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From: [Kim Howard](#)

To: [Grassroots](#)

Sent: Wednesday, November 26, 2008 4:30 PM

Subject: [grassroots] BEF update - Much more work to be done.

Below is a link to the initial draft final report that the task force has been using as a framework for discussion during the past two meetings. Please note that this is a working document and that several committee members have said that they will bring forth additional proposals related to these topics.

- [Initial Draft Final Report of the Joint Task Force for Basic Education Finance](#)

It is difficult for me to adequately convey what is happening right now with the task force, because in many cases there is no sense that a consensus is building around a clear direction. Instead there are many problems which have to do with the size and complexity of the many issues which are being addressed. For example, on Monday Dr. Bergeson expressed serious reservations about LAP not being funded as part of a block grant instead of a categorical program. (The direction of the task force to date has been to say that that all state funded categorical programs would be folded into a block grant of funding to increase flexibility for districts.) Her idea is to maintain the largest and most critical programs as categorical and fund the remaining programs as block grants, thereby significantly reducing, but not eliminating, the number of categorical programs. How money is allocated under the new system is a critical element of the final proposal, yet based the reaction of the committee, there still appears to be the need for further study and discussion of this issue before any thoughtful consensus could be reached. This is being used only as one example of the lack of consensus on complex interrelated issues and applies to many other issues.

The Committee intends to produce a report, albeit later than originally schedule, but it is evident that many issues will be left only partially resolved. There are still questions as to the feasibility and details of individual features as well as to how these features would work together with the goal of improving educational outcomes for kids.

The next meeting of the Basic Education Finance Joint Task Force will be held on December 8 and 9, 2008, in Senate Conference Room A-B-C on the Capital Campus in Olympia. On both days, the meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m.

Chair Grimm indicated at the close of the meeting on Tuesday, that the plan is for the committee to finish its work on Tues. Dec. 9. Those who wish to provide comment will have another opportunity to do so sometime on Monday the 8th. I expect that the public comment time will be published a few days before the meeting. There was a request from a committee member that public comment be allowed to extend into the evening, if necessary. The Chair agreed to do this, if necessary.

[It is clear that we will need to continue to strongly advocate for our #1 priority of redefining and funding basic education with the public, our legislators, and the Governor for this goal to become a reality! Please stay tuned as we will be in touch next week with a recommendation as to how best to proceed given the disappointing outcome that appears likely to result from the Joint Task Force's efforts.](#)

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