could have 99 percent of its students at proficiency and still be deemed as needing improvement (Rice, 2011).

New Partnership: Cape Flattery School District and Neah Bay Schools

When "*No Child Left Behind*" (NCLB) was enacted in 2002, Neah Bay Schools under the direction of the Cape Flattery School District were estranged from the Makah Tribal Council (MTC). Historically, the two entities made no attempts to collaborate on any issues regarding students at the Neah Bay Schools even though about 90% of students were Makah Tribal members, and the school was located within the boundaries of the reservation. In fact, the community sentiment was that Neah

Bay Schools were assured to get the least help with the least resources from the local and state educational agencies. Today, there is open communication between the school district, schools, and the Tribal Council. What turned this around?

When NCLB was enacted and it was apparent that the Neah Bay Schools were failing, the tribal governing body of the Makah started to look further into problems that the school was having. According to Timothy Greene, Makah Tribal Chairman, after years of mistrust of the public school system, the Tribal Council began entertaining the idea of deconsolidating in the 1990's. It was thought that separating from the state public school system by establishing a tribally run school would give the Tribe better control over services for school age children.

A large part of the dissension was about the distribution of 874 Impact Aid funds by the school district between the Neah Bay and Clallam Bay schools. Public Law 81-874 was passed in 1950 to help alleviate the financial strain from the loss of public revenue from federal employees living within the geographic boundaries of school districts. Schools generally fund their education programs and buildings with taxes on land within their districts. Federal employees do not pay these taxes since they are not living on state land although school districts still have to provide student services to the population associated with federal land bases. The first impact laws were primarily focused on the existence of military bases. It was not until the passage of the Indian Education Act in 1972 that it explicitly claimed "Native American children living on federally owned lands also were eligible for funds under Public Law 81-874..." (StateUniversity.com, 2014).

In 2005 when Dr. Ann Renker was hired as NBHS principal, she helped open the door to communicating between the school and the Tribe. This helped the MTC build trust with the school district and schools' administrators. Chairman Greene says that it came to the point where the Council had to "let the professionals do their job and support them" and to overcome "the old mentality...that the council had to fight with the district." (Greene, 2014) In fact, at the inception of Dr. Renker's principalship, she encountered resistance against "...the increased academic and behavioral expectations and [the] laser focus on time-on-task in classrooms..." from the wider community and the tribal council (Renker, 2014). According to Renker, "Once stakeholders saw that success had far-reaching effects on the entire school community [in such areas as] athletics, college admittance, [and] college completion, people accepted the fact that hard work was a necessary component." (Renker, 2014)

In 2007, Kandy Ritter was hired as the new district superintendent and there were immediate changes in the way the Tribe and the district did business. Ritter and Renker both approached the Council with openness and in the spirit of coordination, collaboration and communication. One of the immediate positive changes was transparency with 874 money or "Indian Money." Always a matter of contention when discussion turned to the district and educational services to the Makah community, this subject had caused huge rifts between the Neah Bay Schools and the nearby Clallam Bay community schools. Once on board, Ritter was able to share with the council how the money was spent and the Makah Tribal Council took further steps to be included in the budgeting process (CFSD, 2014). Greene says that 874 funding now stays at the Neah Bay Schools while Clallam Bay schools run off of their own revenue. Additionally, redistricting occurred, providing three open positions to represent

Neah Bay students and community instead of the previous two positions. This occurred with pressure from the community and the Tribe.

The Council also looked further into the problems regarding student success and, with the help of Ms. Ritter, was able to identify target areas. There were four target areas in addition to resolving the big budgeting issue with the 874 money and equal representation according to population (Greene, 2014). These focus areas were:

1. Academic achievement
2. Tribal education budget
3. Teacher retention
4. Makah culture and language

Two trouble spots in academic achievement were kindergarten readiness and low test scores in the Neah Bay public schools. Children exiting Makah Head Start were not entering kindergarten prepared in the areas of reading/writing, math, and social readiness. To remedy this problem, the kindergarten teacher provided assistance to the Head Start staff with visits and curriculum.

As a support to the Neah Bay Schools, the Tribal Council established an education incentive program. Students who pass standardized tests are awarded \$25.00 per assessment and an additional \$25.00 is awarded for passing all tests. These incentives are presented to individual students during an award banquet celebrating their success (Bain, 2014).

Perhaps because the Makah Tribe is small and rural without a casino, their budget for education is limited. Making sure that they spread their limited monetary allocation within the education department is a huge challenge. Also important to the Tribe is the management of the Early Start and Head Start programs that start children off at the youngest possible age by targeting eligible pregnant women and encouraging social and academic growth in Head Start children.

An area that had long been recognized as problematic is the retention of teachers and administrators in the Neah Bay public schools. For many years the majority of teachers were from outside and far away from the Neah Bay community. They came without understanding of the traditional and cultural values of the area, and many were not prepared for the isolation without family and friends. It was as if the schools had a revolving door policy where as soon as a teacher entered the school, they were leaving the community.

The most important effort has been professional development where staff are encouraged to increase their level of education and expertise with continuing education and trainings. Elementary principal, Alice Murner, promotes ownership of problem solving and implementation for her teaching staff, encouraging a positive work environment. Being able to have dedicated and highly qualified teachers longer also promotes closer ties with the students and families in the Neah Bay community. Chairman Greene asserts that “when teachers get the support they need, they will want to stay longer, and staying longer helps to develop strong ties which in turn help students succeed.”

The Makah Tribal also encourages tribal members who have an interest in the education field to pursue their teaching and administrative degrees. It helps that both Renker and Murner have strong association with the Tribe either as a tribal member or through marriage. Additionally, 50% of the certificated staff is either Makah or married to a Makah. By virtue of their vested interest, retention is slowly becoming less of a problem. Retention has been such a focus that Greene also points out, “If you ask Alice why her success as indicated with 91% passing testing, especially in a Native school, she will tell you it is her ability to retain and keep consistency in teacher staffing.”

A major interest of the Tribal Council is the full integration of Makah language and culture into the curriculum. The language program is housed at Makah Cultural and Research Center (MCRC) and is composed of several state certified teachers who instruct Makah language from the pre-school programs through elementary and high school, with some classes periodically taught to adults. The high school has taught a fully accredited course for several years and has a strong presence in the elementary school. Chairman Greene believes that building a strong cultural and language program in the middle school may enhance the student outlook and produce better educational outcomes (Greene, 2014).

Neah Bay High School: Radical Change

When Dr. Ann Renker took the reins as principal of Neah Bay Junior/Senior High School in July 2005, students at the school were performing in the lowest five percent of Washington State’s schools. Only 4% of the 10th grade students passed the State math test, zero passed science test, and 21% passed the writing test. But by 2013, all of the graduates of Neah Bay High School (NBHS) had earned a letter of acceptance to a university, college, technical school or the military, a pattern that had repeated for three straight years (Renker, 2014). Radical change had become reality.

How does a school with such low test scores achieve great success? Under Renker’s leadership several processes were utilized to encourage student growth. One was the implementation of a program designed to change the way students think about their relationship with the learning process. The idea first came to her attention after reading “*The Secret to Raising Smart Kids*” by Carol S. Dweck where the author asserts from more than 30 years of study that the

...overemphasis on intellect or talent leaves people vulnerable to failure, fearful of challenges and unwilling to remedy their shortcomings...On the other hand...teaching people to have a ‘growth mindset,’ which encourages a focus on effort rather than on intelligence or talent, helps make them into high achievers in school and in life. (Dweck, 2007)

Armed with this concept, Dr. Renker and her teaching staff implemented a program with an emphasis on “...’hard work, not natural intelligence’ as the key concept in success, and with the help of [the] school psychologist, [school staff] embedded a growth mindset philosophy, school-wide, as a classroom system” (Renker, 2012).

Surprisingly, this philosophy worked well with high school students and was evident in their test scores for the year 2009/2010, but middle school students did not absorb the growth mind-set instruction with the same outcomes. Older students were more likely to do their best on tests, where their younger counterparts were not as likely to perform at their best (Renker, 2012).

From this data, a mentoring program called the “Catalyst Corps” was developed to pair “a struggling middle school student with a successful high school student.” The students met three times a week for tutoring and science/math field trips together. Subsequent studies indicated that middle school students who were paired with high school students made significant growth as compared to a control group of middle school students without mentoring (Renker, 2014). For this work Renker was awarded a 2011 Inaugural Entrepreneur Award by the Washington STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math). She used the award to rent a research vessel to take these students on a scientific expedition in the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Career mentorship is another program utilized to connect high school students with adult mentors who work in areas of interest to the student. The students are able to use the accumulation of hours toward their Culminating Project or toward school credit. Additionally, Neah Bay High School became a federal GEAR UP school in 2007. With this program they “...were able to teach college readiness skills in classrooms, increase our secondary rigor, and take students to post-high school campuses all over the state.” (Renker, 2014).

One hundred percent of the class of 2013 met the math requirement for graduation. Along with this phenomenal accomplishment, 68% of 10th graders passed the Biology EOC (End of Course) and 93% passed the writing HPSE (High School Proficiency Exam) (OSPI, 2014).

Evidently, the school is also producing college ready students. According to data from the Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity at the University of Washington, Neah Bay High School is the University’s top feeder or student supplier school in the state for any one Tribe, enrolling 16 incoming freshmen students between 1999 to 2013 (Braine, 2014).

Ongoing evaluation is a key component of the school improvement effort. Students evaluate teachers much like college students do at the end of their courses. From this data the principal is able to glean important information that can enhance student learning. As an example, Dr. Renker was made aware that “students viewed probing questions and assignments that could not be completed with facts from a book as indicators that the teachers were asking student to do their jobs.” Renker used this information during the Fall enrollment meeting with students and parents to educate them about best teaching practices and strategies.

Asked later what really made a difference Renker said:

One of the most important contributing factors in the transformation at Neah Bay High School was a school-wide culture that prioritized high expectations in all areas of student outcomes. This expectation transcended the solitary measure of classroom grades and motivated outstanding student performance in state and national competitions -- in academics, civic

service, and extracurricular activities. Part of this entrenched philosophy was rooted in a clear focus on College and Career Readiness, not only a tangible part of our daily atmosphere, but the foundation for all discussions about student improvement, growth, and planning for life after high school.

This foundation was built in community connections to the Makah culture and language. Drawing on the rich heritage and cultural values of the Makah Tribe, school staff aligned values like “hard work” and “following directions” with ancestral practices which required intellectual and social rigor. In addition, the Makah Tribal Council and its associated departments and enterprises provided connections with real-world STEM opportunities by allowing scientists working for the Makah Tribe to work with the school in classrooms and in the field.

Nowhere was rigor initially viewed with more suspicion than in the sports arena. High expectations for grades and behavior required athletes to pass all subjects in weekly grade checks. An athlete with an F on Monday would be benched till the next week. Initially, families were worried that high school athletics would suffer. Worried, that is, till the Red Devils won the first State 1B Football Championship in school history in 2011. For the first time, the connection between student academic success, consistent sports eligibility, and the reliability of team performance was evidenced in a big way that elevated the expectations of the entire village. United by the philosophy that high expectations flourish in an environment that prioritizes growth and improvement over immediate mastery, the transformation at Neah Bay High School was complete. (Renker, 2015)

Neah Bay Elementary School: Achievement

On the OSPI website Neah Bay Elementary Schools’ academics present dramatically different than the middle/high school experience. With only one year recorded as not having met AYP in 2005/2006, every year since then they have met the state requirements (Rice, 2014). Clearly, the elementary school has a long record of success and is presently the only school on the Olympic Peninsula that is passing AYP this year (Rice, 2014).

According to a recent article in the *Peninsula Daily News*, Principal Alice Murner says of the 160 student K through 5th grade school that “It’s just a lot of dedication and hard work on the part of the teachers, staff, the community and the kids taking responsibility for their own learning.” (Rice, 2014)

Although Neah Bay Elementary School is not under the sanctions of NCLB, they are still required to submit a school wide plan because of their Title I classification. According to Michelle Parkin, Community Liaison for Neah Bay Schools, the inclusion of all staff in the School Improvement Process “...has proven to be the key...” and that “...Mrs. Murner believes that the people who implement the activities should ultimately determine what the activities should be.” (Parkin, 2014)

An example of this is the School Improvement Plan process and implementation. Teachers commit to one of several committees where they collectively identify problems, determine specific

goals, and work toward outcomes. This process is monitored throughout the year, reviewed at the end of the year, and results are used for the next year's plans. Goals are updated on a three year cycle. (Neah Bay Elementary Teachers, 2010)

One only has to look at Neah Bay Elementary School's numerous awards and recognitions to see their success (CFSD, 2014):

- 2013-14 Washington Achievement Award for Overall Excellence & Reward School
- 2013 Neah Bay Elementary School recipient of the 2013 Washington State Distinguished Schools (\$10,000)
- 2013 Neah Bay Elementary – designated a REWARD School
- 2013 Title I Part A Award (\$11,700)
- 2013 Golden Apple Award (only one school in the state is chosen per year)
- 2012 Neah Bay Elementary School recipient of the 2012 Washington State Distinguished Schools
- 2012 Neah Bay Elementary – designated as a High Performing and High Progress School
- 2012 Washington State Achievement Index – Exemplary Status
- 2012 Washington Achievement Award winner – recognition for overall excellence and high progress
- 2012 Coastal America Partnership for Action Award
- 2011 Neah Bay Elementary School recipient of the 2011 Washington State Title I Improvement Award (\$5,515)

What's Next?

In 2014 Ann Renker announced she was leaving Neah Bay to join the OSPI school improvement effort. Peter Beh, Neah Bay High School Librarian Aide said, "As long as we follow her philosophy we should be okay." Following in her stead is Matt Vandeleur who was the director of secondary education at North Kitsap School District and a past principal of Poulsbo Middle School. He says that he plans to "examine the school's data to see what the school has been doing that led to improvement and build on those successful strategies." (Peninsula Daily News, 2014)

One critical need is to improve technology and provide adequate internet capacity for students at school. This will serve two purposes: first, connect with learning opportunities otherwise restricted by the school's rural location and second, enable students to test in their home school when

standardized testing is computerized in 2015. The Neah Bay area is largely underserved by its current system which does not support the ability for school wide simultaneous internet usage. High speed internet will allow teachers to deliver a wide range of curriculum to every student in the classroom without bogging down the system for the rest of the school. Without the update Neah Bay school children will be transported to Clallam Bay Schools in order to test which could have negative impacts on performance and outcome. Presently, the Tribe is working with state and federal agencies as well as the Elwha Tribe to remedy this situation. (Greene, 2014)

Meanwhile, on the federal and state fronts, education reform continues its difficult course. News sources recently reported that Washington became the first state to have its No Child Left Behind waiver revoked which will restrict Washington's flexibility in spending federal dollars. The media reported that

It sounds bureaucratic, but it's an important flare-up in a long-running war between teachers unions and the federal government over standardized testing — and whether students' scores should play a role in evaluating teachers.

Washington, like every other state with a waiver, had promised to make that happen. But the Legislature balked, in part because of pressure from teachers, but also because of growing "test fatigue" among students and their parents. A standardized-test boycott at Seattle's Garfield High School made national headlines last year.

In his letter, Duncan made it clear that test scores have to be part of the mix.

"Including student learning growth as a significant factor among the multiple of measures used to determine performance levels is important as an objective measure to differentiate among teachers and principals," he wrote.

The Washington Education Association — the union — has responded by calling No Child Left Behind a "failed federal law," and it praised the state Legislature for rejecting "Duncan's inflexible and bureaucratic demands."

Washington state won't lose federal dollars, but without a waiver, underperforming schools will have to set aside 20 percent for remedies from "private vendors." That means schools might have to pay for private tutoring, or transportation of dissatisfied students to other schools. They also run the risk of being declared "failing," and possibly having staff replaced.

The state's superintendent of public instruction, Randy Dorn, pushed for the Legislature to link teacher evaluations to testing and he says he's not surprised the waiver was rescinded. But he also says the consequences of losing the waiver are disproportionate.

"You have to write the letter to everyone that you're a failing school," he says. "You're supposed to have 100 percent of students at proficient grade level. If you have one kid that's not proficient, you've got to send out the letter."

He guesses 90 percent of Washington state schools will have to send out that letter this summer.

But he says he expects other states will soon be in the same boat, as other legislatures refuse to comply with the conditions of their waivers.

Duncan, meanwhile, says if Washington state changes its stance on the testing issue, he'd be "pleased" to reconsider the revocation of the waiver.

Under the 2014 deadline for 100% school achievement, many schools in Washington are failing (Kaste, 2014).

Although Neah Bay High School has enjoyed significant levels of positive student improvement and the elementary school continues to produce high passing grades, the lack of federal assistance could severely impact Neah Bay Schools. At two opposite ends of the spectrum, Neah Bay Elementary enjoys the status of being the only school on the Olympic Peninsula passing AYP and the Neah Bay Junior/Senior High Schools have met Step 5 status for the first time (OSPI, 2014). Meanwhile, the federal No Child Left Behind Act was up for Congressional reauthorization and there were many arguing for drastic changes, including the reduction of the federal role in education with the states gaining greater flexibility in education.

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