

**WASHINGTON STATE
WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
OCTOBER 27, 2008**

BASIC EDUCATION FINANCE PROPOSALS

Background

Article 9, Section 1, of the Washington State Constitution declares that it is the paramount duty of the Legislature to make ample provision for the education of resident children. Court decisions interpreting this constitutional obligation have determined that the Legislature must define the “basic program of education” and fully fund it.

The 2007 Legislature created a Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance to “review the definition of basic education and all current basic education funding formulas” (SB 5627). The Task Force is to “develop options for a new funding structure and all the necessary formulas, and propose a new definition of basic education.” The Task Force is to complete its work by December, 2008.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has prepared several proposals for the Basic Education Finance Task Force that relate to the Workforce Board’s Youth Goal and Objectives. However, with the exception of support for the Navigation 101 program in the next biennium, OSPI has not submitted specific budget documents on these proposals as yet. The Building Bridges Workgroup, established in 2007 under SSHB 1573, recently released a set of draft recommendations relating to the dropout issue that have basic education funding implications as well. Their final report is due in December of this year. In addition, the State Board of Education (SBE) is asking for basic education funding support for their proposed “CORE 24” graduation requirements and is currently preparing a budget proposal that would provide funding for a “six period” day to support the new requirements.

Included in this packet is a proposed motion for the Board’s consideration that provides support for including the following components in basic education funding: a comprehensive guidance program, career and technical education, enhanced funding for at-risk students and dropouts, and additional funds to support the “CORE 24” proposal. Also included is an analysis of the proposals put forth to date by OSPI, the Building Bridges Workgroup, and the SBE. Finally, the text of the proposals for Navigation 101 and Career and Technical Education, the Building Bridges Workgroup draft recommendations, and the CORE 24 proposal are included.

Board Action Required: Adoption of a motion advising the Basic Education Finance Task Force.

RECOMMENDED MOTION

WHEREAS, Youth Objective 1 of HSHW 2008 calls for a K-12 Guidance and Counseling System that provides students and their parents with a curriculum to individually plan their pathways and prepare for future education and/or work after high school; and

WHEREAS, Youth Objective 2 of HSHW 2008 establishes a 10 year target for all high school students across Washington to have the option to complete a career and technical education (CTE) sequence and specifically calls for increasing the number of students who complete a CTE sequence and/or course requirements for admission to a college or university by expanding grades 7-12 CTE sequences for students; and

WHEREAS, Youth Objective 3 of HSHW 2008 calls for all students to graduate from high school and establishes a 10 year target for every community in the state to have an effective school/community partnership that provides a comprehensive dropout prevention, intervention and re-engagement system for all youth, including those who have dropped out or who are at risk of dropping out; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education has prepared a “CORE 24” proposal for high school graduation requirements that will prepare students for college and/or work and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board has previously passed a resolution in support of the “CORE 24” proposal; and

WHEREAS, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Building Bridges Workgroup, and the State Board of Education are in the process of finalizing proposals in the above areas that align with the policy positions of the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board recommends that the following components be included in basic education funding formulas: a comprehensive guidance program, improved funding for career and technical education, enhanced funding for at-risk students and dropouts, and additional funds to support the “CORE 24” proposal.

Analysis of Basic Education Funding Proposals

1. Navigation 101: Program Support

Description of Proposal

OSPI has presented a proposal to the Basic Education Finance Task Force that includes resources to implement Navigation 101 at the middle and high school level based on grants of \$20,000 per school. Every Navigation 101 district provides a curriculum-delivered advisory program with the following five elements in common:

- ◆ Assign students an educator-advisor with whom they will meet consistently throughout their time in that building to help students achieve mastery of knowledge and skills critical to success as a students and in transition to their preferred career and educational future.
- ◆ Require students to create a planner/portfolio reflective of their work across time and indicative of their educational and career planning. In many districts, this portfolio has the depth and rigor to meet the graduation requirements of both the High School and Beyond Plan and the Culminating Project.
- ◆ Hold student-led conferences at least annually, in which the students present their portfolio of work to their parents (or significant adult), display their work from the past year, explain their course choices for the coming year, and discuss their academic and career plans.
- ◆ Create “student-driven schedules,” meaning that the districts schedule the courses students request as needed to progress on their individual education plans. Some districts have been adjusting their schedules to student requests for years. Some districts struggle to find the teachers needed to meet growing student demand. But all Navigation 101 districts are committed to helping students reach their educational and career goals.
- ◆ Use data to make program improvements and contribute to the state’s understanding of the program.

Analysis of Proposal

HSHW Alignment:

- Youth Objective 1 of HSHW 2008 calls for a K-12 Guidance and Counseling System that “provides students and their parents with a curriculum to individually plan their pathways and prepare for future education and/or work after high school.”
- The 10 year target for this objective is: “No later than 2018, all middle and high schools in the state have in place all five elements of the K-12 Guidance and Counseling System that includes community, business and labor collaboration.”
- One of the “Steps To Get Us There” identified in HSHW 2008 is to “Expand implementation of the best practice guidance system, Navigation 101, across the K-12 system including establishing goals for expansion each year. This would ultimately result in full funding of Navigation 101 as a basic program of education.”

Research and Evaluation Information: Research indicates that comprehensive school guidance and counseling has positive student outcomes. The Social & Economic Sciences Research Center (SESRC), Washington State University, has initiated an evaluation system for Navigation 101 districts. They are tracking: participation and satisfaction for student-led conferences (students, parents and educators); course-taking patterns (whether students take more chemistry, physics and algebra 2, key courses for college preparation); WASL pass

rates; graduation rates; dropout rates; and remedial rates. They will also be analyzing demographics for each of these outcomes. To date, however, the only districts with Navigation 101 programs mature enough for a reasonable evaluation are the “lighthouse” districts: Bremerton, Franklin Pierce, Grandview, Mead and Vancouver. Since these districts were not tracking a common set of data until recently, different outcome data are available at each site. Collectively, however, they indicate positive changes in student behavior for students who graduate after several years’ of Navigation experiences. Examples of the Navigation-related changes include:

- ◆ substantial participation in student-led conferencing (71 percent of students in high schools implementing Navigation 101 held a student-led conference in 2007)
- ◆ remarkably high parent participation (averaged 93 percent of students with one or more adults attending)
- ◆ consistent approval of conferences: all parents average 94 percent; high school students average 84% and educators at comprehensive high schools average 87 percent
- ◆ reduced remediation among students attending college from the Franklin Pierce School District (a decline from over 70 percent to 52 percent, which is only 5 percent above the state average)

Further, those Navigation districts that implemented in 2005 graduated a higher proportion of their students than the state overall.

Costs: Navigation requires staff to serve as district and building leaders on an on-going basis. In most districts the part-time duties of many staff equate to a single FTE for Navigation 101 coordination. Additionally, many districts have chosen to recognize the added responsibilities of advising beyond the previously contracted duties of teachers. Further, there is substantial time required to organize student conferences. OSPI has proposed funding 358 secondary schools at \$10,000 in the first year and 535 secondary schools in the second year of the upcoming biennium for a total of \$9 million. OSPI also recommends that all 1,074 secondary schools be funded by the 2017-2019 biennium at a biennial cost of \$40 million.

Constituent/Stakeholder Positions

Proposed by OSPI. The WTECB has been very supportive of proposals to expand Navigation 101 in past years.

2. Navigation 101: Graduation Advisors

Description of Proposal

OSPI has presented an additional proposal to the Basic Education Finance Task Force as part of the Navigation 101 program that includes a staffing allocation for a graduation advisor in high schools at a ratio of 1:1000 students in grades 9-12. The graduation advisor would help manage the tracking of student progress towards graduation. In the 2007-08 school year, districts assisted students with over 60,000 retakes, at least 2,300 portfolios of student work, nearly 400 WASL/grades-comparisons, 1,460 test scores on the SAT, PSAT, or ACT to demonstrate meeting standard, and 1,250 out-of-state waivers for students new to this state. Districts also assisted many of the 174 students who filed appeals to the state regarding their WASL scores. Graduation advisors could also provide the personalized support that some at-risk students need (see number 8, below).

Analysis of Proposal

HSHW Alignment: There are no specific objectives that align with this proposal. However, the services being proposed to assist students in meeting their graduation requirements could be considered a second tier in a comprehensive guidance and counseling system; that is, an additional component of the Navigation 101 program.

Research and Evaluation Information: Research has shown that tracking student progress must begin when high school credits are first awarded. In a 2007 report, the National Center for Education Statistics reported a strong correlation between lower than average credits earned in the 9th grade and leaving school before graduating. Also, Washington's current student-to-counselor ratio is 1:483; the American School Counselors Association recommends 1:250.

Costs: No cost estimates are available as yet.

Constituent/Stakeholder Positions

Proposed by OSPI.

3. Career and Technical Education: Enhanced Funding Ratios

Description of Proposal:

For secondary CTE programs, OSPI proposes that enhanced funding be provided for CTE students in grades 7 through 12. A richer staffing ratio of 1:18.5 compared to the current ratio of 1:19.5 would be provided with a "use it or lose it" provision for certificated administrative staff (CAS) who have an oversight role of CTE programs. The Non-Employee Related Costs (NERC) allocation would include equipment replacement in the instructional materials allocation and add a Student Leadership Organization allocation. The funding proposal for Skills Centers would continue the current certificated instructional staff (CIS)/CAS staffing ratio of 1:16.67. The NERC allocation would match the secondary CTE allocation. This proposal also provides guidance counselors and pupil support at the Skills Centers at the same allocation provided to basic education.

The funding proposal for Skills Centers would continue the current Certificated Instructional Staff (CIS)/CAS staffing ratio of 1:16.67. The NERC allocation would match the secondary CTE allocation. This proposal also provides guidance counselors and pupil support at the Skills Centers at the same level of support provided to basic education.

Analysis of Proposal

HSHW Alignment: Youth Objective 2 of HSHW 2008 states: "All students leave high school prepared for success in further education and/or work." The 10-year target for this objective is: "No later than 2018 all high school students across Washington have the option to complete a career and technical education sequence that matches their career interests, articulates with postsecondary education and results in industry certification where applicable." One of the "Steps To Get Us There" calls for increasing the number of students who complete a CTE sequence and/or course requirements for admission to a college or university by "expanding grades 7-12 CTE sequences for students."

Research and Evaluation Information: None available.

Costs: No biennial cost estimates are available as yet. OSPI has a placeholder in their budget proposal. Presumably, the proposal will be based on a staffing ratio of 1 (.92 CIS/.08

CAS):19.5 for secondary school CTE programs and an enhanced NERC funding formula of \$2,232/FTE for CTE (currently funded at \$23,831/CIS), including the following components:

- NERC categories following basic education model: \$1,383/FTE
- Vocational equipment allocation: \$724/FTE
- Equipment replacement allocation: \$75/FTE
- Student Leadership Organization allocation: \$50/FTE

The staffing ratio at Skills Centers would remain the same (1:16.67) and the NERC formula would be raised to \$2,232/FTE (currently funded at \$18,489/CIS) which would include an equipment replacement allocation of \$125/FTE and an allocation for guidance counselors and pupil support.

Constituent/Stakeholder Positions

Proposed by OSPI and supported by WA-ACTE. The funding proposal by legislators on the Basic Education Finance Task Force includes an enhanced staffing ratio and an enhanced NERC.

4. Career and Technical Education: High Demand Funding

Description of Proposal

The 2008 Legislature provided \$1,700,000 for one-time grants to middle schools, high schools, or Skills Centers, to develop or upgrade high-demand career and technical education programs. OSPI proposes an ongoing appropriation for high demand program grants that meets the demand for these programs at the local level.

Analysis of Proposal

HSHW Alignment: Under Youth Objective 2 of HSHW, one of the “Steps To Get Us There” calls for increasing the number of students who complete a CTE sequence and/or course requirements for admission to a college or university by “identifying high employer demand programs and expanding these offerings in secondary CTE sequences.”

Research and Evaluation Information: None available.

Costs: No cost estimates are available as yet. OSPI has a placeholder in their budget proposal. The high demand grants were funded at \$1.7 million for 2008 - 2009.

Constituent/Stakeholder Positions

Proposed by OSPI and supported by WA-ACTE.

5. Career and Technical Education: I-Best

Description of Proposal

The 2008 Legislature provided \$250,000 for five grants to Skills Centers to develop integrated CTE, academic/basic education, and English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. OSPI proposes that CTE programs involved in Secondary Integrated Basic Education Skills Training or I-BEST programs be provided an additional certificated instructional staff (CIS) person for every 25 English language learners.

Analysis of Proposal

HSHW Alignment: Under Youth Objective 2 of HSHW 2008, there are no specific “Steps To Get Us There” that relate directly to I-BEST funding at the secondary level. However, there

is a recommended step under the objective related to older youth that states: “Develop I-BEST opportunities specifically for older youth.”

Research and Evaluation Information: No information is available for secondary I-BEST programs, which are just being designed. However, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) found that I-BEST students in their programs earned five times more college credits on average and were 15 times more likely to complete workforce training than were traditional ESL students during the same amount of time.

Costs: No cost estimates are available as yet. OSPI has a placeholder in their budget proposal. Skill centers were funded in the 2008-2009 budget to develop a model for secondary I-BEST programs.

Constituent/Stakeholder Positions

Proposed by OSPI and supported by WA-ACTE.

6. Career and Technical Education: Summer School Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)

Description of Proposal

The 2008 Legislature provided \$500,000 for summer school funding for middle and high school students to explore career opportunities rich in math, science, and technology using CTE as the delivery model. OSPI proposes that funding be provided for summer school CTE math, science, and technology courses.

Analysis of Proposal

HSHW Alignment: Under Youth Objective 2 of HSHW 2008, one of the “Steps To Get Us There” calls for increasing the number of students who complete a CTE sequence and/or course requirements for admission to a college or university by “increasing the number of CTE courses that provide credit for math or science.”

Research and Evaluation Information: None available.

Costs: No cost estimates are available as yet. OSPI has a placeholder in their budget proposal.

Constituent/Stakeholder Positions

Proposed by OSPI and supported by WA-ACTE.

7. Dropout Early Warning Data System (DEWS)

Description of Proposal

The Building Bridges Workgroup draft recommendations propose funding for school districts to implement and maintain dropout early warning data systems, as developed by OSPI, that analyze school and district dropout patterns and provide in-time student progress monitoring. Specific early-warning data and well-designed monitoring systems would be used by school districts both to identify at-risk students and to gauge their level and cause of risk. Patterns in early indicators could be examined at the school and district levels to identify systemic weaknesses in schools that are actually increasing the likelihood that students will drop out.

Analysis of Proposal

HSHW Alignment: Youth Objective 3 states: “All students graduate from high school.”

The 10-year target for this objective is: “No later than 2018 every community in the state will have an effective school/community partnership that provides a comprehensive dropout prevention, intervention and re-engagement system for ALL youth, including those who have dropped out or who are at risk of dropping out. There are no specific “Steps To Get Us There” that relate directly to the development of an early warning data system in school districts throughout the state. However, the Building Bridges Workgroup considers this an essential first step in building a comprehensive dropout prevention, intervention and re-engagement system in local school district communities.

Research and Evaluation Information: Research has recently determined that there are critical indicators such as school attendance, academic struggles and behavioral problems that can reliably predict (with 75% individual predictive validity, beginning in the 6th grade) which particular students are likely to drop out before receiving their high school diploma. This data needs to be analyzed at the school building level in order to identify the variables that are predictive. There are also particular populations that are at high risk of dropping out and need to be identified. Disabling conditions such as learning disabilities, behavioral disorders, and substance abuse underlie and compound other factors that contribute to high drop-out rates for all categories of at-risk populations. Foster care youth, adjudicated youth, and homeless youth also face significant risks to graduating with their peers.

Costs: No cost estimates are available yet. OSPI is currently conducting a “breakthrough series” to design a model early warning system that can be utilized by most school districts in the state.

Constituent/Stakeholder Positions

Implementation of a dropout early warning system is proposed by the Building Bridges Workgroup in draft recommendations. OSPI is likely to be supportive. A dropout early warning system is also included in the funding proposal by legislators on the Basic Education Finance Task Force.

8. Enhanced Funding to Support At-Risk Students and Dropouts

Description of Proposals

The Building Bridges Workgroup draft recommendations propose that enriched funding for the learning assistance program, student support staff, and health services be included as part of the basic education funding formula. The Workgroup believes these funding components constitute the minimum funding obligation the K-12 system must provide to ensure that personalized relationships and academic and non-academic supports are available for students who have been identified as highly at risk of dropping out. Additional non-academic supports will need to be provided through community partners. The Workgroup is also exploring enhanced funding options for dropout retrieval programs for 16 to 21 year olds not likely to return to high school to ensure sufficient dollars are available for individualized and intensive basic skills instruction, case management, and other support services.

Analysis of Proposal

HSHW Alignment: Under Youth Objective 3, there are no specific “Steps To Get Us There” that relate directly to enhanced funding for at-risk students and dropouts. However, the Building Bridges Workgroup considers the enhanced funding, as part of the basic education funding formula, for the learning assistance program, staff for student support services, and

health services as essential steps in building a comprehensive dropout prevention and intervention system in local school district communities.

Research and Evaluation Information: Research indicates that students at high risk of dropping out need intensive, personalized attention/advocacy and support systems. The well-researched program “Check and Connect” provides trained staff to provide this kind of support for students at risk of dropping out. Building Bridges grantees are also building partnerships with community members to provide needed non-academic support services. Youth in dropout retrieval programs also need case management to address numerous barriers and to navigate through systems in which they have failed or of which they are unfamiliar. They need specialized and individualized instruction and they have emergency financial and employment needs that must be addressed concurrently with education.

Costs: No specific costs are available at this time. OSPI has made proposals to the Basic Education Finance Task Force on staffing for support services, student health and the learning assistance program, citing in general the need for additional funding. The Building Bridges Workgroup is also recommending full funding of the learning assistance program, health services and staffing for support services. The Building Bridges Workgroup is planning to work with the Legislature, K-12 education, postsecondary education, and the workforce system to develop options for enhanced funding for dropout retrieval programs.

Constituent/Stakeholder Positions

OSPI and the Building Bridges Workgroup (in draft recommendations) are supportive of enriched funding formulas for the learning assistance program, staff for student support services, and health services that would provide needed support for targeted at-risk students. No stakeholder positions are available as yet on enhanced funding for dropout retrieval programs.

9. CORE 24

Description of Proposal

CORE 24 is the new set of credit requirements for high school graduation being considered by the Washington State Board of Education. CORE 24 would require students to develop a plan for their future and choose classes to help them achieve their goals. The proposed new requirements (intended to be implemented, contingent on funding, beginning in 2013) include a requirement for three credits in a “career concentration.” A career concentration is defined as a career and technical education (CTE) program of study or a course sequence which helps a student prepare for their intended postsecondary studies or career field.

Analysis of Proposal

HSHW Alignment:

- Youth Objective 2 of HSHW 2008 states: “All students leave high school prepared for success in further education and/or work.”
- The 10-year target for this objective is: “No later than 2018 all high school students across Washington have the option to complete a career and technical education sequence that matches their career interests, articulates with postsecondary education and results in industry certification where applicable.”
- One of the “Steps To Get Us There” calls for increasing the number of students who complete a CTE sequence and/or course requirements for admission to a college or

university by “*working with the State Board of Education to ensure high school graduation requirements contain a viable option for students to pursue a CTE sequence.*”

Research and Evaluation Information: Research on CTE has indicated that the risk of dropping out is at its lowest when students take 3 credits of CTE for every 4 credits of academic coursework.

Costs: No costs available as yet. The State Board of Education (SBE) is currently preparing a budget proposal to fund a “six-period” school day to accommodate the CORE 24 credit requirements. Current basic education funding formulas are based on the assumption that middle and high schools provide staff for five-period days.

Constituent/Stakeholder Positions

Proposed by SBE. Supported by WTECB with specific implementation suggestions. WA-ACTE supports with the caveat that at least one of the “career concentration” courses be a CTE course. The legislative proposal for BEA funding includes monies for a “seven-period” school day to accommodate the CORE 24 proposal.

Student Planning and Graduation Support for Secondary Students

Resource Proposal

Provide a *comprehensive guidance program* that organizes crucial services to middle and high school students, and their parents, as they navigate credit and graduation requirements, credit retrieval, requirements to meet standard in reading, writing, mathematics, and science, five¹ alternative routes to meeting standard, career and technical education, and requirements for a Culminating Project and High School and Beyond Plan. Personalizing education through sustained planning support for students and including their families' involvement pays dividends in improved education achievement and post secondary success.

The proposal has two components: resources to implement Navigation 101 at the middle and high school level based on grants of \$20,000 per secondary school and a staffing allocation for a graduation advisor in high schools (a ratio of 1:1000 students in grades 9-12). The two components provide critical help with managing new requirements and routes to meeting requirements for graduation, staffing for Navigation coordination at the district and building levels, resources for extra time spent on Navigation responsibilities by educator-advisors, and support for the logistical costs of added activities, such as the student-led conferences. Funding would support activities and costs driven by the portfolio/planner used to meet the High School and Beyond Plan and Culminating Project and the myriad of options for meeting graduation requirements.

This proposal primarily addresses educational and career planning guidance. It complements the guidance, counseling and social work support provided by certificated counselors, social workers, and/or family advocates requested for all students in Component D of the staffing model.

Background on Student Requirements and System Changes

More Rigor, More Relevance: In 1992, the Governor's Council on Education Reform and Finance (GCERF) called for more rigor in Washington schools resulting in new high school graduation requirements. Students must now meet standard on mathematics, reading, and writing through the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) or five different available alternatives. They must also complete a Culminating Project and a High School and Beyond Plan. And the effort continues as the State Board of Education considers adding more math requirements and increasing the total credits required for graduation.

The increased graduation requirements are not satisfied by academic class work alone. A High School and Beyond plan is a student's individual statement of intent, experience and goals. Similarly a Culminating Project is an encapsulation of the individual students' learning and experience. These tasks are intentionally defined to personalize education and motivate student performance. But each

¹ Alternatives include attain a specific score level on the SAT/ACT/PSAT college entrance tests; attaining high scores on Advanced Placement tests; Grade Point Average comparisons and benchmarking; meeting standard on a Collection of Evidence (COE); and continuing to take math courses (applies to meeting standard on the mathematics WASL only).

complicates the job of supporting educational success, expanding the school work load and the kinds of resources it needs.

HB 1209 also noted students' need for greater connection between their school work and their working futures, an observation that resulted in Goal 4 "**Understand** the importance of work and finance and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect future **career and educational opportunities.**" Helping students set career and education goals has only been supported financially through career and technical education (CTE).

Understanding Choices: Further, students preparing for life after high school face diverse options. Beyond higher graduation standards, students and parents now face more choices in high school than in the decades when the current staffing/funding formula was developed. To choose well, they must know their goals, their abilities, their preferences – and prepare accordingly. To avoid choices that limit their futures, they must begin considering options in middle school. Even choosing "college" presents complicated choices, because preparing for a highly competitive university can be different from preparing for a one to three-year technical certification. Skills Center? Running Start? These opportunities are a boon for motivating and preparing students only if they have the information and perspective to make sound choices.

Keeping Track of Student Progress to Graduation: Schools have always had to monitor student progress toward graduation requirements. Specific requirements such as mandatory courses (Washington State history or occupational credits) and the fact that students can accumulate some credits in middle school have always complicated the task. Requirements for a culminating project and post-secondary plan have added a new layer of detail.

The requirement to meet standard on reading, writing, mathematics, and science, and the options to meet these requirements through several simultaneous routes make accurate tracking of student progress very intensive. Students must meet standard on two WASL assessments (reading and writing), they must meet standard on the WASL mathematics assessment or keep taking courses, and soon students will also have to meet standard in science. Students can take each assessment up to five times, and pursue any one or all of six alternatives to the WASL, for one more of the WASL components. A 10th grader who does not meet standard in a content area has at least twenty opportunities in the 11th and 12th grade to demonstrate they have met standard in that content area (4 retakes, 4 COE submissions, 1 or 2 WASL/Grades comparison, and 13 college admission tests).

Tracking student progress became a management struggle for schools as the Class of 2008 prepared for graduation and as they attempted to help the Class of 2009 address potential deficiencies during their junior year. In the 2007-08 school year, districts assisted students with over 60,000 retakes, at least 2,300 portfolios of student work, nearly 400 WASL/grades-comparisons, 1460 test scores on the SAT, PSAT, or ACT to demonstrate meeting standard, and 1250 out-of-state waivers for students new to this

state. Districts also assisted many of the 174 students who filed appeals to the state regarding their WASL scores.

Tracking student progress must begin when high school credits are first awarded. In a 2007 report, the National Center for Education Statistics reported a strong correlation between lower than average credits earned in the 9th grade and leaving school before graduating.

Background on Navigation 101

Navigation 101 Model: Navigation 101 first emerged from the experimentation of one Washington school district, Franklin Pierce, which faced performance disparities among its students, and between its students and those in other districts. They sought to better connect students and parents to high school, implement a comprehensive guidance program, help students plan their course needs, and connect students with other non-academic support where needed—all to assist more students to make their time in high school meaningful and ensure that they graduated on time.

To date, Navigation 101 is the only model for a comprehensive guidance program in Washington schools for which there is proven effect upon student outcomes. While districts have chosen to implement Navigation 101 for a variety of reasons, most responded to its direct approach to improving performance among minority and disadvantaged youth. In fact, Navigation is particularly lauded by families who find it difficult to advise and support their students. The exceptional turnout of parents and guardians for student-led conferences is evidence of that. While Navigation 101 districts previously averaged a 40% parent attendance at conferences, some individual schools struggled to achieve a 20% attendance rate. Yet in 2007 among the Navigation 101 schools, 93% of the students holding a student-led conference had a parent or guardian attend. And students, parents and educator-advisors routinely give the conferences high marks for their value.

Details of Navigation 101 implementation vary among schools. Some districts emphasize the development of the advisor-student relationship, so Navigation classes meet several times a week, even daily. Other districts focus more on the delivery of the Navigation 101 curriculum and opt for fewer but longer Navigation sessions. No district meets less often than eight times a year (essentially, once a month). Yet every Navigation 101 district has five program elements in common. All districts:

- ◆ Assign students an educator-advisor with whom they will meet consistently throughout their time in that building (one advisor during middle school; one advisor during high school.)
- ◆ Require students to create a planner/portfolio reflective of their work across time and indicative of their educational and career planning. In many district, this portfolio has the depth and rigor to meet the graduation requirements of both the High School and Beyond Plan and the Culminating Project.
- ◆ Hold student-led conferences at least annually, in which the students present their portfolio of work to their parents (or significant adult), display their work from the past year, explain their course choices for the coming year, and discuss their academic and career plans.
- ◆ Create “student-driven schedules,” meaning that the districts schedule the courses students request as needed to progress on their individual education plans. Some districts, like Vancouver, have been adjusting their schedules to student requests for years. Some districts struggle to find the teachers

needed to meet growing student demand. But all Navigation 101 districts are committed to helping students reach their educational and career goals.

- ◆ Use data to make program improvements and contribute to the state's understanding of the program.

To achieve these goals, districts need resources at the state, regional and school level. Essential elements include:

- a) **Motivated staff:** In short, students do not just need an advisor. They need an advisor who cares and who knows how to help. Fortunately, experience with Navigation 101 creates educator commitment. Data that demonstrates how students change and how performance improves helps sustain that commitment. Staff in many places, however, feel beleaguered by the number of changes in their schools, no matter how worthy the initiative. Districts must make sure they are uniting rather than fragmenting the changes. Many districts need time for more staff development so that educators understand how Navigation activities contribute to learning, and how Navigation skills meet the graduation requirements. Many districts need time for more educators to develop advisor skills: educators want to be good at what they teach.
- b) **Logistical support:** Engaging parents in successful student-led conferences demands organization before, during and after the event. Students need tools (portfolios as well as preparation). Parents need translators, take-away tools, and more communication with schools than one annual event. The delivery of the Navigation curriculum, while provided by the state, must be tailored to the school, timed with the school schedule, and given just-in-time support for educator-advisors. Students who transfer in, miss sessions, or otherwise fall out of sequence must be afforded opportunities to catch-up. All these operational details require staff time and materials.
- c) **State-level leadership:** It is not cost-effective for every district to create a comprehensive guidance curriculum for itself nor to create the tools (like a model portfolio) each district needs. Local innovation has been a hallmark of Navigation 101, but state leadership replicates and disseminates emerging and promising practices across the state. State-level support for technical assistance and evaluation is also essential.

Navigation 101 Historical Funding and Costs: On its own, Franklin Pierce attracted others to its model and now, with state assistance, over 100 districts have adopted or begun adopting it. The newest districts to implement Navigation 101 were able to utilize a state-funded grant, authorized by the legislature in 2006. The temporary grants (averaging \$ 10,000 per building for three buildings per district) were intended only to defray the costs of organizing and initiating Navigation 101. The temporary, two-year grants are now ending for the first round of districts, funded in 2006-2007. Districts funded in 2007-2008 will end this school year.

There is more to sustaining Navigation 101 than the initial work. With two years experience with wider implementation, it is clear that Navigation requires staff to serve as district and building leaders on an on-going basis. In most districts the part-time duties of many staff equate to a single FTE for Navigation 101 coordination. Additionally, many districts have chosen to recognize the added responsibilities of advising beyond the previously contracted duties of teachers. Further, Navigation 101 increases parental

involvement. The time required to organize successful student conferences is well worth the effort, but when 93% of a schools' students have at least one family member attend a conference, the logistics are daunting. The positive outcome is more parent-school interaction throughout the year. These are admirable outcomes that drive real costs.

Research on Effectiveness of Navigation 101: The Social & Economic Sciences Research Center (SESRC), Washington State University, has initiated an evaluation system for Navigation 101 districts. They are tracking: participation and satisfaction for student-led conferences (students, parents and educators); course-taking patterns (whether students take more chemistry, physics and algebra 2, key courses for college preparation); WASL pass rates; graduation rates; dropout rates; and remedial rates. They will also be analyzing demographics for each of these outcomes.

To date, however, the only districts with Navigation 101 programs mature enough for a reasonable evaluation are the "lighthouse" districts: Bremerton, Franklin Pierce, Grandview, Mead and Vancouver. Since these districts were not tracking a common set of data until recently, different outcome data are available at each site. Collectively, however, they indicate positive changes in student behavior for students who graduate after several years' of Navigation experiences.

Examples of the Navigation-related changes include:

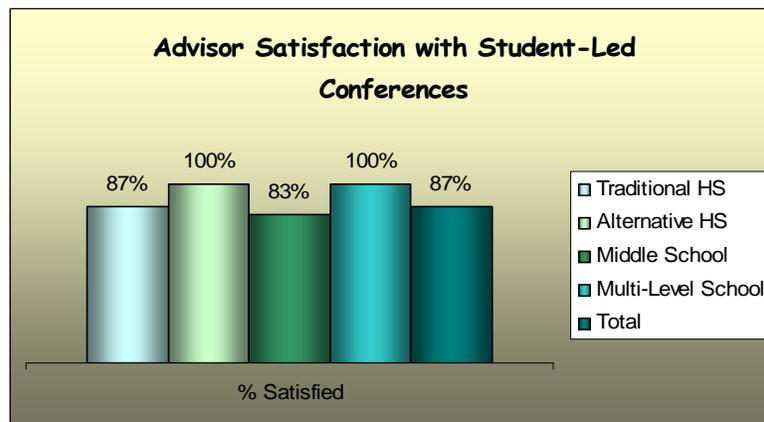
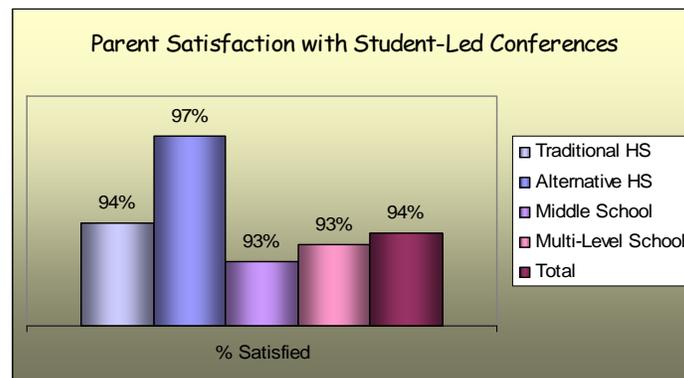
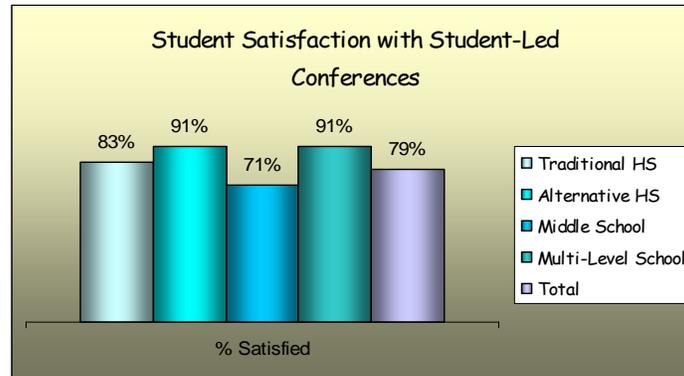
- ◆ substantial participation in student-led conferencing (71% of students in high schools implementing Navigation 101 held a student-led conference in 2007)
- ◆ remarkably high parent participation (averaged 93% of students with one or more adults attending)
- ◆ consistent approval of conferences: all parents average 94%; high school students average 84% and educators at comprehensive high schools average 87%. (Educators at multi-age and alternative schools actually gave a 100% approval rating.)
- ◆ reduced remediation among students attending college from the Franklin Pierce School District (a decline from over 70% to 52%, which is only 5% above the state average.)

For additional evidence of Navigation 101 effectiveness see Appendix A.

APPENDIX A

Navigation 101 Evidence of Success

The first goal of Navigation 101 is personalizing education. The Student-Led Conference is the focus around which much of the educator-advisor and student relationship forms. This annual event demonstrates students' skills as planners, articulating both their educational experience and goals, and directly involves parents and family with the school as the students' support.

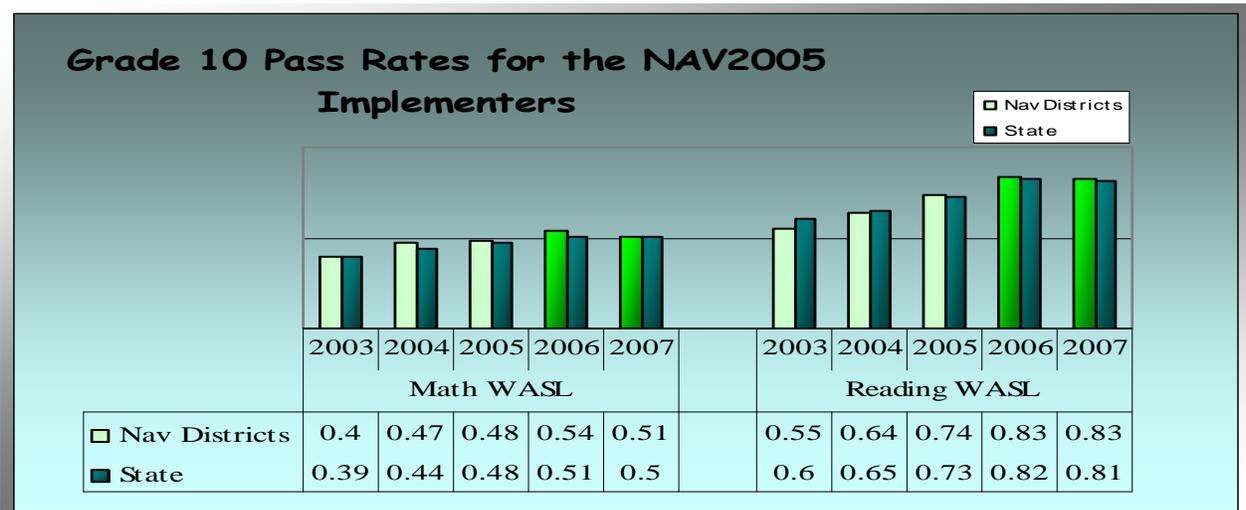


While Navigation 101 has operated in several districts for five years or more, the systematic evaluation of the program is more recent. SESRC/WSU, the program evaluator, uses a combination of data
 June 2008

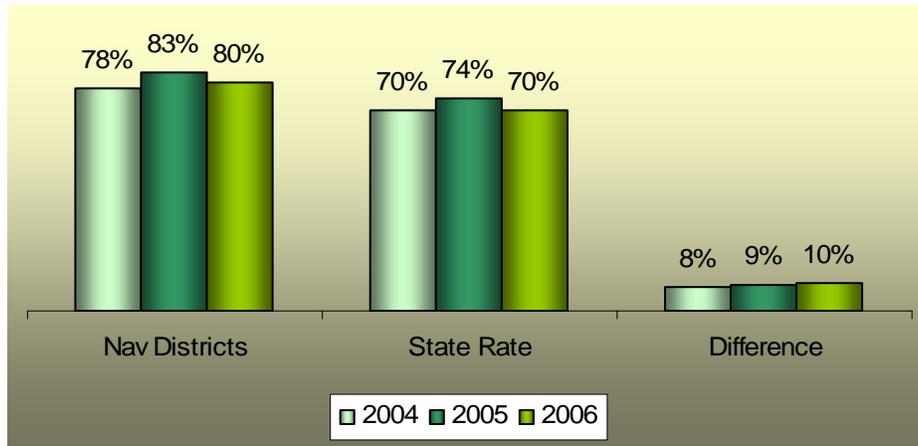
submitted directly by the districts (including parents, students, and educators satisfaction with the student-led conferences) and data derived from OSPI reports (such as WASL scores and graduation rates) to provide the districts with feedback on the effectiveness of Navigation statewide and locally. In the example below, for example, districts that implemented Navigation 101 before the state grants were available can see that they:

- ◆ Continue to meet or beat the state average in WASL math passage;
- ◆ Continue to gain in math achievement;
- ◆ Improved their reading performance, which used to be lower than the state average but now surpass it.

To date, however, few graduating classes have progressed through high school entirely engaged in Navigation. Measuring the effectiveness of a program implemented across multiple years is a daunting task, but some districts now show us how they are faring. An example is this representation of 10th grade WASL pass rates for those districts that implemented Navigation in 2005.



Further, those Navigation districts that implemented in 2005 graduated a higher proportion of their students than the state overall. Both these Navigation districts and the state saw slight improvement and then decline in the graduation rate in 2006, but the decline among the Navigation districts was slightly less than the rest of the state and their graduation rate continued to improve against the state rate:



APPENDIX B

Other States Implementation of Comprehensive Guidance Models

Navigation 101 was developed in the Franklin Pierce School District and is unique to Washington. No other state implements it, although it is being implemented in individual districts in other states (e.g., Paterson, New Jersey).² Navigation 101 derived, however, from guidance models and programs utilized in other states, particularly Missouri and Utah. Both were, in turn, based upon the work of the two most well-known advocates of comprehensive guidance and teacher advisory: Norm Gysbers and Robert Myrick. Both advanced the idea that guidance is an integral part of a school's educational mission rather than an auxiliary service to the academic curriculum.

Gysbers' guidance model tightly integrates the guidance function with the academic mission of schools. It emphasizes the centrality of guidance to the total education program, and defines the relationship between guidance and other aspects of the student's education. Essential elements include: a) a guidance curriculum, including structured classroom activities; b) individual student planning, including activities that help student understand their own growth and development; c). responsive services, including assessment, counseling and teacher/parent/specialist consultation; and d) system support, which include those activities that support the program and its operations. Dr. Gysbers has been an advisor to Navigation 101 as well as the chief architect of the guidance standards adopted by the American School Counselors Association.

The assumption behind Robert D. Myrick's Teacher Advisor Program (TAP) is that each student needs a friendly adult in the school who knows and cares about him or her in a personal way. The advisors help their advisees deal with the problems of growing up and getting the most out of school. A teacher-advisor is usually responsible for an advisee's cumulative folder, work folders, teacher-student conferences, parent conferences, group guidance experiences and follow-up on academic progress reports. Advisors also consult with other teachers, school counselors, and support personnel about their advisees.

TAP is designed to provide an opportunity for all the students in a school to participate in a small and cohesive group of 15 to 25 peers led by a caring teacher who promotes and monitors individual students' educational and developmental experiences as they progress through school. Teacher-advisors meet with their advisees on a regular basis through a "homeroom" or "homebase" group. This becomes, in effect, the students' home within the school, where they have a supportive teacher and group of peers with whom they can explore personal interests, goals, and concerns.

Since many high school teachers have never had a guidance course, they are unsure of how to lead a non-academic group discussion with adolescents. Counselors therefore assist teachers as they plan and prepare for advisory. In some structures, counselors and teachers work together as teams to deliver advisory curriculum. Administrative support and periodic evaluation are also essential.

² Paterson School District newsletter, winter 2008.

Utah currently provides \$8.7million of state funding for a Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Program (CCGP). To qualify, districts must demonstrate that they meet state CCGP standards. Funds are then awarded to districts at a base level of \$19,227 for the first 400 students and on a prorated basis for 500-1200 students, where they are capped. The maximum any single district receives is just under \$500,000. In total, the \$8.7 million serves 226,206 students at an average of \$38.84 per student. Utah tallied the guidance expenditures made by local districts on counselors, administrative support, career centers and material, extended day contracts, and counseling inservice. The total exceeded \$50 million. With the state CCGP funding at only 13.7% of that total, they are requesting an increase for the next biennium to add \$8.2 million to the CCGP specifically to lower the counselor ratio to 1:350. That would increase state-level spending in Utah to over \$75 per secondary student.

In comparison, Virginia averages 1 guidance counselor to 500 students in its elementary schools; 1 per 400 in middle schools; and 1 per 350 students in its high schools. Tennessee's ratios are 1 per 500 in elementary schools and 1 per 350 in secondary schools.

APPENDIX C

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Career and Technical Education

Proposal Summary

For secondary CTE programs, Superintendent Bergeson proposes that funding be provided for CTE students in grades 7 through 12. A richer staffing ratio of 1:18.5 compared to the current ratio of 1:19.5 would be provided with a “use it or lose it” provision for certificated administrative staff (CAS) who have an oversight role of CTE programs. The NERC allocation would include equipment replacement in the instructional materials allocation and add a Student Leadership Organization allocation. Finally, the Superintendent proposes that funding be provided for summer school math, science, and technology courses and the High Demand Program grant total should be adjusted to the demand in the field. See table below.

Current	Proposed
Serve students 9-12	Serve students 7-12
Staffing ratio of 1 (.92 CIS/.08 CAS):19.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing ratio of 1:18.5 • Use it or lose it provision for CAS allocation
NERC of \$23,831/CIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NERC categories following basic education model; \$1,383/FTE • Vocational equipment allocation; \$724/FTE • Equipment replacement allocation; \$75/FTE • Student Leadership Organization allocation; \$50/FTE • Total: \$2,232/FTE
Equipment replacement of \$75/student	Include in NERC allocation
No summer school funding	Summer School for CTE rich in math, science, and technology
High demand program grants; \$1.7 million	Grant amount adjusted to demand

The funding proposal for Skills Centers would continue the current certificated instructional (CIS)/CAS staffing ratio of 1:16.67. The NERC allocation would match the secondary CTE allocation. This proposal also provides guidance counselors and pupil support at the Skills Centers at the same allocation provided to basic education. Also, in order to meet the demand of the English Language Learners, those programs involved in the I-BEST program would be provided an additional CIS person for every 25 English language learners. Finally, the Superintendent proposes that the High demand program grant total should be adjusted to the demand in the field. See next page.

Current	Proposed
Staffing ratio of 1 (.92 CIS/.08 CAS):16.67	Use it or lose it provision for CAS allocation
NERC of \$18,489/CIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match Secondary CTE allocation of \$2,232
Equipment replacement of \$125/student	Include in NERC allocation
No allocation for guidance counselors and pupil support	Same allocation as basic education proposal
Grant dollars to start I-BEST programs in five Skills Centers	Change staffing ratio to additional 1:25 English Language Learners for those classes involved in I-BEST
Extended Day/Barrier Reduction --Maximum of \$485,000 each fiscal year may be expended to provide skills training for secondary students enrolled in extended day school-to-work programs. \$500 per student FTE (SHB 1128)	No change
Summer school funding	No change
High demand program grants; \$1.7 million	Grant amount adjusted to demand

Historical Funding and Practice in Washington

State Funding

In 1919, the Legislature established a vocational program and provided additional funding for vocational education classes via a weighted pupil formula. When the Legislature passed the Basic Education Act, they included vocational education as part of their definition of basic education. In the 1979-80 school year, the state provided a staffing ratio of one instructor for every 16.67 vocational education students (1:16.67) and an allocation of \$6,893 per instructor to cover non-employee related costs (NERCs), such as equipment, supplies, utilities, etc. This same school year, the state provided a staffing ratio of one instructor for every 20 regular education students (1:20) and an allocation of \$3,910 per instructor to cover NERCs. Currently, districts receive funding for a staffing ratio of 1:19.5, a NERC allocation of \$23,831, and equipment replacement funding of \$75 per student for their secondary education programs in high schools. Skills Centers received funding for a staffing ratio of 1:16.67, a NERC allocation of \$18,489, and equipment replacement funding of \$125 per student.

The 2007 Legislature passed legislation that provides funding for a Skills Center student to count for up to 1.6 of a full-time equivalent (FTE) student. In addition, now all Skills Centers receive Initiative 728 money for the number of FTE students that attend through an agreement with their sponsoring district. The 2008 Legislature made numerous programmatic changes to the CTE program. These changes provide a roadmap of how to improve CTE in the future and fall into three categories: Quality, rigor and links to postsecondary education; academic instruction through CTE; and expanding access and awareness. For more specific information on these important changes, please refer to 2SSB 6377.

THE DROPOUT PROBLEM: A TIME TO ACT

10-9-08 Draft

1. Set A Statewide Goal For All Youth and Ask Youth-Serving Agencies To Coordinate Efforts to Achieve It

Background

The Challenge: Achieving a high level of education and skills has become an economic necessity in the 21st Century economy. However, according to the latest statistics from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), 27.5% of students in the Class of 2007 did not graduate on-time with their peers. During the 2006 – 2007 school year, 20,122 students dropped out. The consequences of not graduating from high school are serious for both individuals and society as a whole. Students who exit school prematurely face an uphill battle throughout their lifetimes in securing a livable wage in the global economy. High school dropouts earn significantly less than high school graduates over their lifetimes. Students who drop out tend to experience more frequent occurrences of early pregnancy, substance abuse, mental health issues, and tend to have greater need for publicly funded health and social services. Youth transitioning back to the community from incarceration, those who are homeless, in special education, and living in foster care are substantially more at risk.

A Community-Wide Issue: The role of reducing the number of public school dropouts is not solely that of the K-12 school system. Research shows that risk and protective factors related to dropping out span the influences of home, school, and family. Successful attempts to address this multiple dimension problem have involved a coordinated approach that draws on the resources of all youth-serving agencies and organizations that provide support and services to students and families.

Agency Coordination: The 2007 Legislature, in SHB 1573, directed the Building Bridges Workgroup to “identify and make recommendations for the reduction of state fiscal, legal and regulatory barriers, which prevent coordination of dropout program resources across agencies at the state and local level.” Seven state agencies provide over 60 programs that support at-risk youth in Washington state. These agencies identify their program objectives independently from each other. The objectives are seldom explicitly related to keeping youth engaged in education. They also administer programs that may not align with the services of other agencies, even as they serve the same struggling youth or his/her family. There is little coordination among these programs to eliminate barriers to efficient and effective service provision at the local level. People who work with struggling youth in local communities express the concern that many are lost or their needs ignored because schools do not have information about which students are struggling with homelessness, domestic abuse, substance abuse, mental health issues, or other non-academic problems. Data-sharing problems include a lack of understanding about what data can be shared, a lack of policy in place that encourages data-sharing and provides guidance on how to do it, and existing restrictions on data use. There is insufficient professional development across agencies about the needs of and services for at-risk youth. Research indicates that teachers need to create more culturally aware classrooms, teach to a full range of learning styles,

and deploy teaching strategies that are effective for all students. Many persons working with youth are not familiar with the latest findings related to the effects of trauma on children and youth. The barrier reduction survey conducted by the State and Local Collaboration Committee of the Building Bridges Workgroup indicated that front-line workers in education and agencies that provide services for at-risk youth are often unfamiliar with services provided by other youth-serving agencies.

Progress to Date: SHB 1573 has provided an opportunity for representatives from different agencies to learn about each other's programs and begin discussions about how we can work together to reduce the dropout rate. However, not all key agencies are at the table on a regular basis and there is no certainty that current agencies participating will continue to commit significant staff time to this partnership effort. To date, the Building Bridges Work Group has relied on agency staff with other duties to participate in these joint planning efforts.

Recommendations

Directing the resources of state agencies and their regional and local counterparts to address the dropout problem in a coordinated and efficient manner in communities throughout the state will require a bold statement by the Legislature and Executive branches on the importance of the dropout issue. Statewide goals and targets for improving the graduation rate and helping students who have dropped out become college and career ready will need to be set. The dropout issue will need to become a cross-agency priority. Agencies will need to partner with each other in setting specific objectives and performance measures and coordinating programs and services at the state and local level. Adequate support for working together, distinct from service delivery and other administrative functions, will need to be provided. State agencies will need to provide guidance for local entities as to what information about at-risk youth can be shared and the proper procedures for doing so. Professional development will need to be provided for educators on teaching to at-risk youth. There will need to be cross-training of youth workers on how to address the needs of youth through the services provided in their respective agencies.

Priorities: The following recommendations are initial steps to ensure youth-serving agencies coordinate their programs to help reduce the dropout rate:

Recommendation 1.1: The Legislature should set statutory goals to address the dropout problem as follows:

- **Establish a 2015 target for the percentage of students that will graduate from high school; and**
- **Identify a college and work ready goal and 2015 target for students who have dropped out.**

Recommendation 1.2: The Legislature should direct state agencies that provide major programs for at-risk youth and dropouts to develop programmatic objectives and measures to help meet the state dropout goals and to work together to achieve those goals. Specifically, the Legislature should direct state agencies to provide:

- **Protocols and templates for model agreements on sharing records and data to improve outcomes for at-risk youth; and**

- **Professional development within existing resources that informs staff about the latest research in working with at-risk youth and provides knowledge about programs and services for such youth.**

Recommendation 1.3: The Legislature should provide adequate resources to the Building Bridges Workgroup to support the joint work of state agencies in providing leadership to address the dropout issue.

<h2 style="margin: 0;">2. Build Local Dropout Prevention and Intervention Systems and Practices</h2>
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Background

Building Bridges Grant Program: SHB 1573, Laws of 2007, provided grants to partnerships of schools, families, and communities to build a continuum of dropout prevention, intervention and retrieval activities. Building Bridges grantees are required to identify students at risk of dropping out of school, or who have dropped out, and provide those students with assistance and support to facilitate the continuation of their education. These grants serve at-risk middle and high school students and are required to provide all of the following programs and activities:

- A system that identifies students at risk of dropping out from middle through high school and offers timely interventions;
- Coaches or mentors for students;
- Staff that coordinates the partners;
- Retrieval or re-entry activities; and
- Alternative educational programming.

While Building Bridges grantees have been in full operation only six months, they have begun developing the components of a comprehensive dropout prevention and intervention system. [Insert examples]. We expect to learn more in the next year from the evaluation of these grants as to the programs and practices that are proving to be effective in reducing the dropout rate.

Emerging and Promising Practices: During the last year, the Emerging and Promising Practices Committee of the Building Bridges Workgroup has reviewed the research to identify programs and activities that school districts should focus on to improve their graduation rate. The following are important activities and programs for local school districts to implement to improve the graduation rate of their students:

- *Improved Academic Instruction:* While important changes in education have occurred in recent years the basic method of delivering instruction has stayed substantially the same. Many schools use a rich variety of pedagogy but most instruction is characterized by the “stand and deliver” approach. There is a need to establish recognized and routine strategies to be employed when students fail to learn—to relentlessly pursue and personalize student learning for diverse, struggling, and discouraged learners. Commonly agreed upon strategies can be pursued consistently within classrooms and throughout the school, including: in-class tutoring, sheltered instruction, and a variety of pedagogy; clear and consistent consequences for absences and missing assignments; and strategies for home-school communication with frequent progress reports.

- *Alternative Education Programs:* Students have different learning styles, many have individualized challenges, and all require a variety of educational strategies to be successful, as “one size does not fit all.” Literature reviews show that school districts should provide programmatic options for struggling students. Smaller learning communities with more individualized instruction, on-line learning, and alternative schools that offer specialized programs to students at-risk of dropping out are often more appropriate options for struggling students.
- *Comprehensive Career Guidance and Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs:* Comprehensive career guidance and CTE can provide a more relevant learning experience for many students by connecting the coursework they are taking with their career interests. While many youth leaving high school will at some point in their lives seek out post-secondary education, almost all will seek employment. Even those youth who continue on to post-secondary education are doing so in order to prepare for employment. A major factor in the decision to drop out is that classes are not interesting to students. Students need high school coursework to be relevant. They are looking for a connection to the “real” world. The evaluation of Navigation 101 has shown promise in improving the graduation rate and studies of career and technical education have shown that it can have a positive effect in preventing at-risk students from dropping out.
- *Personal Relationship with Caring Adults:* Students often drop out of school because of their own particular personal and family circumstances, as well as academic struggles. A strong factor for protecting such students from dropping out is a relationship with a caring adult. Students, themselves, often cite the lack of a relationship with a teacher or an adult in school as a reason for dropping out. Students at risk have a need for relationships that are characterized by high levels of trust, safety and the sense of value. Relationships are the primary aspect of the “holding power” of schools. Holding power does not occur by simply starting a new program or changing one aspect of schooling; holding power develops strong relationships throughout the school. Schools should therefore intentionally establish policies, practices, and structures that create and support trusting relationships. The Navigation 101 program provides advisors to assist students in career planning. Adult mentors can be found in a wide variety of organizations including businesses, non-profits, faith-based and other public and private agencies. Activities such as mentoring and tutoring, after-school and summer school programs, and work-based and service learning opportunities can provide the venue for these relationships. Struggling students need even more intensive attention and advocacy. The well-researched program “Check and Connect” provides trained staff to provide this kind of support. Many of the Building Bridge grantees have implemented “Check and Connect” or other forms of this personalized support for the students they have identified as being at-risk.
- *Health Supports for Students:* Health status of youth is an important factor in the ability and willingness of students to complete school. Health promotion in schools is not just about encouraging children and young people to eat well and to exercise; it encompasses a much broader holistic approach. In some school districts, the “coordinated school health” initiative has resulted in gains in student attendance, improved teacher productivity, improved test scores and reductions in drop out, suspension and expulsion

rates. To the extent that mental, physical and behavioral health challenges contribute to dropping out of school for some youth, school-based health centers could reduce those challenges. Within a safety-net system, school-based health centers augment access to care and quality of care for underserved adolescents compared with traditional outpatient care sites. Strategies for improved school health that can be considered by local school districts should include coordinated school health programs and/or school-based health centers.

- *School-Family-Community Partnerships:* Schools often have limited ability to handle the wide variety of student needs. Combining forces with the community can increase student success, increase resources, and decrease risk factors. Schools should enhance their coordination with community-based institutions and government agencies to be able to respond individually and holistically to the academic, social, emotional, health and mental health needs of each struggling student. Building school-family community partnerships is a proven strategy for reducing the dropout rate according to the work of the National Dropout Prevention Center. The original Building Bridges legislation acknowledged the need for collaboration between local school districts and community partners to build wrap-around services for struggling students and dropouts by requiring grantees to provide staffing for partnership building. The documents we have reviewed and our survey of staff from youth-serving agencies confirm this need. School districts and youth-serving agencies and organizations tend to dedicate their limited resources to direct services, unless specifically encouraged to expend resources on community capacity building and partnership development. The Building Bridges Workgroup also commissioned an independent consulting firm to learn from three communities in Washington that have had success in reducing the rate of dropping out of school in recent years. A common element in those communities was *collaboration among multiple partners* in the effort. These communities all built capacity at the family, organizational and community levels both to work together to effect change, and also to effectively select and implement strategies and programs for their local circumstance. Current programs that provide some resources for local/regional collaboration focused on school completion, in addition to the Building Bridges Program, include the Readiness to Learn Program, and the Community Public Health and Safety Networks.

System-Wide Planning and Implementation: While implementation of individual promising programs and activities has the capacity to improve graduation rates, a strategic approach that integrates multiple programs and activities has the potential to make a much bigger difference. For dropout prevention and intervention efforts to be the most effective and to be sustained over time, they need to be part of a systematic and comprehensive effort in each local school district community. Currently, school districts are not knowledgeable about or engaged in dropout-related assessment and planning processes that are needed to build a systematic effort. They lack expertise in implementing promising programs and strategies and in building partnerships with families and local community members. However, Reinvesting in Youth, a Building Bridges grantee, has recently developed a dropout prevention planning guide to assist school districts in this comprehensive school improvement planning and implementation process.

Dropout Early Warning Data: Local school districts can also be helped in building a systematic effort through the use of good data. Research has recently determined that there are critical indicators (such as school attendance, academic struggles and behavioral problems) that

can reliably predict which particular students are likely to drop out before receiving their high school diploma. Generating this data is good news for educators, reformers, and advocates interested in improving student outcomes. Specific early-warning data and well-designed monitoring systems can be used both to identify at-risk students and to gauge their level and cause of risk. Patterns in early indicators can be examined at the school and district levels to identify systemic weaknesses in schools that are actually increasing the likelihood that students will drop out. Some school districts, such as Everett and Franklin Pierce, have developed systems to generate this early warning data. They use the data to provide in-time monitoring of student progress related to these critical indicators. However, many schools simply do not have the internal capacity—including time, expertise, and technological tools—to analyze student data, select indicators and triggers, identify at-risk students, communicate this information to necessary stakeholders, and train and support school staff to maximize the power of these systems. Inadequate data collection, entry, maintenance and resources limit the ability of districts to thoroughly analyze the critical indicators and can lead to inaccurate conclusions. There is also a lack of common definitions for critical dropout indicators, such as school absences. Comparison and monitoring of data within and between districts is very difficult as a result.

Recommendations

Schools cannot meet the dropout challenge alone. Community support will be needed, particularly to reduce non-academic barriers to learning. Local school districts will need to build a community action team of school staff, students and family members, and community members to create a shared vision and purpose, leverage resources, share risks and provide accountability for the dropout issue. They will need to create a sustainable partnership, designating staff time and personnel to provide technical assistance and adequate resources to prepare teachers, administrators, school staff, students, family members, and community members for engagement and collaboration. The Building Bridges Workgroup will explore ways to build coordinated efforts for the development of local partnerships. In addition to building these partnerships through the Building Bridges Program, the Readiness to Learn Program, and Community Public Health and Safety Networks should continue to be funded to assist in this effort.

The K-12 school system does have an obligation, apart from the local community, to address the dropout issue so that all students can be successful. They must specifically plan for dropout prevention and intervention, monitor students' progress in a timely manner plan, deliver effective academic instruction and alternative programming, offer career guidance and a solid career and technical education program, provide counseling and basic health services for students, develop individual plans and targeted strategies for struggling students (including individual support and advocacy for students who need it), and provide administrative staff to partner with parents, the local community, and other support agencies to reduce academic and non-academic barriers to learning. It is a sound legal argument that students with barriers to learning will not have a "reasonable opportunity to learn" without these activities and services in place.

Many of these needed dropout-related programs and activities that should be delivered by local school districts can be done so within existing Basic Education Act allocations, provided "basic education" is fully funded. Full funding must be provided for "academic" programs such as career guidance, career and technical education, and the learning assistance program. Also, full

funding for “non-academic” programs related to the dropout issue, such as health and counseling services, is needed.

Dropout prevention and intervention efforts by local school districts, however, cannot be sustained over time and make a significant impact on improving high school graduation unless they are part of a systematic effort by the school district and local community. The current Building Bridges Program must be continued as the initial step in the development of a comprehensive dropout prevention and intervention system. Future grantees can serve as a model for how to plan and build a comprehensive dropout prevention and intervention system in local school district communities. The Building Bridges Workgroup will also work with OSPI to develop a dropout prevention and intervention planning component that can be added to the school improvement planning process.

The Legislature will need to phase in support for additional funding components in order to build a statewide comprehensive dropout prevention and intervention system. Of primary importance is the development of an early warning data system to identify struggling students and target timely interventions. Next, the Building Bridges Work Group will need to continue to monitor the Building Bridges grantees and conduct research to identify the most effective programs and activities, including interventions for struggling students. In addition to supporting emerging best practices, future recommendations will need to address how to provide administrative support for comprehensive school improvement planning, the implementation of proven programs and strategies, and the building of school-family-community partnerships. The Building Bridges Workgroup will also need to work with the State Board of Education and OSPI to develop incentives to encourage districts to address the dropout issue and focused assistance services for school districts with a severe dropout problem.

Priorities: The following recommendations should be implemented as the first stage in developing comprehensive dropout prevention and intervention systems in local school district communities:

Recommendation 2.1: At a minimum, funding for the Building Bridges Program should continue at the current level (\$5 million) in the 2009-2011 Biennium. Grant criteria should be modified by OSPI to provide more state-level direction to school districts to ensure they implement a school improvement planning process related to dropout prevention and intervention and are systematically addressing the full continuum of dropout prevention and intervention activities.

Recommendation 2.2: Legislative enhancements to public education should include basic education funding for school districts to implement and maintain early warning data systems, as developed by OSPI, that analyze school and district dropout patterns and provide in-time student progress monitoring.

Recommendation 2.3: Legislative enhancements to public education should include additional academic resources to support and motivate secondary students, including a staffing allocation for schools to improve student planning and graduation through implementation of Navigation 101, enhanced funding for career and technical education, and full funding of the learning assistance program.

Recommendation 2.4: Legislative enhancements to public education should include improved staffing ratios for school nurses (1 nurse per 750 students) and counselors and pupil support (1 per 500 elementary and 1 per 350 secondary students) and grants for schools to implement and sustain coordinated school health models. These resources should be components of the basic education funding formula.

3. Create a Dropout Retrieval System For 16 to 21 Year Old Youth Who Are Not Returning To High School

Background:

School District Challenges: Local school districts have a difficult challenge in retrieving and serving 16 to 21 year old students who have dropped out and are so far behind in credits that graduation is unlikely. For a variety of reasons, they are not in a position to successfully reengage these students. These students seldom want to return to the same school environment they voluntarily or involuntarily abandoned. School districts are ill equipped to track students who have crossed district boundaries and live in a variety of locations.

Types of Retrieval Programs: Due partly to the reasons cited above, the primary dropout retrieval programs (other than alternative high schools operated by local school districts) that exist in Washington state are operated by outside agencies and organizations through contracts with local school districts. Of these, there are two basic program types – college retrieval programs and reengagement community learning centers. College retrieval programs are usually located on college campuses and offer specialized college introductory classes, basic academic skills (ABE) instruction, GED preparation, and, often, enrollment in regular degree and certificate programs. Reengagement community learning centers are usually not located on college campuses and do not usually offer college courses. They offer basic math, reading and writing support, GED completion, high school credit recovery and/or college academic preparation on a year-round, open enrollment basis. They also assist students in addressing personal barriers to success and in successfully transitioning to college or work.

Retrieval Program Funding: Dropout retrieval programs that do exist are not funded in any systematic way across the state. While some receive local community support, grants, or federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Program dollars, Basic Education Apportionment (BEA) funds through contracts with local school districts are their primary funding source. Unfortunately, for reasons detailed below, many school districts are no longer willing to provide the BEA funding that has been provided for years. The federal WIA monies have also been shrinking. Yet, the cost of serving students in retrieval programs remains high. Students in dropout retrieval programs need staff-intensive, long term case management/counseling support to address numerous barriers and to navigate their way through systems in which they have failed or of which they are unfamiliar. They need specialized and individualized instruction, at least initially. They have emergency financial needs and employment needs that must be addressed concurrently with education.

Programmatic Goals: Currently, most dropout retrieval programs focus on the attainment of skills needed for a GED as well as the acquisition of additional skills that prepare dropouts for college and/or economic self-sufficiency in the workplace. They are aware that the GED alone is

not a sufficient credential to survive in the market place, but is rather a stepping stone to further education. In 2005, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) published a nationally recognized research paper (the “tipping point” research) that provides evidence that attending community or technical college for at least one year and earning a credential provides a substantial boost in earnings for adults. Conversely, students attaining a GED or a diploma alone are much less likely to be able to earn the same amount or to find jobs as easily.

A Looming Crisis: During the past two years several dropout retrieval programs serving hundreds of students who have dropped out of public schools have either been forced to close down or are on the brink of closure because local school districts are no longer willing to provide Basic Education Apportionment (BEA) monies. School districts are working hard at helping all enrolled students achieve a high level of academic success and stay in school. They are intervening with students still on a path to graduation but at-risk of dropping out. It is nearly impossible to direct limited resources away from these students who are still in system and still contributing toward the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) scores and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). There are few resources to go after students who have “chosen to leave.” Also, retrieving students who have dropped out can adversely impact academic performance results. Lack of local school district support has also occurred because of unclear statutory language, fear of audit findings or non-compliance, misunderstandings, communication breakdowns, lack of appropriate contractual language, and a perceived attitude of too much risk and exposure. Ambiguous contracting, funding, operational, outcome and oversight mechanism for existing programs has further diminished local district support. Fixes to shore up these programs have been put into statute on a piecemeal basis, but overall the statutory authority for their existence and oversight is dispersed and weak.

Recommendations:

Creating a system that provides an alternative educational pathway for 16 to 21 year old dropouts that leads to educational self-sufficiency will require the development and funding of systematic, statewide dropout retrieval programs as part of our basic education structure. Such a system will be successful in engaging and retaining dropouts because it will not insist on their pursuit of a high school diploma as their primary goal. Dropout retrieval programs in the statewide system will be designed to provide needed support services and opportunities for remedial education and the awarding of high school credit. GED preparation should be allowed because it is a credential still recognized by most employers, the court system and the military. However, the dropout retrieval system will also ensure that older youth attain the skills needed to be prepared for entry into college and/or livable wage employment. Goals and performance measures that ensure skill gains are made and students are adequately prepared for further education and work will need to be set. The system will also support students in reaching the “tipping point” by providing guaranteed, tuition-free access to college classes—at least until students have obtained college readiness and work readiness skills or turn 21.

In order for these successful programs to continue, they must be knitted together into a geographically accessible system. There is a need to engage entities that have a successful history of regional service provision in this dropout retrieval system. A broad partnership of existing providers currently serving these dropouts should be built based on existing regional relationships. Local school districts, educational service districts, workforce development councils, community and technical colleges, Skills Centers and community-based organizations

need to be at the table to leverage available resources and design efficient programming. The partnership developed must be able to focus on dropouts who no longer fit well in the standard high school system and must see serving these students as a primary mission. Educational service districts (ESDs) are the logical entity to be the lead partner in this regional partnership due to their history of managing cooperative programming for local school districts.

There are two possible structural models for granting ESDs the responsibility for a dropout retrieval system. In the first model, ESDs would have the authority to enroll students and draw BEA funds. ESDs would be responsible for special education services. In the second model, ESDs would form a cooperative of school districts. They would provide the administrative services, but students would still be enrolled in their district of residence. A single ESD contract would be signed by each school district in this cooperative and would facilitate enrollment in and billing to the state through each district. Under either model, ESDs and their regional partners would design appropriate programs. ESDs would contract with agencies/institutions to operate the dropout retrieval programs, manage the contracts, and manage the data system. Contractors could include community and technical colleges, school districts providing regional alternative schools, non-profit organizations, and other governmental or tribal entities.

The dropout retrieval system rules need to ensure that all students (and their parents) who are considering a dropout retrieval program have the guidance, counseling, and support to, first, explore all possible options for attaining a diploma through the more traditional high school completion route. Clear eligibility requirements need to be put into place to ensure that high school students do not “jump” into friendlier dropout retrieval programs – these programs must truly be a last resort when graduation is extremely unlikely. Eligibility requirements will also need to ensure that such programs do not encourage school districts to “dump” students who require disproportionate amounts of staff time and pull down district or building performance statistics. Standards and rules will also need to address program quality, comparability and credibility and guarantee the proper use of BEA funding.

Billing and reimbursement methodology for these retrieval programs should be standard across the state to ensure the availability of BEA funds for the students they serve through a standard contract. While the standard BEA reimbursement rate should be the foundation for reimbursement, seat time attendance should not be the basis. Reimbursement should be based on the number of students enrolled each month and the type of instruction each student receives.

There is a need to develop, administer and provide enhanced funding beyond the BEA dollars for dropout retrieval programs. The funding for dropout retrieval programs must provide enough resources for individualized and intensive basic skills instruction, case management, and other support services. It also must provide tuition-free postsecondary options for these youth. A funding mechanism to supplement BEA funding needs to be put in place. The Building Bridges Workgroup will continue to work with the Legislature, K-12 education, postsecondary education, and the workforce system to develop funding options beyond the BEA monies.

Priorities: The Legislature should take the following initial steps to create a retrieval system that provides an alternative educational pathway for 16 to 21 year old dropouts:

Recommendation 3.1: Establish a statewide dropout retrieval system with goals for students to make significant basic skill gains, complete a high school credential, gain college and work readiness skills, and obtain an industry credential or certificate.

Recommendation 3.2: Give Educational Service Districts the lead role in developing regional partnerships to design and contract for services for 16 to 21 year old youth who have dropped out and are not likely to return to high school.

Recommendation 3.3: Develop a single, comprehensive regulatory framework to guide and govern dropout retrieval programs. Regulations should include:

- **Eligibility requirements based on non-attendance, credit to age ratio, and/or recommendations from third parties (i.e.. juvenile justice staff, foster care case managers, DSHS case managers) to prevent the “jumping” and “dumping” of students;**
- **Standards for required program service elements (case management, specialized instruction, teaching qualifications, access to support services); and**
- **Billing and reimbursement methodology (not based on seat-time attendance).**

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