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Olympia, Washington – October 5, 2009

Gates Foundation Supports Teacher Study

The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) announced today the receipt of a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to study the relationship between teachers and student performance. The study will be conducted by researchers at the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE), University of Washington. The PESB is interested in the results of this research because of their role in crafting licensure policy and ensuring a quality teacher work force.

“This is the most fundamental question for our board to have answered” said Stephen Rushing, Chair of the PESB. “We recognize that learning is a complex interaction between teacher and student. We also know that study after study shows student gains related to the quality of teachers. This effort will contribute to our knowledge about teacher effectiveness and drive improvements in policy and practice.”

The award specifically funds analysis of the results of the *ProTeach Portfolio*, an external assessment that all Washington State residence (new) teachers must complete in order to reach professional licensure and maintain a career in teaching. By examining the assessment results, the PESB hopes to study whether the assessment predicts teachers who have a positive impact with students. The *ProTeach Portfolio* was designed and being piloted for validity by Educational Testing Services (ETS), a world leader in educational assessment. ETS is a partner to this important assessment, committing over \$5.5 million in development funds for the new assessment.

The *ProTeach* requires candidates complete three modules of work that demonstrate their teaching knowledge and skills. Washington educators will be recruited and trained by ETS to score the portfolios. The elements and scores can then be matched with student results in the classroom. The study results should point to the indicators of effective teaching, thus helping the assessment become more refined, and contributing to the empirical knowledge about teachers.

The study will be completed between the 2010 and 2011 school years with the results published by 2012. PESB anticipates the results will help improve the *ProTeach* assessment tool in addition to point towards policy refinements that will ultimately assure that certified teachers are well trained, effective and consistently support student success.

The Professional Educator Standards Board was established by the Legislature in 2000 and is responsible for setting and upholding high standards for the profession, ensuring that students encounter high-quality educators throughout their school experience. This deliberative body fulfills the state's intent for the profession to be self-governing, with a composition primarily of practicing educators and administrators joined by representatives from educator preparation programs, parents and citizens.

