WASHINGTON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL
EDUCATION · OPPORTUNITY · RESULTS

Committee for Academic Affairs & Policy (CAAP)

The Committee for Academic Affairs and Policy addresses issues related to academic policy. This includes the seven Roadmap action items below. It also discusses issues related to the Council's responsibilities regarding consumer protection, the Disability Task Force, and diversity issues.

Action Items:	Scheduled Meeting Times
• Ensure high school graduates are career and college ready. • Streamline and expand dual-credit and dual-enrollment programs. • Align postsecondary programs with employment opportunities. • Provide greater access to work-based learning opportunities. • Leverage technology to improve student outcomes. • Ensure cost is not a barrier for low-income students. • Help students and families save for postsecondary education.	Thursday, May 21, 2015 **Thursday, July 16, 2015 – 8:30-10:15 AM** Wednesday, September 23, 2015 Thursday, December 10, 2015

Members

Julie Garver (COP)
Violet Boyer (ICW)
Jessica Vavrus (OSPI)
Jan Yoshiwara (SBCTC)
Linda Drake (SBE)
Aviance Tate (UW Student)
Nova Gattman (WTECB)

WSAC Members

Council: Jeff Charbonneau, Gil Mendoza
Staff: Randy Spaulding
Support Staff: Tivoli Farler

AGENDA

1. **Issue Briefs (8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.):**
   a. Student Transitions – Noreen Light
   b. Postsecondary Completion – Mark Bergeson
2. **Progress on Roadmap Action Items (9:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.) (Randy)**: Roadmap webpage
   a. Ensure high school graduates are career and college ready.
   b. Streamline and expand dual-credit and dual-enrollment programs.
   c. Align postsecondary programs with employment opportunities.
   d. Provide greater access to work-based learning opportunities.
   e. Leverage technology to improve student outcomes.
   f. Ensure cost is not a barrier for low-income students.
   g. Help students and families save for postsecondary education
3. **Updates (9:45 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.) (Randy):**

a. Dual Credit
b. Admission Standards
c. Disability Task Force
d. Improving Student Learning at Scale
e. Smarter Balanced Assessment
   OSPI Press Release #1
   OSPI Press Release #2
f. Related legislative items (Maddy)
   Budget Comparison

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Successful Transitions to College

Primary author Noreen Light

Contributions by Hailey Badger, Dawn Cypriano-McAferty, Anne Messerly, Deb O'Neill and James West

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August 2015

OVERVIEW

Primary audience

Washington Student Achievement Council members; secondary audiences are other education policymakers.

Purpose

Provide context for consideration in updates to the Roadmap and Strategic Action Plan. The overarching purpose of this work is to increase educational attainment to achieve Washington State's two goals by 2023:

1. All adults in Washington, ages 25-44, will have a high school diploma or equivalent.
2. At least 70 percent of Washington adults, ages 25-44, will have a postsecondary credential.

Definitions

- **Issue brief.** The issue brief is a short, objective look at the background or current status of a specific issue. The issue brief describes what the issue is, who is impacted by the issue, what barriers are slowing or stopping progress to resolve the issue, and what is being done that is contributing to the resolution of the issue. The issue brief does not include recommendations, although two or three indicators (or predictors) of success may be identified.
- **Successful transition to college.** A student is considered to have made a successful transition to college when he or she enrolls in college and earns credits in college-level coursework which apply to a certificate or degree.

Key Questions

- Who are the populations of potential students?
- What are the challenges students and colleges face in creating successful transitions to college?
- What makes a difference in making student transitions successful?
- What are we doing in Washington State to increase and improve student transitions to college?

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS TO COLLEGE

What is a successful transition to college?

A transition to college involves many stages, including applying for college, paying for college, acclimating to college and completing college-level coursework. For purposes of this issue brief, a transition to college is successful if the student enrolls in college and earns credits in college-level coursework which apply to a certificate or degree.

College Readiness: Key to Successful Transitions

College readiness is a two-sided concept. In order to successfully transition students to college, both of the following must take place: 1) students must be ready for college; and, 2) colleges must be ready for students.

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KNOWING OUR STUDENTS
Who are we currently serving in postsecondary education?

A snapshot of the demographics of current (2013-14) postsecondary students:

Public baccalaureate institution students[1]: 106,823 students enrolled	Community and technical college students[2]: 388,082 students enrolled
• 16.54% over the age of 25 • 52.17% female • 59.25% White • 11.93% Asian • 8.81% Hispanic • 6.37% other ethnicity • 5.83% Multi Racial • 3.78% unknown • 3.21% African-American • .76% Native American • 61% entered directly from high school • 2% enrolled in pre-college/remedial coursework. Of these students, 65% needed remedial math, 16% English only, and the remainder needed both. • 33.11% received Pell or State Need Grant	• % over the age of 25 • 57% female • 65% White • 15% unknown • 7% Pacific Islander • 5% Hispanic • 4% African American • 2% Native American/Alaska Native Need comparable data 4 yr/2 yr

Who will we be serving 10 to 15 years from now?

For the first time in U.S. history, the majority (50.2%) of people age 5 and under are people of color. The other 49.8% are single-race, non-Hispanic, White. Millennials, born between

[1] Washington Office of Financial Management. Public Central Higher Education Enrollment System. (2015).Retrieved from http://www.ofm.wa.gov/hied/dashboard/enrollment.html
[2] (citation? American Association of Community Colleges, 2015.) from Maya's report.

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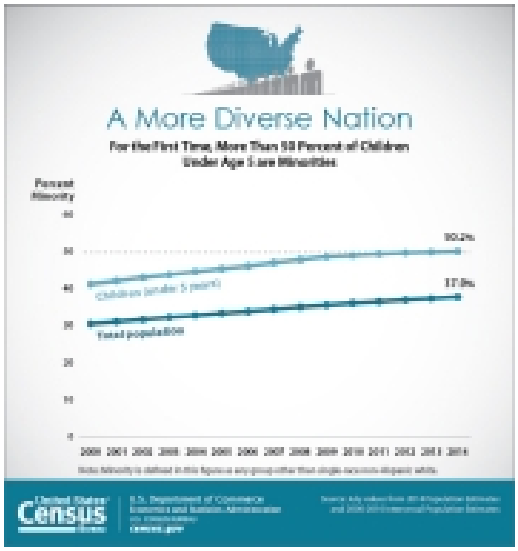

1982 and 2000, now number 83.1 million and represent more than one quarter of the nation's population, exceeding the size of the 75.4 baby boomers.[3]

The average age of a college student has risen from XXX to XXX.
Gender:… etc.

XX% of Washington State students are English Language Learners. That is, they speak a language other than English as their first language.

Societal and workplace changes are exerting pressure which changes the make-up of student populations. During the Great Recession of 2007, those who were the least educated took the hardest hits. Recovery from the recession is placing demands on employees for better education credentials and job training across new fields of employment.[4] At the same time that we move into an era where 70% of living-wage jobs require a postsecondary credential or degree, we will see growth in previously underserved student populations: students of color, English language learners, returning adult students, and students with children, jobs, and life experience.

Will these students be ready for college? Will our institutions of higher education be ready to serve the students who arrive on their doorsteps? This report will focus on the barriers to transitions and the effective strategies to successful transitions to college of recent high school graduates and adults up to age 44.

STUDENTS FACE MULTIPLE CHALLENGES

Poverty

Data from more than 3.5 million high school graduates, found that poverty remains a more important indicator of whether a student will go to college than high school demographics or location.[5] Students may choose to forego postsecondary education in order to work full-time and contribute to the support of their family.

Students of color

Students of color experience harassment at higher rates than White students, and perceive the college climate as more racist and less accepting than White students.[6] Identifying with faculty and staff who do not reflect the diversity of students makes engagement with college life more difficult. Moreover, some students of color may be more social or

[3] Millennials outnumber baby boomers and are far more diverse, census bureau reports. U.S. Census Bureau, 2015.
[4] Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020.Georgetown Public Policy Institute, June 2013.
[5] Poverty the Strongest Factor in Whether High School Graduates Go To College. National Student Clearinghouse, 2014.
[6] Differing Perceptions: How Students of Color and White Students Perceive Campus Climate for Underrepresented Groups. Journal of College Student Development, 2005.

cooperative learners, learning best in group activities, rather than solitary or competitive environments.

English language learners

ELL students represent one in nine of the 49.5 million students enrolled in U.S. public schools – a number that has risen dramatically, from 3.5 million during the 1998-99 school year to 5.3 million a decade later. ELL students who worked while in school were more likely to go to college after graduation. It may be that jobs offer opportunities for stronger English language development as well as accrued earnings for family and college expenses. However, the potential for disruption of the transition to college is also very real, as demonstrated by the delay in college enrollment for non-ELL students who work while in high school.[7]

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities face disproportionate challenges that may prevent them from transitioning successfully to postsecondary education. (citation) Because the two education systems are required to comply with different federal laws, the differences in services – including both accommodations and modifications - that K-12 and postsecondary education systems offer to students with disabilities may contribute to these challenges. The K-12 system must comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); the higher education system must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504).

Academic accommodations and modifications are not synonymous terms. While the ADA and Section 504 require postsecondary institutions to provide appropriate academic adjustments and reasonable accommodations, they *do not require academic modifications*, which are allowable under the IDEA in high school.[8]Academic modifications can fundamentally alter the curriculum or reduce course requirements. For example, an accommodation may allow a student to take an exam in a quiet room or have a reader, while a modification may allow a student to take an exam multiple times or write a shorter length paper. This is a significant difference because modifying the curriculum and individualizing instruction are core IDEA principles. Such differences can cause students and families to have expectations that postsecondary institutions cannot meet.

Furthermore, students with disabilities have difficulty navigating the postsecondary system and preparing for the demands of postsecondary education. Postsecondary education is demanding, and students with disabilities often find themselves inadequately prepared for the advanced level of material and course complexity. In addition to academic challenges, these students often lack the "soft skills" needed to be successful, such as study skills, time management skills, communication skills, and self-advocacy skills. Also, postsecondary students (in contrast with K-12) are responsible for locating the on-campus services to obtain disability accommodations, and/or providing the necessary documentation to receive an accommodation.

[7]The Educational Trajectories of English Language Learners in Texas. Vanderbilt College, Peabody College, Migration Policy Institute, 2012.
[8] IDEA resource: http://idea.ed.gov/

Disability documentation requirements vary among postsecondary education institutions, and postsecondary education institutions do not generally receive sufficient state or federal funding to provide assessments for students with disabilities. As a result, many students who require more robust documentation must pay for a professional evaluation or assessment to document their disability if their K-12 evaluation isn't recent or robust enough for the postsecondary institution's needs. Returning adult students with disabilities usually require a professional evaluation, since they most likely do not have a recent K-12 evaluation. The cost of a psychological evaluation can range from under $1,000 to $3,600. This cost may not be covered by student aid and can be a significant barrier for students from low-income households.

What Makes a Difference?

In 2008, the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) identified the following 17 predictors of post-school success for students with disabilities:[9]

• Career awareness • Occupational courses • Paid employment/work experience • Vocational education • Work study • Community experiences	• Exit exam requirements/ high school diploma status • Inclusion in general education • Program of study • Self-advocacy/self-determination	• Interagency collaboration • Student involvement in the IEP • Parental involvement • Student Support • Transition program • Self-care/independent living • Social skills

A common theme is the importance of work-based learning experiences to improve post-school transitions and outcomes for students with disabilities. In the analysis done by NSTTAC, career awareness, work study, and work experiences in high school or college all improved educational outcomes.

Transition programs and robust transition planning in high school are also critical elements to ease transition to postsecondary education for students with disabilities. According to NSTTAC, students who participated in the Youth Transition Program[10] in Oregon and met four or more transition goals were more likely to be engaged in postsecondary education. Furthermore, students who received transition planning services during the year prior to leaving school were more likely to be engaged in postsecondary education. (specific citation?)

Self-advocacy or self-determination skills are also an important measure of post-secondary success. Students who participated in self - determination skill development programs had higher postsecondary self - determination skills.

A 2014 survey of Disability Services offices at Washington higher education institutions (Link to survey results?), affirms that these challenges and indicators reflect the issues in Washington State. For example, when asked what critical unmet needs, if met, could benefit a student's transition to

[9] Retrieved from http://www.nsttac.org/ on July 11, 2015.
[10] Resource: http://www.ytporegon.org/

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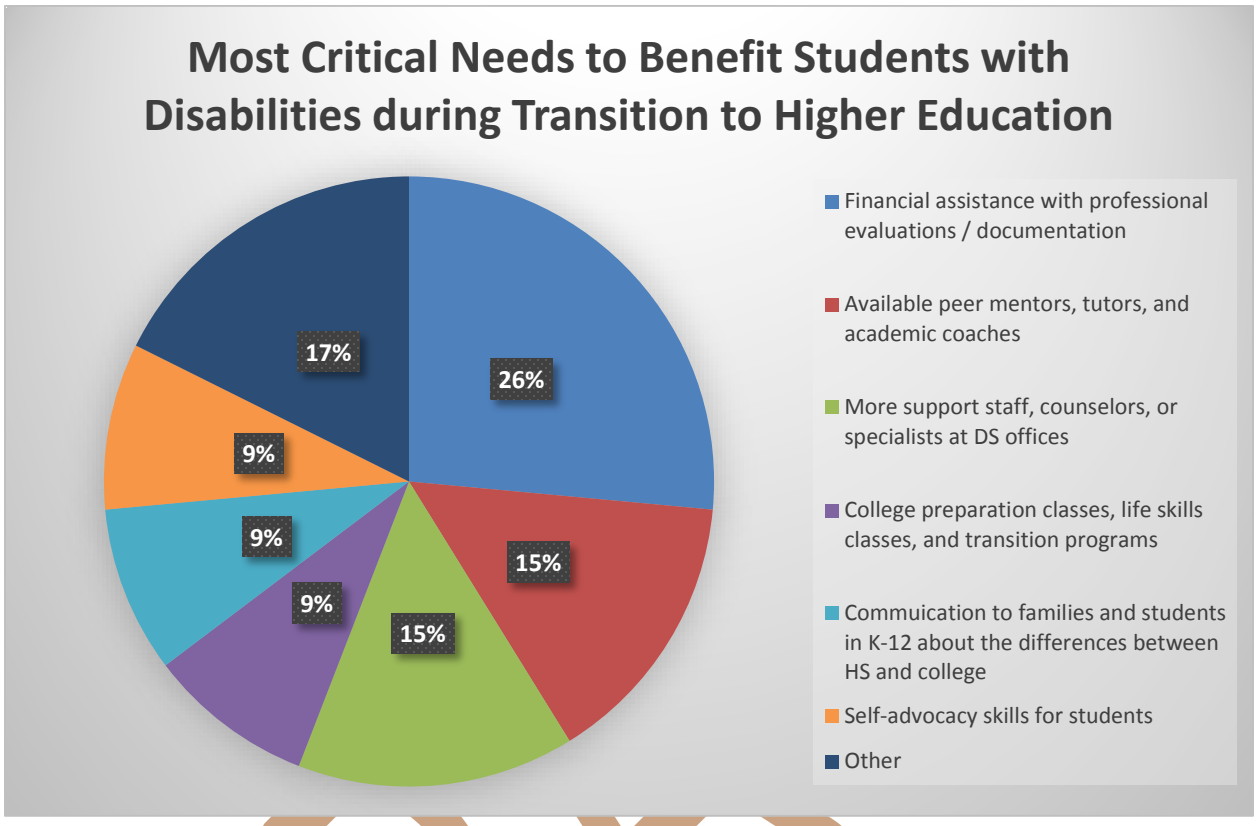
postsecondary education, some (percentage?) said financial assistance with disability documentation and self-advocacy skills.



What's Working Well in Washington State?

- DO-It Scholars (University of Washington) In this internship program, students with disabilities spend a summer at the U.W. campus and have an opportunity to learn about college life. They are placed with a college peer-mentor, learn to use adaptive technology, and explore careers.
- Governor's Committee Youth Leadership Forum (Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment)- The Youth Leadership forum provides the opportunity for high school students to spend a few weeks developing their personal and social skills so they can become leaders in their communities.
- IMAGES (Spokane Public Schools) Community IMAGES is a 1-2 year High School Transition Program for students who are 18-21 years of age. This program is designed to assist with the transition from public school into the adult world. Instruction occurs on the Spokane Community College campus as well as in the community.
- SAILS/Mainstay (Seattle Central College) The SAILS program is a support program for college freshman with ASD and other learning differences. The program provides individualized supports for students, as well as a "College 101" course, which emphasizes time-management skills, self-advocacy skills, study skills, and personal learning.

Former foster youth

There are currently 10,068 children in foster care in Washington State.[11] Students transitioning from foster care frequently face challenges succeeding in postsecondary institutions, with only 2.7 percent completing a bachelor's degree by the age of 25[12]. A study by Casey Family Programs shows that the lack of school stability, with 65 percent of foster youth experiencing seven or more school changes between elementary and high school[13], is associated with academic difficulty. This academic instability is known to hinder student academic preparedness for a postsecondary education. Are students from foster care testing into remedial coursework at higher levels than others?

Financial aid and comprehensive support services

In general, students from foster care lack social and financial support as young adults. Programs that have strong support networks and financial backing, are seeing improved retention rates and students graduating at higher rates than the national average. For example, Seattle University's Fostering Scholars program has a retention rate of 85%, compared to the U.S. average retention rate of 77.1%.[14] The programs below provide students with comprehensive support services and scholarships to help increase student success rates in college.

- Seattle University's Fostering Scholars program provides students with year-round housing, a scholarship, and staffing to provide support services to students from foster care.
- Washington State's Passport to College Scholarship program provides former foster youth with a post-secondary scholarship and funding for comprehensive support services from the college and through a contract with the College Success Foundation.
- Foster youth are auto-enrolled into Washington State's College Bound Scholarship program, which provides students with a post-secondary scholarship.

Optional placement in extended foster care

Former foster youth may elect to participate in the Extended Foster Care Program, a state program that provides them with a continuance in foster care. The Extended Foster Care Program provides youth with stable housing and medical assistance, if they are either attending a postsecondary program or are looking for employment or are actively working.

Formerly or currently incarcerated students

Juvenile students in detention, jail, or prison

Washington State provides K-12 basic education services to incarcerated and previously incarcerated juveniles. The goal is to provide these youth the opportunity to meet the same

[11] Retrieved from http://www.adoptuskids.org/for-families/state-adoption-and-foster-care-information/washington, on July 10, 2015.

[12] Alumni Studies Northwest Report Fact Sheet. Casey Family Programs. http://www.casey.org/media/AlumniStudies_NW_Report_FactSheet.pdf

[13] Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study. http://www.casey.org/media/AlumniStudies_NW_Report_ES.pdf

[14] Retrieved from http://www.seattleu.edu/fosteringscholars/ on July 10, 2015.

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challenging state academic content standards and student academic achievement standards that all children in the state are expected to meet. Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) offers specific guidance to educators teaching in jails and juvenile detention facilities. OSPI oversees the four Educational Service Districts and 35+ school districts that provide these services inside:

- State-operated juvenile institutions and group homes
- County-operated juvenile detention centers and group homes
- Adult jails and state correctional facilities
- Community schools

Washington State law also allows some juveniles to be incarcerated in adult facilities. This complicates the delivery of educational services, and reduces the ability to prepare students for college-level work. In addition, approximately 1/3 of the youth in [U.S.] juvenile facilities have identified special education needs – more than double the rate in the general population.[15]

Adult students in jail or prison

According to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, "Most of the men and women entering correctional facilities lack the literacy and employment skills needed to succeed in our communities upon release."[16] Attorney General Eric Holder and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan shared research findings[17] showing that inmates who participated in correctional education programs were 43% less likely to return to prison than inmates who did not.

Postsecondary instruction is offered to incarcerated adults through a contract between the Department of Corrections and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. In 2012-13, eight college districts offered contracted instruction for the Washington Department of Corrections at 12 correctional facilities. Students enroll in courses to increase literacy and gain occupational skills.[18]

Correctional education programs benefit all citizens of Washington State[19]:

- Offenders who are provided opportunities to gain job skills are much more likely to be successful in the community upon release. A successful ex-offender contributes to the community by working, paying taxes, making restitution payments, and supporting other family members.
- Educated offenders are statistically less likely to commit additional crimes upon release. There is a direct correlation between education level and recidivism: the

[15] Organizing and Delivering Empirically-based Literacy Instruction to Incarcerated Youth. Exceptionality: A Special Education Journal, 2005.
[16] State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Retrieved from http://www.sbctc.edu/college/e_correctionaled.aspx on July 10, 2015.
[17] Justice and Education Departments Announce New Research Showing Prison Education Reduces Recidivism, Saves Money, Improves Employment. (2013). U.S. Department of Justice.
[18] 2013-14 Academic Year Report.(2014).State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.
[19] State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Retrieved from http://www.sbctc.edu/college/e_correctionaled.aspx on July 10, 2015.

higher the education level, the lower the recidivism rate. A decrease in recidivism reduces long-term costs to taxpayers.

- Education programs are an integral part of the "targeted interventions and seamless services" prescribed in the state's Offender Accountability Act. Offenders who attain literacy and job skills are better equipped to find and keep employment, take care of their families, and contribute to their communities.

Although state funds cannot be used for postsecondary education beyond basic education and short-term vocational programs, and incarcerated adults are not eligible for Pell grants, a few opportunities to pursue a degree do exist. One such program is thriving at Coyote Ridge Corrections Center, where funding from the Sunshine Lady Foundation covers the cost of college courses leading to an associate of arts degree. Instruction is provided by faculty from Walla Walla Community College.

An old-fashioned, through the U.S. mail, correspondence program (no internet access is allowed for incarcerated students) is available through Seattle Central College. Tuition cost per course is $554.20.[20] However, with no public funding, grants or loans available, and inmate jobs paying about $.50 per hour, very few inmates can afford the tuition.

In general, education programs in youth detention facilities are limited to general coursework leading to a high school diploma or equivalency. Gateways for Incarcerated Youth is an exception. Offered through a collaboration between The Evergreen State College, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Green Hill Academic School, and with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Gateways program offers incarcerated youth an opportunity to learn about themselves and their potential through college coursework. Evergreen students serve as peer mentors and tutors, working alongside Evergreen faculty and community volunteers. Gateways incarcerated youth can earn college and high school credits at no cost to the students.

Returning Adult Students

Adult learners are making up an increasing proportion of the total enrollment in today's colleges and universities, and yet they continue to be the least understood, the most difficult to recruit, and the least likely to persist. (citation?) The primary challenge faced by returning adults in postsecondary education is the wide range of responsibilities these students often juggle: marriage, children, and often full-time work.

External factors like these can be an indicator of persistence (or lack of persistence), along with prior academic performance (e.g., poor high school GPA); psychological factors such as stress and satisfaction with academic program; academic factors such as study habits and advising; and personal educational goals and commitment to those goals.

Research on the topic consistently identifies four major barriers to education for working adults:

- Lack of time.
- Family responsibilities.
- Scheduling and location of courses.

[20] Retrieved from http://www.prisoneducation.com/prison-education-news/distance-learning-seattle-central-community-college.html on July 10, 2015.

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- Cost of education.21

CAEL has developed a set of principles that have been shown to enhance adult student success in community colleges: outreach, life and career planning, financing (flexible payment options), assessment of learning outcomes, teaching-learning process (using multiple methods of instruction), student support systems, use of technology, and strategic partnerships.[22]

Veterans

Military veterans often have more skills than the general population but are less likely to earn a college degree and more likely to be unemployed. If veterans can get college credits for skills they learned in the military, they would be able to complete college faster and would be more likely to earn a degree or credential.[23]

It is estimated that 5 million U.S. service members are expected to transition from military life to civilian life by the year 2020. Since the implementation of the new Post 9/11 GI Bill® in 2009, taxpayers have invested about $42 billion supporting higher education needs and educating transitioning service members[24]. Mandatory benefits include a Basic Housing Allowance, $1,000 book stipend, and full funding in tuition and fees at state's public baccalaureate institutions. Now more than ever, the Post 9/11 GI Bill® has made college more affordable and attainable for service members to experience a more successful transition from military life to college life. Despite expanded benefits and greater opportunities, little or no data exists on the veteran population to understand success in enrollment, attendance, or variables in degree completion, in an era where higher education policymakers need to better understand the growing needs and trends of a non-traditional undergraduate student population.

What are the challenges?

Federal education benefits provided to veteran students -- $18 billion since 2009 -- represent a substantial investment in the labor market and a skilled workforce (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, 2013). However, transitioning to civilian life after military service may make attending college challenging for veterans. Transitioning veterans must balance job search, and research of education and training opportunities, with family responsibilities; some are also managing emotional challenges or physical disabilities.

Some veterans returning from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom are returning with mental and physical health needs (Schmidt, 2009). They may experience psychological and/or post-traumatic stress, readjustment to personal relationships and adaptation to civilian lifestyles (DiRamio, Ackerman, and Mitchell, 2008).

Some veterans rely solely on their GI Bill® education benefits as their only source of income while searching for employment. Veterans may enroll in college in order to obtain

[21] Adult Education Participation Decisions and Barriers, in Review of Conceptual Frameworks and Empirical Studies. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.1998.
[22] Helping Adult Learners Succeed: Tools for Two-Year Colleges. Council For Adult & Experiential Learning, September 2007.
[23] Veterans get credit for prior learning. American Association of Community Colleges, February 2013.
[24] American Council on Education, July 2014.

their education benefits without a clear educational plan. In the short term, their benefits assist with their living expenses, but in the long term, this path may not lead to accomplishment of their academic and career goals.

With the recent demand for the Post 9/11 GI Bill® and increase in veteran population, colleges and universities are seeking more creative solutions and relying on best practices to improve access, student retention and completion, provide needed resources in academic advising, and to eliminate barriers to increase their success in their transition to college.

What's working in Washington?

Successful transitions for our veteran students require investments in partnerships: stakeholders, community engagement, access to services, trained staff, educational planning, and limiting bureaucracies. Access to career and education advising programs would enable more veterans to successfully complete degrees and pursue satisfying careers.[25]

Washington State is a leader in the development of such partnerships and investment through the establishment of Veteran Resource Centers at the public baccalaureate institutions, development of the Washington Military Transition Council, and collaboration with higher education agencies and institutions in the development of policies for extra-institutional learning. These efforts are aligned with the overarching effective practices identified by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), which include transition support, financial planning, outreach, on-campus veteran support groups, prior learning assessment, and creating a Veterans Resource Center.

Eastern Washington University, for example, has several resources for veterans that can assist veteran students with applying for their GI Bill® benefits, admissions and financial aid counseling, academic and personal advising, and disability services. Other services include specialized tutoring, workshops for veteran and military students, public presentations and speakers, referrals to campus support services, activities for veterans and their families, and faculty and staff training. Central Washington University, the University of Washington, Washington State University-Vancouver, and The Evergreen State College have similar resources available with a separate mission statement and goals that include a smooth transition from military to student life and to increase student retention.

Military Transition Council

By Executive Order in May 2013, Governor Jay Inslee directed the creation of the Washington State Military Transition Council (WSMTC)[26], which formalized the relationship between western Washington's largest military base, Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) and Washington State. The Order gives authority to the WSMTC to collaborate with multiple state agencies to work with local governments as well as private and non-profit organizations. The WSMTC is the first of its kind in the United States. With

[25] Investing in Veterans: The need for career and education advising. Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, 2013.
[26] Washington State Military Transition Council webpage: http://www.dva.wa.gov/about-wdva/washington-state-military-transition-council-wsmtc

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the goal of reducing veteran unemployment at its core, four pathways exist that also include transition to higher education. The pathways include:

1. Access to public two-year and four-year colleges and universities.
2. Private career schools.
3. Employment.
4. Self-employment through entrepreneurship.

Use of the Post 9/11 GI Bill® has tremendous benefits to transitioning student veterans. Federal financial support assists transitioning veterans with realizing college career goals, but cannot completely address college success of undergraduate student veterans. Partnering with organizations such as the WSMTC, fostering the four pathways, and the encouragement of the creation of more Veteran Resource Centers, will ensure student veterans receive the support and resources needed to complete degrees and contribute to a skilled workforce.

What's Working Across Washington?

Educators and policy leaders in Washington State are taking steps to make the transition from high school to college a logical next step for students – not a giant leap.

- Inclusion of the Common Core State Standards for English language arts and mathematics in the Washington State Learning Standards.

Cross-sector collaboration

  - Cross-sector Council supports broader cross-sector, collaborative policy-making, improves cross-sector understanding of individual sector requirements and funding models, and leads to improved alignment of policies and practices.
  - The Improving Student Learning at Scale team, funded through the National Governors Association and including leaders of education sectors, workforce and the governor's office, developed consistent messaging around implementation of the Common Core State Standards, supported cross-sector development of 12th grade transition courses, and the Smarter Balanced agreement.
  - Alignment of high school graduation requirements (set by the State Board of Education) with the minimum college admission requirements (set by the Washington Student Achievement Council) – though not yet a complete match - has been moving closer, over time. A review of the current admission requirements is underway.
  - Bridge to College English Language Arts and Bridge to College Mathematics courses were co-designed and developed by K-12 teachers and higher education faculty to prepare 12th grade students for a successful transition to college-level coursework.
- K-12 and higher education collaborated to implement a cross-sector agreement to use the 11th grade Smarter Balanced assessment scores to exempt entering college students from placement into remedial coursework. All public institutions and many of the private colleges agree that a student who scores a 3 or higher on the Smarter

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Balanced assessment will not need to take a placement exam to enroll directly into entry-level college courses.

- Faculty learning communities sponsored and supported by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges have facilitated professional learning in the implementation of Universal Design for Learning[27] principles in college classrooms, which provide for multiple means of learning and expressing what a student knows and can do.
- Colleges are encouraged to use multiple means of placing students in coursework. Example is the crosswalks that Green River Community College has developed to show how earning specific grades in specific high school courses indicates that students will be successful in college-level math. Course rigor and GPA are often better indicators of a student's future academic success than standardized test scores.
- Student success in the first year of college, particularly for first-year students is improved through cohort-based models such as the Academic for College Excellence, in use at Olympic and Bellevue Colleges.

Accelerating Attainment

Dual Credit

Providing high school students with the opportunity to access college coursework can prepare them for what will be expected from them in college. With dual enrollment credits already earned, students are more motivated to enter college and are set on a path to completing a postsecondary degree in less time.

It is estimated that 82 percent of U.S. high schools have students enrolled in dual enrollment courses.[28] Dual credit options provide opportunities for high school students to earn college credit through college courses taught at the high school, or by taking college courses on the college campus. Students also have opportunities to earn college credit through specific scores on standardized exams offered through Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Cambridge International programs, and through articulation agreements for career and technical programs. The Washington Student Achievement Council includes dual credit as an action item in the Roadmap for educational attainment for the state, and the Washington State legislature passed ESSHB 1546 this session which expands dual credit options and funding.

Prior Learning Assessment

Many adult students aspiring to earn a degree have college-level knowledge that they have acquired through work and life experiences. It is estimated that 65 percent of postsecondary learning occurs outside of the traditional academic environment through

[27] Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 defines Universal Design for Learning as a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice that—(A) provides flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and (B) reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient (20 U.S.C. § 1003(24)).

[28] Dual Credit and Exam-Based Courses in U.S. Public High Schools: 2010-11. National Center for Education Statistics, February 2013

on-the job training, military training, apprenticeships and a variety of other programs.[29] Providing students with opportunities to earn credit for their skills and knowledge not only encourages them to enroll and pursue their degree, but it shortens their time to degree completion.

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is a set of processes that address each of the four major barriers identified above. Prior learning is defined as the knowledge and skills gained through work and life experience; through military training and experience; and through formal and informal education and training from in-state and out-of-state institutions including foreign institutions.[30] PLA is the process used to evaluate previous life experience for academic credit. Prior learning assessment can be accomplished through standardized tests, course challenge examinations, portfolio assessment, and crosswalks between military and work-based learning and college courses.

PLA students are consistently more successful than other adult students in terms of graduation rates and persistence. Studies by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) show that 56% of PLA students earned a degree within seven years, compared to 21% of non-PLA students. PLA students are more successful than other adult students regardless of institutional size, individuals' academic abilities, race, gender, age, or financial aid eligibility.[31]

The Washington legislature recognizes the value of PLA for increasing returning adult educational attainment and established a statewide PLA workgroup, in 2011. The workgroup evaluated national best practices, developed sample policies and practices, and created a faculty handbook to address seven goals to increase both the number of students receiving credit for prior experiential learning and the number of credits awarded that count towards their major or towards earning their degree, certificate, or credential.[32] This is an ongoing process and the workgroup continues to assist colleges and universities develop policies and practices to assist returning adults maximize their previous experiential learning and achieve success.

For academic year 2013-14 (summer 2013 through spring 2014):

- **12,987 students** received academic credit for prior learning that counted toward their major or earning their degree, certificate. This is an increase of 182% over last year.
- **306,308 academic credits** were accepted by colleges and universities toward degrees, certificates, or credentials. This is an increase of 261% over last year and equivalent to approximately 6,800 annual full time equivalent students.

The PLA Workgroup is currently working to help colleges and universities implement SSB 5969 passed by the legislature in 2014. This legislation requires each institution to adopt "a

[29] Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2018. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, June 2010.
[30] Prior Learning Assessment Workgroup: 2014 Progress Report. Washington Student Achievement Council. January 2015.
[31] "Fueling the Race to Postsecondary Success: A 48-Institution Study of Prior Learning Assessment and Adult Student Outcomes", The Council for Adult & Experiential Learning, March 2010.
[32] RCW 28B.77.230.

policy to award academic credit for military training applicable to the student's certificate or degree requirements."

Competency-based Education

Along the same lines, competency-based education (CBE) programs, such as those offered by Western Governors University and being developed through the community and technical college system, also build upon a student's prior learning by allowing students to move through course material at an individualized pace, demonstrating mastery of each level of content before moving on to the next. Students bring their knowledge and skills to the programs and advance more quickly through courses in which they have already developed competencies.

From the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), about the competency-based business transfer degree:[33]

- Students can work through a 90-credit two-year transfer degree at their own pace — in some cases, within 18 months — applying prior experience and college credit where appropriate.
- Supported by business faculty and dedicated advisors, students will earn course credit by demonstrating at least 80% mastery of all learning outcomes in the course.
- The competency-based program can reduce costs for students. Tuition for each six-month term will be $2,667. During each term, students can complete as many credits as they are able. Working at an average full-time pace, a student can complete a full two-year degree in 18 months.
- All content for the courses will be openly licensed and digital so students will not pay for textbooks and will always have full access to the materials they need. The courses will show on student transcripts as regular five-credit courses that will transfer to four-year institutions.

Reducing Cost to Students

Open Education Resources

Mentioned above, open education resources (OER), such as openly-licensed materials and curricula, can dramatically reduce costs to students. OER also support the needs of both students and faculty by allowing for more frequent updating of content and access to a broader and more diverse set of resources. The SBCTC has created an Open Course Library[34], including openly-licensed, free-for-use-by-anyone curricula and low (less than $30) or no cost textbooks for 81 high enrollment, gatekeeper and pre-college courses. The courses and materials are designed for face-to-face, hybrid and/or online delivery.

Other nationally-recognized effective strategies for successful transitions include:

Guided Pathways. Traditional colleges and universities offer a wide variety of programs and majors. With so many choices, students end up confused and frustrated, taking unnecessary courses and wasting time on excess credits. On average, bachelor degree graduates in the United States earn 12 credits that don't count toward their majors.[35]

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[33] Retrieved from http://sbctc.edu/college/_e-elearning-competency-based-education.aspx , July 10, 2015.
[34] Resource: http://opencourselibrary.org/
[35] Guided Pathways to Success. Complete College America, Winter 2012.

Providing students with prescribed pathways will deliver structured programs of study that can be followed through to degree completion. Students gain a clear path to graduation. They are guided through their course selections, accelerating their progress and shortening the time it takes to earn their degree. Adult returning students appreciate the 'no-nonsense' approach to 'just getting it done.'

*Transfer Pathways***.** Many students do not follow the traditional path of entering and graduating from a single institution. Roughly one-third of students, nationwide, transfer at least once before earning a degree.[36] In Washington, more than 40 percent of all bachelor's degrees awarded at public colleges and universities are awarded to students who have transferred from a Washington Community or Technical College.[37]
Students often become frustrated by the complexity of the transfer process and the difficulty of getting accurate information. Many encounter setbacks because of lost credit and increased financial burden. Providing students with prescribed transfer pathways takes the guesswork out of transfer with step-by-step academic roadmaps. Clearly, articulated program pathways gives students access to the information they need to evaluate and navigate a transfer, making informed choices and avoiding courses that won't count toward their chosen degree. Seamless transfers encourage students to persist and graduate on time.

Washington is a national leader in transfer policy. The Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA) between community and technical colleges and public and private colleges and universities in Washington has been in existence since the early 1970's. Over 600,000 students have completed this degree and transferred to a baccalaureate institution. In 2013-14 over 17,000 students completed a transfer pathway.

Reverse Transfer. Nationally, about 64 percent of community college students transfer to a baccalaureate institution without first getting an associate's degree. While many transfer students will go on to complete their bachelor's degree, about 26 percent will drop out leaving them without a degree.[38] In many cases, these students have either completed more than enough credits to have earned an associate's degree, or are only a few credits short. But they end up with nothing to show for their time, effort, and financial investment.

Through Reverse Transfer these students are afforded the opportunity to gain the associate's degree they have earned, providing them a valuable credential in the workforce, while also motivating further efforts towards a bachelor's degree. Washington has just implemented a pilot Reverse Articulation Program between the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) and Washington State University. Previous agreements have been developed between the Spokane College District and Eastern Washington University and SBCTC and Western Governors University Washington. Since these are new programs, results are not available at this time.

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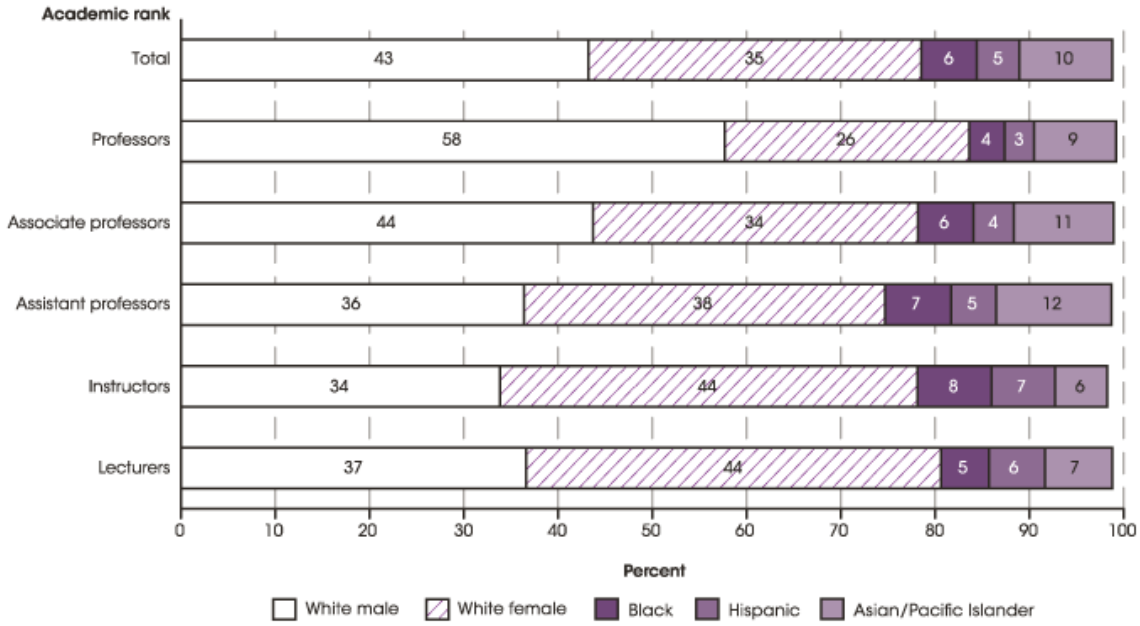
[36] "Transfer and Mobility: A National View of Pre-Degree Student Movement in Postsecondary Institutions," National Student Clearinghouse, February 2012.
[37] 2015 Transfer Report: A Review of Improvements in Transfer. Washington Student Achievement Council. April 2015.
[38] Baccalaureate Attainment: A National View of the Postsecondary Outcomes of Students Who Transfer from Two-Year to Four-Year Institutions" National Student Clearinghouse, August 2013.

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES FACE MULTIPLE CHALLENGES

Funding to increase advisor staffing, and staffing of full-time faculty.

Recruitment and retention of diverse faculty members:

- Nationally, in 2011, full-time instructional faculty at colleges and universities were 79% White (44% male, 35% female), 6% Black 4% Hispanic, 9% Asian or Pacific Islander, and less than 1% were American Indian or Alaska Native or two or more races.[39]



Washington State???

System complexities:

- FAFSA – the form is too long, too complex, and requires information that many students do not have or information that families are hesitant to reveal. From the White House, "Each year, more than 16 million college students and their families complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). They spend hours answering needlessly complicated and intrusive questions that undermine the fundamental goal of student aid: to help more students attend and graduate from college." (CEA and NEC, 2009)[40]
- Information technology infrastructure, examples: disconnect between K-12 and higher ed systems (High school and beyond plans aren't online and don't really go "beyond", limitations on coding items for dual purposes such as CTE courses meeting high school graduation requirements and also meeting minimum college admission standards. Lack of capacity to fully utilize Big Data to individualize instruction and learning.
- NCAA processes. Each school that adopts one or both of the newly-developed 12th grade transition courses (Bridge to College ELA and Bridge to College Mathematics) must individually apply to the NCAA for course approval – although, to be adopted,

[39] Characteristics of Postsecondary Faculty. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2014.

[40] Simplifying Student Aid: The Case for an Easier, Faster, and More Accurate FAFSA. The Council of Economic Advisors and the National Economic Council, 2009.

the courses must be identified with the same course title, taught using the same outcomes, and taught by teachers who complete the same training.

- NWCCU accreditation requirements. Ambiguity in definition of prior credit and experiential learning lead to inconsistencies in award of credit, and inconsistencies in determining whether or not prior learning credits apply to the 25% of the credits in a degree being experiential learning.
- State statute prohibits the use of state funds for college programs beyond basic education and short-term vocational training programs for incarcerated students.
- FERPA limits interaction between colleges and parents of dual credit students.
- Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) don't transfer from the K-12 system to institutions of higher education with a student.

What's working?

- Work underway to simplify FAFSA. National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) states that simplifying the FAFSA is not enough. NASFAA has eight specific recommendations41 for a more efficient and effective financial aid system. The Obama Administration is currently working on three steps: the online application is being streamlined, electronic retrieval of tax information from the IRS will be available and will transfer into the online FAFSA, and Congress is considering simplification of the eligibility formula.42
- Diversity of faculty and staff??? How has this changed in the past decade?

Additional notes:

Access to information about education

- An abundance of information about college courses, funding and application is available; the information is inconsistent, and is found in bits and pieces amongst different websites and sources, requiring information literacy and computer skills to access.
- Advising staff are in short supply at both the secondary and postsecondary level.
- The language of education is confusing: undergraduate, baccalaureate, pre-college, remedial, associate of arts/science, transfer, etc.

Cost

- FAFSA is complicated, lengthy, and for some a seemingly insurmountable barrier
- Textbook costs are causing many students to try to complete coursework without buying the text.
- Tuition cost. Recent legislation to reduce tuition.
- Transportation
- Child care
- Employment (flexible scheduling)

Scheduling

[41] Simplification of the Student Aid System: Eight Specific Recommendations. National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, June 2009.

[42] Simplifying Student Aid: The Case for an Easier, Faster, and More Accurate FAFSA. Executive Office of the President. Office of Management and Budget. The Council of Economic Advisors and the National Economic Council, 2009.

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- Flexible scheduling is needed to align with student's work and family obligations. Online, hybrid, weekend and evening courses.

Housing ?

On-campus Support

- Multiple measures for diagnostic assessment and placement.
- Required advising leading to educational planning.
- Required enrollment in structured pathways.
- Use of technology to streamline services.
- Bring effective practices to scale through professional development.
- Opportunities for students to engage in college life, organizations and cultural-specific groups.[43]

On-site support, particularly peer support and mentoring. Cohort models build community.

Professional development. Cross-sector learning communities to align 12th grade and first-year college curricula.

Cultural competency. Positive learning and social outcomes result when colleges design and implement focused, intentional multicultural experiences for students.[44] Information literacy and technology skills are critical to succeed in today's classrooms – for both students and faculty.

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[43] Empowering community colleges to build the nation's future. American Association of Community Colleges, 2014.
[44] Differing Perceptions: How Students of Color and White Students Perceive Campus Climate for Underrepresented Groups. Journal of College Student Development, 2005.

Postsecondary Completion Issues

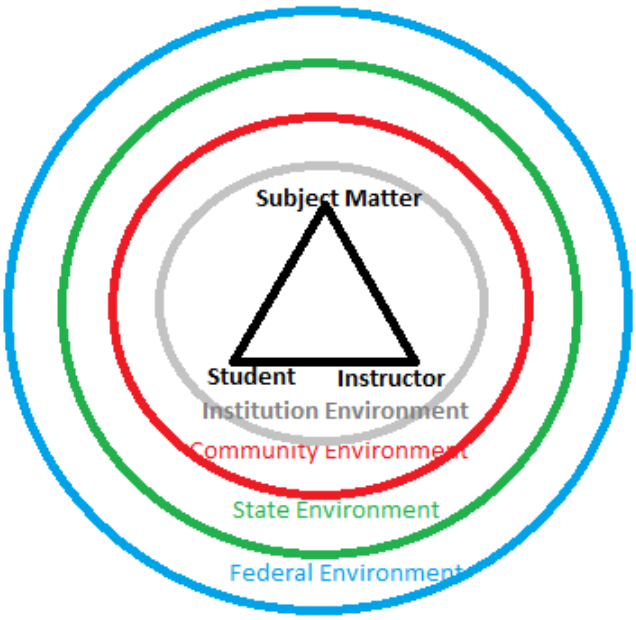
Introduction

Every two years the Washington Student Achievement Council updates the state's Roadmap to increase educational attainment. This issue brief is one of three designed to provide context for the 2015 Roadmap update and inform future conversations about how to meet the state's educational attainment goals. One brief focuses on high school graduation, another focuses on transition into postsecondary education; and this one focuses on completion of postsecondary education by students who have successfully enrolled. Completion occurs when a student persists long enough to finish an apprenticeship, earn a certificate, or earn an associate or baccalaureate degree. This brief focuses on credentials that may typically be a student's first postsecondary attainment and therefore excludes graduate degrees.

Postsecondary students come from many different backgrounds and range from recent high school graduates (typically 18-24 years old, also known as traditional-age students) to adult learners (typically 25-44 years old, also known as returning adults, non-traditional students, post-traditional students, or come-backers). In addition to age, students very from each other along many other dimensions, as outlined in the Washington Postsecondary Education Landscape in Appendix A. This brief will focus on students who experience barriers to postsecondary completion—in other words the students who the state needs to serve better if it wants to meet its postsecondary educational attainment goal. These include returning adults, students of color, low-income students, and a variety of other students facing barriers to completion.

Despite differing along multiple dimensions, all students receive instruction and learn subject matter on their pathway to a postsecondary credential. This learning happens in the context of a postsecondary education institution (e.g. a college, university, trade school, or other face to face or online postsecondary education provider). The institution lies within the broader context of community, state, and nation. These contexts may also be thought of as environments, as depicted in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Contextual Framework for Postsecondary Learning [Note: Draft version to show concept. Final will be better.]



Each environment consists of many people and environmental conditions. Although this graphic makes things look simple, the postsecondary education institution environment is complex, and in Washington the institutions themselves exhibit a wide diversity of missions and other characteristics. For more detail on the landscape of postsecondary education institutions, please see Appendix A. For purposes of this brief, the term postsecondary institution refers to a baccalaureate, career, community, or technical college; university; technical institute; vocational school; trade school; or other educational organization that awards degrees or postsecondary certificates, including certificates of apprenticeship completion.

The graphic is intended to help readers think of the factors that influence postsecondary completion in terms of the decision makers and environmental conditions at each level. At the center is the instructor and the student, who make teaching and learning decisions in the context of the environmental conditions at a postsecondary education institution. Institution-level decision makers make academic, support, and programmatic decisions that affect student completion outcomes. Communities partner with institutions in various ways. State legislators, councils, and agencies make policy and budgetary decisions that influence the legal and financial aspects of the state-level environments that the educational organization operates in. State-level associations, such as Independent Colleges of Washington and Council of Presidents, coordinate, advocate, and disseminate. The federal government makes policy and budgetary decisions. The environments influence each other. For example federal grant money often funds programs that are administered at the state or campus levels.

This brief will review data, policy, and practice to guide future state-level planning. It will provide exemplars of effective policies and practices at the institution and state levels. The institution-level exemplars are provided in order to help state-level decision makers understand institution-level conditions so they can make informed state-level policy decisions.

In order to help readers understand key concepts, the brief is organized in terms of four research questions:

- What factors influence apprenticeship, certificate, or degree persistence and completion?
- What barriers do students face in persisting to attain a certificate, degree, or apprenticeship?
- What barriers do institutions face in retaining students until they attain a degree (or transfer along the path to attaining one), certificate, or apprenticeship?
- What effective policies and practices nationally and within Washington State help students and institutions overcome those barriers?

Although some researchers use persistence and retention interchangeably, this brief will treat persistence as a student-level concept and retention is an institution-level concept. In other words students persist to complete their program, and institutions retain students to graduate them. Similarly, completion rate is a student-level concept and graduation rate is an institution-level concept. Since a student must persist in order to complete, this brief treats factors that promote persistence and retention as promoting completion and graduation too.

Persistence and Completion Factors

<u>Factors at the Institutional Level</u>

In order for a student to obtain a postsecondary credential, she must persist in her postsecondary program until she meets all of its requirements. Postsecondary institutions help students persist through efforts aimed at student retention. Although researchers have invested significant effort in studying student

persistence and retention in degree programs, there is not much related to completion of certificate or apprenticeship programs. Therefore, this issue brief primarily focuses on degree programs.

Vincent Tinto, one of the world's leading researchers in this field, recently developed a research-based conceptual framework or model that describes the most important college completion factors in terms of four core conditions that promote student success:

> ***Expectations****. Student success is driven, in part, by what students expect of themselves. These self-expectations are shaped, in turn, by a variety of institutional actions, not the least of which have to do with the expectations the institution establishes for student performance and those the faculty establish for their students, especially in the classes they teach. Student success is directly influenced not only by the clarity and consistency of expectations but also by their level. High expectations are a condition for student success, low expectations a harbinger of failure. Simply put, no one rises to low expectations.*
>
> ***Support****. It is one thing to hold high expectations; it is another to provide the support students need to achieve them. Without academic, social, and, in some cases, financial support, many students, especially those who enter college academically underprepared, struggle to succeed. At no time is support, especially academic support, more important than during the critical first year of college, when student success is still so much in question and still very responsive to institutional intervention. And in no place is support more needed than in the classroom where success is constructed one course at a time.*
>
> ***Assessment and feedback****. Students are more likely to succeed in institutions that assess their performance and provide frequent feedback in ways that enable students, faculty, and staff alike to adjust their behaviors to better promote student success. This is especially true during the first year and in the classrooms of that year, when students are trying to adjust their behaviors to the new academic and social demands of college life.*
>
> ***Involvement.*** *A fourth and perhaps the most important condition for student success is involvement, or what is now commonly referred to as engagement. The more students are academically and socially engaged with faculty, staff, and peers, the more likely they are to succeed in college. Such engagements lead not only to social affiliations and the social and emotional support they provide, but also to greater involvement in educational activities and the learning they produce.* (Tinto, 2012)

This framework is analogous to the planning, implementation, and evaluation cycle that people in the business world use for projects. The "project" in this case is college completion. Expectations correspond to planning; support and involvement correspond to implementation by institutions and students respectively; and assessment and feedback correspond to evaluation. The analogy is not perfect, but it may help some readers understand the framework.

Though the conditions may differ in relative importance depending on the student, institution, and delivery mode (face-to-face or online); they are mutually reinforcing; and all four are important. The more these conditions exist, the more likely a student will persist. As Tinto puts it "In sum, students are more likely to succeed in settings that establish clear and high expectations for their success, provide academic and social support, frequently assess and provide feedback about their performance, and actively involve them with others on campus, especially in the classroom." (Tinto, 2012)

[Note – need to add something about certificate and apprenticeship programs here. Tinto's framework stresses the importance of the first year. This suggests that it may even be applicable to year-long certificate programs too. Not sure about apprenticeship programs, but there's no reason to think the framework would not apply. Maybe the framework would apply, and the work connection is the vehicle for student involvement.]

Tinto's framework is centered on students and courses. Despite the wide variety of students and institutions in Washington, all have students and coursework in common. Therefore his framework provides a useful lens through which to view barriers to completion regardless of the student and type of institution being considered. That is the beauty of it. However, its research base is campus-oriented rather than online, so its applicability to online completion may be limited. That said, expectations, support, and assessment seem as applicable to online learning as they do to face-to-face learning. Unfortunately, there is no similar framework developed with regard to student completion of online programs.

Factors at the State and National Levels

State and national level factors include the state and national legal, policy, and budgetary frameworks. State and national policy makers can make decisions that can create state and federal environments that are conducive to improving completion. In Terms of Figure 1 and Tinto's framework, this would mean creating a state environment that will help institutions ensure that the conditions outlined in Tinto's framework are met within the institution environment.

Barriers to Postsecondary Completion

Some groups of students face bigger barriers to postsecondary completion than others, and different types of institutions face different barriers to serving those students. This becomes very clear when graduation rates are broken down by race/ethnicity, income (in poverty or not), age (18-24 and 25-44), special population (e.g. vets, incarcerated, disabilities, what is the right list?) and institution type (public and private), as shown in tables 1-4 below.

Table 1
Washington State Six Year Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity
2005 Entering Cohort at Public and Private Not for Profit Baccalaureate Colleges and Universities (University of Washington and Washington State University, 2013)

RACE/ETHNICITY	Public		Private	
	WA	US	WA	US
White	68.5%	59.9%	72.9%	68.2%
Latino	60.6%	49.0%	60.1%	61.1%
African American	52.0%	38.8%	74.8%	44.6%
Asian	74.6%	67.3%	67.9%	77.3%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	59.3%	38.3%	43.4%	48.8%
Native Hawaiian /Pacific Islander	73.1%	49.5%	44.4%	53.7%
Two or more races	65.2%	56.1%	78.9%	75.3%
Other	67.3%	56.9%	65.1%	65.1%
TOTAL	68.3%	56.8%	70.7%	65.6%

Source: IPEDS, 2012

[Table 1 – would be modified to show additional disaggregation besides race/ethnicity: income (in poverty or not or quartiles), age (18-24 and 25-44), family status, employment status, and special population (e.g. immigrant, veteran, incarcerated, disabilities, English Speaking Ability, incarcerated, geographic region, others—what is the right list?) Note, for income could use WICHE graphs on attainment for different income quartiles].

[Table 2 – Same as Table 1 but with Community and Technical College 3 year associate degree graduation rates (for students who indicated an intent to obtain a degree) trend over time, disaggregated as with Table 1]

[Table 3 – Same as Table 1 but with certificate graduation rates trend over time, disaggregated as with Table 1]

[Table 4 – Same as Table 1 but with apprenticeship completion rates trend over time, disaggregated as with Table 1]

It is clear from Table 1 that, although Washington baccalaureate institutions' completion rates are already higher than the US average there is still room for improvement, especially for some racial/ethnic groups. It is also clear from comparing Tables 1 and 2 that improving completion rates is a bigger challenge for community and technical colleges. This is because of factors related to community and technical colleges' open door policy, which means that community and technical colleges admit a higher percentage of underprepared students than baccalaureate institutions [SBCTC help explain low completion rates?].

These tables all provide visual evidence that barriers to completion have varying impacts across different groups of students. The barriers take many forms and often have root causes that predate a student's enrollment in postsecondary education. For example the opportunity gap many African American, Latino, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Southeast Asian American students face during their K-12 education may cause them to drop out of high school or may necessitate developmental coursework during postsecondary education. The opportunity gap is the disparity in access to quality schools and the resources needed for all children to be academically successful (National Opportunity to Learn Campaign).

Before discussing barriers students and institutions face in detail, it is useful to identify the points where postsecondary students tend to get stuck regardless of which demographic group they are in:

1) First year
2) Full time/part time [discuss academic momentum?]
3) Choosing a major [discuss wasted credits from false starts?]
4) [Other?]

These sticking points, which are difficult for most students to overcome, are especially difficult for students who face barriers due to their race/ethnicity, being first generation postsecondary students, income level, age, or other characteristics.

Barriers faced by Students

This section of the issue brief will focus on barriers faced by groups of students with various demographic characteristics. The groups are not mutually exclusive—many students belong to multiple groups. For

example low income students of color who are first generation college students face the barriers listed for several groups. Conversely, some barriers, such as financial barriers, impact multiple groups.

Students of Color

It is clear from the completion rates in the tables above that Latino, African American, and American Indian/Alaskan Native students face barriers to completion. They are more likely than white students to be first generation college students and to come from families with low socio-economic status. Once they are on campus, they are more likely to find it difficult to integrate themselves into academic and social communities within a campus climate that may not be welcoming (University of Washington and Washington State University, 2013). Moreover, there is evidence that students of color perceive campus racial climates differently than white students. For example, researchers have found that students of color were:

- More likely to rate as negative the same campus racial climate white students rated as positive.
- Less likely to feel that the campus racial climate is improving than white students.
- Less likely to agree with the statement "racial discrimination is no longer a problem" than white students (Rankin and Reason, 2005)

This is not surprising and is consistent with stories from students of color about feeling out of place on campus because neither their faculty nor many of their fellow students look like them. For first generation students, this problem is compounded when they visit family because their relatives cannot relate to their college experience. So they suffer a double whammy of feeling out of place both on campus and at home. In addition students of color may worry about "becoming white" and losing their racial identity (Tyson, 2001).

[Insert a box or sidebar with quotations from current or former students of color about how they felt on campus]

Because of the opportunity gap they faced in K-12, students of color are more likely to be academically underprepared for postsecondary education and need more developmental coursework than their white peers, as shown by table 5:

[Table 5 - showing enrollment in developmental courses, disaggregated by race/ethnicity]

This is a barrier to completion because developmental courses take extra time and effort and do not count towards a degree. Students who need to complete developmental courses are less likely to complete a degree. There can be complications with student aid as well.

Conversely, students of color are less likely to have taken a rigrous curiculim in hish school that includes dual enrollment courses (see Table 6).

[Table 6 - showing enrollment in dual credit courses, disaggregated by race/ethnicity]

In addition to academic barriers, students of color tend to have different social capital than white students. The term social capital refers to knowledge of social values and informal cultural norms (Riekenberg, 2014), or knowing how to get around in a particular social setting or environment such as college. It is transmitted from generation to generation through families and social connections. For example, students from families with college-going traditions teach their kids how to engage with peers, administrators, and faculty.

Communities of color impart different social capital to their kids, such as knowing how to rely on each other and help each other out.

Finally, students of color face the pervasive underlying barrier of racism, which takes many forms, ranging from the use of degrading and insensitive stereotypes (Engeberg, 2004) to racial slurs (Bidwell, 2015) and hate crimes (Libaw, 2015). Contrary to what many white people believe, racism in the United States is neither dead nor dying. It persists in three ugly forms that students of color face on and off campus: structural, individual, and institutional racism (see Glossary).

[Should we say more?—ideas welcome]

First Generation College Students

Researchers define first generation college student at least three different ways:

- Students whose parents hold no degrees (Seanz et al., 2007)
- Students whose parents did not ever enroll in postsecondary education (Nuñez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998)
- Students from families with no university or college experience (Choy, 2001)

First Generation college students (FCGS) face the following barriers:

- Insufficient academic preparation – FCGS are more likely to have come from high schools with only limited opportunities for advanced placement, international baccalaureate, honors, or other academically rigorous courses (Horn & Nuñez, 2000).
- Limited college knowledge – FCGS do not know how to apply for college or connect education with career path (Vargas, 2004).
- Financial constraints – FCGS are more likely to work more and work off-campus (Pike & Kuh, 2005; Terenzini et a., 1996)
- Conflicts with college culture – FCGS are less likely to live on campus and more likely to perceive campus environments and faculty as less supportive than other students (Pike & Kuh, 2005).
- Limited familial support for college – Parents lack information about the process of going to college, especially financial aid, which may cause them to discourage their kids from going for higher ed. (Vargas, 2004). They often lack financial resources as well.
- [Others?]

Low-Income Students

For purposes of this brief, the term low income students includes recent high school graduates from low income families and adult learners with low incomes. Researchers have found an inverse relationship between family income level and higher education attainment (The Pell Institute, 2015). To complete postsecondary education, low income students must overcome multiple financial, academic, and social barriers.

Financial barriers to completion include not being able to cover both academic and non-academic expenses (e.g. living expenses and other costs), being able to afford to attend only part time, and having to take out loans (Helmcamp, 2015). For low-income, first generation students, “unmet financial need – need that remains after applying all financial aid – is a major problem.” (The Pell Institute, 2008)

- Academic barriers to completion include lower levels of academic preparation and lower likelihood of participating fully in academic experiences that foster postsecondary success, such as studying in groups or interacting with faculty and other students. (The Pell Institute, 2008)
- Social barriers include low-income students tending to be older and more likely to have family and work obligations that limit their ability to participate fully in extracurricular activities or use support services. Also, low income student parents are unable to attend classes unless they have child care available. (The Pell Institute, 2008)

Adult Learners (age 25-44)

Most of the students enrolled in postsecondary education in Washington are over 25 [Citation?], making this a very important group of students. It is also the most diverse. Students from any of the groups previously discussed can also be adult learners, depending on their age and life circumstances. Because they come from a wide range of life circumstances, they face a wide range of barriers to postsecondary credential completion.

The barriers they face depend on a number of things, including employment and family responsibilities. However, adults do, in general, share some commonalities. For example, time generally matters very much to them because they are juggling life, work, and school commitments. Here are some barriers that many adult learners face (Erisman and Steale, 2015, 2012):

- Unemployment limits resources
- Employment limits time and can put people in the position of earning too much to be eligible for federal aid but not enough to pay for college given their other financial obligations
- Family commitments limit time
- Campus policies not designed with adult students in mind can cause problems, especially since adult students are likely to transfer credits.
- [Others?]

In addition, there are some distinct subgroups, such as veterans, adults with disabilities, or adults with some college credit, whose members face barriers or have assets that other adults do not. Research shows that a valuable approach to serving adult students is to identify such subgroups and work to address their needs (Beasley, Gardner, and Johnson 2014).

A subgroup of particular interest to policy makers in Washington is the state's 900,000 [verify number] residents who have some college credit. For work or other reasons, these people left postsecondary education. To meet the state attainment goals it is necessary to reengage many of these former students. But we will need to keep in mind that working adults want to participate differently. For example, they do not spend much time on campus and do not have a lot of patience for multiple levels of developmental courses or courses that cover material they already know. They want acceleration because they have less time.

In closing this section on adult learners, we note that they pose unique measurement challenges for policymakers. For example time to postsecondary credential completion, a popular progress measure, may work fine for students who enroll in postsecondary education directly after high school but not for adults, who may cycle in-out of courses and programs over time, for various reasons. Research shows that the vast majority of the 900,000 Washington state students who have some college but no degree, are in the 25-44

age group. Supporting these adult learners to complete will assist in boosting overall attainment levels in the state (Wasghinton Student Achievement Council, 2013). there exists a large population of students

[What other groups should we add? E.g. Undocumented students?]

Barriers faced by Institutions

Institutions, states, and the federal government have developed policies, programs, and practices to help students address the barriers students face in completing postsecondary education. Because of the diversity of institutions and institutional missions that evolved in a context of limited state and federal control, most of the effort has been at the institutional level. Though institutions want to help diverse students overcome the completion barriers they face and have devised effective means for doing so, they face barriers of their own.

For example, a 2013 statewide survey of 49 public and private colleges (including community and technical colleges) and universities identified scarce financial resources and insufficient human resources/staffing as the biggest barriers they face in serving students of color. (University of Washington and Washington State University (2013)). Adequate, stable funding is important.

Other barriers include:

- Insufficient faculty and staff diversity (Azziz, 2015). This is important for several reasons, including the importance of mentors and role models for diverse students.
    - [Insert student anecdotes about how important it was to be mentored by someone a student identified with]
- Placement of diversity initiatives at the periphery of an institution (Tinto, 2012)
- Need for professional development on how to support adult students (Erisman & Steele, 2012)
- [What about cultural competence professional development far faculty-it is important in K12 but what about postsecondary?]
- Resistance to change, such as the change necessary to re-orient an institution to serve the needs of diverse learners.
    - [insert example]
- Policy [What barriers do Washington institutions face in terms of state law, rules, or policy?]

Effective Policies and Practices

Effective policies and practices are those which move the needle in terms of helping students succeed. In other words, there is evidence that they work in terms of helping the students they serve. They should ultimately result in higher completion rates for a given student population than one would expect without the policy or practice.

<u>Institutional Level</u>

Institutional retention practices take many forms, many of which are listed in Appendix B (Voigt, L. and Hundrieser, J. (2008). At the institutional level, Tinto's framework tells us that effective institutional practices are those that create institutional settings that promote high expectations, support, frequent assessment and feedback, and student involvement. In effect, these are principles of effective practice. The following practices and programs are consistent with these principles.

[Could also identify other principles of effective practice here—but most will be included in Tinto's. For example, effective practices that ensures low income students have access to rigorous curriculum or support services are covered by Tinto's Expectations and Support components.]

[Flesh out outline below . . .]

Nationally, institutions are doing A, B, and C [replace letters with summary text]. Summarize commonalities (characteristics, features). Here are a few examples of what is working:

[Insert national effective institution- level effective practice examples here].

In Washington, Institutions are doing D, E, and F (which may overlap with A, B, and C) [replace letters with summary text]. Summarize commonalities (characteristics, features). Here are a few examples of what is working in Washington:

[What outstanding examples of Washington effective institutional practices to use?]

<u>State Level</u>

[Flesh out outline below]

Summarize commonalities (characteristics, features) and results, and list a few examples of state-level policies and practices for other states.

Summarize commonalities (characteristics, features) and results, and list a few examples of what Washington is doing at the state level. Frame in terms of symbiosis, working together, creating structures in place for cooperation. Emerging system-wide policy levers which are beginning to bear fruit (e.g. SBCT Student Achievement Initiative). Add local dimensions.

In Washington, we do a lot well:

- branch campuses and higher education centers provide regional educational opportunities to otherwise underserved areas
- College Bound has been a game changer. Once a student starts thinking he can do college, his behavior changes.
- Competency-based programs through WGU and public two and four year institutions
- Degree completion programs
- WA has one of the best transfer and articulation programs in the U.S.
    - It incorporates a continuous improvement framework through cross-sector workgroups
- Expanding dual credit.
- Financial Aid – cost of college is a shared commitment.
- Work-based learning
- SBCTC initiatives – Student Achievement Initiative, IBEST
- [Others ideas?]
    - E.g. COP dashboard for completions linked to ERDC data

But we still have work to do:

- Create stable funding environment – retention work takes time and is hard to accomplish in an unpredictable financial environment. Need stable funding policy at state and federal level.
    - Link to Roadmap priorities

- Create statewide culture that values postsecondary education. Marketing.

National Level

[Flesh out outline below]

- National Completion Initiatives such as Complete College America
- Federal initiatives such as free CTC (not sure if that is an effective practice)

Conclusion

Most of the effective practices occur at the institutional level, indicating that postsecondary completion is largely an institution-level effort. Nonetheless the state can help by making policy and financial decisions that create favorable environmental conditions for institutions to do their work in. This will require advance planning to figure out how to create these conditions. Key questions for the state to consider as it develops plans include:

- How can the state incentivize institutions to create conditions that promote unleashing their creativity to serve their increasingly diverse students?
- What roles or activities should state agencies like the Council consider to help colleges play their role in achieving greater attainment?
- [Others?]

No state level policy will be effective without enthusiastic implementation by the institutions in which postsecondary teaching and learning take place. This will require collaboration between institutions, businesses, community-based organizations and government. We all need to work together and develop close relationships.

[Other themes?]

Appendix A Washington Postsecondary Education Landscape

Students

Students vary from each other along other dimensions as well; including race/ethnicity, English proficiency, socioeconomic status, gender, gay/lesbian/bisexual/heterosexual, transgender, disability, religion, employment, family responsibilities, and geographic location. Along each of these dimensions, some groups of students face unique barriers to postsecondary enrollment and completion and as a result are underrepresented in postsecondary education. These students are frequently referred to as underrepresented students of various kinds. For example, along the dimension of race/ethnicity Black, Latino, Native American, and Pacific Islander postsecondary students are often referred to as underrepresented minority (URM) students, even though the term minority is rapidly becoming an anachronism in many areas across the country.

[Flesh out outline below]

- Groups/dimensions
    - Poverty
    - Age
    - Race/ethnicity
    - Adult with some college
    - [Other?]

Data tables on numbers of students in various groups and trends. Similar to SBCTC people graphic? Similar to Key Facts?

Postsecondary Education Institutions

Policy Makers

[Outline below indicates elements to include in student landscape description that will be fleshed out in future draft]

WSAC

SBCTC

- ATL
- Councils
- Student Achievement Initiative
- IBEST

WTECB

COP

ICW

OSPI (makes policies that impact postsecondary completion indirectly)

Washington Apprenticeship and Training Council (WSATC)

Northwest Career Colleges Federation

[Others?]

Appendix B Retention Practices

[Flesh out outline below (Voigt, L. and Hundreiser, J. (2008). Each entry would be followed by up to 3 lines of descriptive text]

- Recruiting
- Admissions Selectivity
- Academic Advising
- Teaching/Learning
- Academic support
- Academic enrichment
- Learning communities
- Service Learning
- Counseling
- Extracurricular activities
- Policies/procedures
- Internal marketing program
- First Year Experience course
- Sophomore strategies
- Junior jaunt
- Adult learning strategies
- Exit interviews
- Re-entry interviews
- Recruit back
- Technology
- [Others?]

Glossary

Completion means finishing a program and obtaining a credential (degree, certificate or apprenticeship credential).

Completion rate versus graduation rate [to be defined]

Degrees means associate and baccalaureate degrees. For purposes of this issue brief, the term does not include graduate degrees because those are not first degrees and are therefore outside the scope of the this brief.

Developmental coursework [to be defined]

Opportunity gap is the disparity in access to quality schools and the resources needed for all children to be academically successful.

Racism is the belief that certain races of people are by birth and nature superior to others and/or discrimination or hatred based on race. It can be classified into 3 types:

1. *Structural Racism*

   Definition: Structural Racism in the U.S. is the normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics – historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal – that routinely advantage whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. It is a system of hierarchy and inequity, primarily characterized by white supremacy – the preferential treatment, privilege and power for white people at the expense of Black, Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, Arab and other racially oppressed people.

   Scope: Structural Racism encompasses the entire system of white supremacy, diffused and infused in all aspects of society, including our history, culture, politics, economics and our entire social fabric. Structural Racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism – all other forms of racism (e.g. institutional, interpersonal, internalized, etc.) emerge from structural racism.

   Indicators/Manifestations: The key indicators of structural racism are inequalities in power, access, opportunities, treatment, and policy impacts and outcomes, whether they are intentional or not. Structural racism is more difficult to locate in a particular institution because it involves the reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present, continually producing new, and re-producing old forms of racism.

2. *Individual Racism: Individual or internalized racism lies within individuals. These are private manifestations of racism that reside inside the individual. Examples include prejudice, xenophobia, internalized oppression and privilege, and beliefs about race influenced by the dominant culture.*
3. *Institutional Racism Institutional racism occurs within and between institutions. Institutional racism is discriminatory treatment, unfair policies and inequitable opportunities and impacts, based on race, produced and perpetuated by institutions (schools, mass media, etc.). Individuals within institutions take on the power of the institution when they act in ways that advantage and disadvantage people, based on race.* (Lawrence Keleher, 2004)

   [Should racism be pulled out into a separate appendix to give it more prominence?]

Retention versus persistence – retention is an institutional measure and persistence is a student measure.

Returning adults are students who left the P20 education system for a while and are now returning to it to pursue postsecondary education.

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Washington Student Achievement Council

The Legislature created the Washington Student Achievement Council in July 2012. (RCW 28B.77). By statute, the Council provides strategic planning, oversight, advocacy, and programs to support increased student success and higher levels of educational attainment in Washington.

Council Committees

Three standing committees, composed of Council members and top level policy staff from partner organizations, make recommendations to the Council regarding policies and potential Council action that supports goals identified in the 10 Year Roadmap and current Strategic Action Plan.

- The Committee for Student Support
- The Committee for Funding and Affordability
- The Committee for Academic Affairs and Policy

WSAC Committees seek input from various groups to inform committee recommendations to the Council and to inform reports to the legislature on progress made on Roadmap and Action Plan goals.

To continue implementation of the WSAC Strategic Action Plan and in response to recent legislation regarding dual credit, the **Committee for Academic Affairs and Policy** is seeking input on streamlining and improving dual credit programs with particular attention to increasing participation of students who are low-income and/or currently underrepresented in the Running Start, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) and Cambridge International programs. The Council is also interested in input on improvements to dual credit opportunities in career and technical programs, such as Tech Prep.

Some examples of specific groups that may be able to inform CAAP recommendations and the WSAC report to the legislature include:

Joint Transfer Council – Acceptance, award of elective and general education credit, and transferability of standardized exam scores (AP, IB, etc.); and, quality standards for College in the High School.

Washington Council for High School College Relations Commission on Dual Credit, Tech Prep Consortium, **Running Start Coordinators, and previous participants in the WSAC dual credit workgroup.** Input on implementation practices in dual credit, particularly in the areas of Running Start and Tech Prep, and quality standards for College in the High School models. Feedback from practitioners may be collected through an online survey and follow-on webinar.

Timeframe	Activity
Summer/Fall 2015	WSAC staff contact and seek input from partner agencies and groups. July 29, JTC meeting, begin conversation.
Winter 2016	Receive input from Joint Transfer Council, WCHSCR Commission on Dual Credit, Tech Prep, and other groups.
Spring 2016	Initial draft of report, feedback from partners.
	Preliminary draft of report to CAAP.
Summer 2016	Revised draft to CAAP.
	Finalize and format report.
	Presentation to Council.
September 15, 2016	Final report presented to the legislature.

DRAFT

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2015 Work Plan: Review of Minimum College Admission Standards

Overarching Project Goals:

Review existing standards and revise, as needed, to meet the needs of institutions and students, aligning admission standards with high school graduation requirements, and to ensuring that students are college-ready when they are admitted to public baccalaureate institutions.

RCW 28B.77.020(7)(a)
Establishing Washington Student Achievement Council's authority to set minimum admission standards.

Review and draft proposed revisions			Winter 2015
Policy (WSAC website) Students (ReadySetGrad)	1. Review existing documents 2. Propose revisions to policy to align with HS graduation requirements. 3. Propose revisions to language to make documents more user-friendly.	Policy team (Noreen, initial review and draft) 01/27/15 internal meeting (Gene, Don B., Randy, Noreen, Jim) Draft discussion questions for possible policy changes.	
Internal review			Winter/Spring
	1. Policy 2. Access and Support	Randy – individual discussions with sector Council members, Paul and Gil	
Partners review			Spring/Summer
	1. Council of Presidents/ICORA 2. CAAP	ICORA meeting, 02/25/15 CAAP meeting, 07/16/15	
Revise draft			
		Draft of possible policy changes and options 04/22/15	Spring
Partners review			July/August

	1. State Board for Community and Technical Colleges 2. Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction/Counsel 3. State Board of Education	Should this be one-on-one discussion, or could we schedule meeting with small group (ISLS?) to take considerations back to their agencies/groups?	
Revise Draft			August
		Policy team (Noreen, initial rewrite) Meet with Randy and Jim. Randy will email draft MCAs to Paul and Gil, Ben, Jan/Marty and Vi	
Formatting			August
	1. Communications review for formatting, accessibility and consistency.	Communications team	
Final Review			September
	1. Any final revisions. 2. Submit for Council meeting packets	Policy team	
Final Approval	1. Executive Director 2. Council	Council meeting, 10/15/15	After final staff review.
Communications and Dissemination			After final approval
	1 Post to WSAC website and RSG site. 2. Insert any revisions into PPT decks (Example: WCHSCR tour, HS Counselor conference, and so forth.)	1. Communications 2. Presenters	
Implementation	1. TBD, may vary.		

2015 Review: Questions for Consideration

Minimum college admission standards

The purpose of the minimum college admission standards is to ensure that students are well-prepared to be successful in achieving their post-secondary educational goals. The standards should encourage diversity in the student population by recognizing multiple measures of college preparedness, including alternate routes to traditional admission pathways.

The primary goal of the 2015 review of minimum college admission standards, first year (freshmen) policy is to foster alignment between K-12 assessment requirements, high school graduation requirements, and four-year public college admission requirements, maintaining all admissions pathways in a single policy.

To achieve this goal, the following changes to the minimum college admission policy are under consideration:

- **Admissions Exams**

  Option 1: Maintain current policy. Official SAT or ACT test scores must be sent directly to the college or university to which a student is applying.

  Option 2: Add additional test options. Official SAT, ACT, Smarter Balanced test scores must be sent directly to the college or university to which a student is applying.

  Option 3: Allow institutions to implement test optional policies, approved by WSAC. An approved policy would allow individual institutions to exempt all students, or students meeting locally determined criteria from the requirement to submit SAT or ACT test scores directly to the college or university to which a student is applying.

- **College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADR)**
  - **Add a third credit in science** to align with a change in the high school graduation requirements. Third credit would not need to be lab-based. (Effective 2021; note this was a planned change in the last revision by the HECB)
  - **Arts credits.** Adding a second credit in Arts would align with a change in the high school graduation requirements.(Effective 2019.)
    Option 1: Maintain Current Policy. Remain at 1 credit of Arts. Substitution with a course from another core is allowed.
    Option 2: Increase to 2 credits of Arts. Substitution of 1 credit in other core area allowed.
    Option 3: Increase to 2 credits of Arts. Substitution of up to 2 credits in other core areas allowed.
  - **Include Advanced Placement (AP) Computer Science** as a course which may fulfill the senior year quantitative math requirement. (Effective immediately. Statutory change in 2013. RCW 28A.230.097)
  - **Include Bridge to College English Language Arts** as a course which may fulfill a CADR English requirement (4th year). (Effective 2016.)

- **Include Bridge to College Mathematics** as a course which may fulfill a CADR quantitative reasoning and/or mathematics requirement. (Effective 2016.)
    - **Option 1**– Allow Bridge to College Mathematics course to fulfill senior year quantitative requirement.
    - **Option 2** – Allow Bridge to College Mathematics course to fulfill third math credit (Algebra II or equivalent) and the senior year quantitative requirement.

DISABILITY TASK FORCE 2015 DRAFT WORKPLAN

2015 Goals

1. Focus on work we could do without legislation or funding, and where we can easily achieve success
2. Look for more opportunities to create and facilitate assembly of partnerships
3. Prioritize current recommendations but maintain focus on unresolved issues, perhaps these can be weaved together
4. Establish and determine timelines, accountability, and cost implications for recommendations
5. Communicate and share our work with stakeholders in order to have buy-in and support

MEETING DATE	TOPIC/ GOALS	RECOMMENDATION	BRIEFINGS/UPDATES OR INVITEES	FOLLOW UP ACTIONS
JANUARY 12	• Develop 2015 Workplan • Identify 2015 Goals • Provide 2014 Report Feedback	N/A	N/A	-Develop written 2015 workplan -Revise Ready,Set,Grad content -Begin preliminary development of surveys
MARCH 30	• Approve 2015 Workplan • Review and approve Ready, Set, Grad disability content • Review issue brief for AT transferability and survey content	Recommendation #2 Future Work #3 Recommendation #7	Karen DeYoung- **Neurodiversity** Sarah Gardner, Bellevue College- **Autism Spectrum Navigator's Program**	
MAY 18	• Provide feedback on proposal for assistive technology transferability workgroup • Review selected method for sharing best practices • Compare documentation standards at postsecondary institutions	Recommendation #3 Recommendation #6 Future Work #4		-Identify members and send out draft AT e-mail -Revise survey content
JUNE 18	• Review feedback from WAPED • Participate in small group work- "best practice" guidelines for HSBP/IEP integration	Recommendation #1 Recommendation #4 Future Work #1	Julia Suliman, Linda Drake, State Board for Education	-Upload information to RSG -Create proposal for IEP/HSBP integration
SEPTEMBER 17	• Develop a plan to increase professional development opportunities • Review Professional Educator Standards Board pre-service criteria	Recommendation #5 Future Work #2 Future work #5 Future Work #6	Center for Change in Transition Services -TBD Professional Educators Standards Board -TBD Foster Care Presentation	TBD
OCTOBER 8	• Provide input on 2015 report • Update on WATT workgroup	Recommendation #7 All	N/A	-Send revised report to task force
NOVEMBER 9	• Finalize 2015 report • Next steps/ plan for 2016	All	N/A	TBD

Improving Student Learning at Scale (ISLS) Project

Final Report

June 2015

Anne Messerly
Noreen Light
Randy Spaulding

Project Extension and Key Objectives

The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) requests an extension through December 1, 2015, and additional funding from the NGA in the amount of $25,000 to accomplish the following key objectives:

- Coordinate implementation efforts between educational sectors regarding the Smarter Balanced assessment.
- Prepare for the determination of the high school graduation threshold.
- Align communications efforts between sectors and other organizations to produce a common message about Smarter Balanced scores to teachers and families:
    - Develop specific messaging for students and families who receive lower scores (i.e. 1 and 2); create a graphic depiction of paths for each Smarter Balanced score.
    - Produce a clear, common message regarding the postsecondary placement agreements and the differences between them (public four-year, private independent, and community and technical colleges).
    - Create a video of student voices: "What I wish I knew in high school."
    - Maintain a strong focus on the career piece of college and career readiness.

Narrative report

Communication

The Improving Student Learning at Scale (ISLS) Collaborative has been extremely effective in coordinating Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Smarter Balanced (SB) implementation efforts between various educational sectors, agencies, and organizations in Washington State. Although the K-12 and higher education sector leaders work together often, it is less common that we have a group with representation from the Governor's Office and State Legislature. That broader perspective allowed us to engage in meaningful conversations and work to collaboratively align policy.

ISLS has also made progress in developing clear and consistent messaging regarding the CCSS and SB assessment. When the group first convened, there were no statewide communications materials available regarding the SB assessment. The ISLS group contracted with Strategies 360 to develop FAQs for guidance counselors[1] and postsecondary educators[2] and an infographic for students and families.[3] The guidance counselor handout was distributed at two large statewide guidance counselor

conferences, while the postsecondary handout was passed onto various higher education institutions.

The ISLS group leveraged existing work by building a stronger relationship with ReadyWA. In conjunction with ReadyWA (and with additional funding provided by State Farm to cover printing and mailing costs), the ISLS group sent the infographic to all Washington schools, along with a letter signed by WSAC's executive director and a video narrative[4] to accompany the infographic. The infographic was designed to be a tool for counselors to communicate with students and families regarding Smarter Balanced scores; counselors could provide copies for the students to take home. The infographic has been so successful that Oregon has asked to use it as a baseline to create an infographic for their state.

Through our partnership with ReadyWA, ISLS team members also helped develop two interactive videos[5] about the Smarter Balanced assessment for students and families.

Easing Transitions

As mentioned, the ISLS group has been a helpful forum to bring sectors together and allow for informal communication. Partially as a result of this communication, postsecondary sectors (community and technical colleges, four-year public baccalaureates, and private independent colleges) have established agreements for use of the SB assessment in college placement. Students who earn a score of 3 or 4 on the SB can now skip standard placement tests at colleges and enter directly into credit-bearing coursework. The following agreements are in place with each sector:

- Public baccalaureates[6]
- Community and technical colleges[7]
- Private independent colleges[8]

Work Plan Focus Areas

In our original ISLS work plan, the team identified three areas of focus relating to the implementation of CCSS or SB assessments and a specific plan for each one. Below we will provide a summary of progress completed on each topic:

1) Dual Credit
2) High School and Beyond Plan
3) High School Transition Courses

Dual Credit

Dual-credit programs offer high school students the opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school, saving students time and money. With the implementation of SB

agreements, students who score a 3 or 4 on the assessment will be encouraged to enroll in dual-credit courses.

Last year, WSAC convened a dual credit workgroup to recommend legislative language that would streamline and expand dual-credit and dual-enrollment programs. On May 8, 2015, House Bill 1546[9] was signed into law by the Governor. The bill clarifies the differences between College in the High School (CHS) and Running Start (RS); expands CHS to 10th graders; provides funding for small, rural schools and low-income students in CHS; and allows use of existing funds to assist RS students with transportation, books, and program fees.

To supplement the work of the dual credit workgroup, in 2014 WSAC hired two graduate interns to write a report on dual credit acceptance policies[10] at various public and private institutions in Washington State. The report outlined the variation in acceptance policies by type of institution and exam, the type of credit awarded, and some of the challenges for students. The report was well received by members of the workgroup and by a representative from the state Legislature.

In addition, the ISLS group supported the development of an interactive tool for students transitioning from high school to college with exam-based dual-credit coursework. The resources provided by the grant helped Washington to develop an innovative dual credit lookup tool[11] that is included with other outreach materials on WSAC's ReadySetGrad website. The tool allows students to search and compare how their high school Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Cambridge International exam scores will apply as college credit at various public and private independent institutions in Washington State.

High School and Beyond Plan

The State Board of Education (SBE) is the entity responsible for establishing graduation requirements in Washington State, one of which is the High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP). The purpose of the HSBP is to allow students to set postsecondary and personal goals, explore future careers, and select coursework that will best prepare them for their goals. The HSBP is a student's personalized pathway toward college and career readiness. HSBP implementation is up to local control, and therefore SBE has provided guidance[12] on what plan components should be included in a high-quality HSBP, including is a recommendation that students consider dual-credit courses.

Students, families, and educators will now be able to use the HSBP as a resource to chart a student's pathway based on their SB scores, as depicted in this infographic.[13] The goals a student sets in their HSBP should be informed by their SB scores and reflect areas they need improvement, and also build on students' strengths. WSAC staff will be presenting sessions at upcoming conferences for educators based on this theme.

High School Transition Courses

Washington has developed and piloted Bridge to College transition courses[14] for students who score a 2 on the Smarter Balanced Assessment to get them on the pathway to college and career readiness. Implementation of these courses is now being brought to scale.

The Bridge to College Mathematics course is grounded in the Southern Regional Education Board's Math Ready course. Intended for students heading for college pathways not requiring calculus, the curriculum emphasizes: modeling with mathematics and the Common Core Standards for Mathematical Practice; a variety of essential standards from Algebra I, statistics, and geometry; and the Algebra II standards agreed to as essential college- and career-readiness standards for most students. The course emphasizes student engagement based heavily on conceptual teaching and learning.

The Bridge to College English Language Arts course is grounded in building critical reading, academic writing, speaking and listening, research and inquiry, and language use as defined by the new state English Language Arts (ELA) learning standards for high school (CCSS). By the end of the course, students will use strategies for critical reading, argumentative writing, and independent thinking while reading unfamiliar texts and responding to them in discussion and writing. The course will also develop essential habits of mind necessary for student success in college, including independence, productive persistence, and metacognition.

Responses to the following reflection questions

What factors in your state make advancing college and career-readiness standards particularly challenging? How have you used this project to address those challenges? What challenges remain and how have you planned to address them?

Washington State is in a time of change. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Smarter Balanced (SB) assessments resulted from a need for increased academic rigor and equity in schools across the nation. Although the more challenging standards will benefit students and society in the long term, they have created many short-term challenges. Washington State is in the process of addressing these challenges, and the ISLS group has been able to identify issues and plan proactively for the future.

An important challenge related to SB in Washington is preparing teachers for the new standards and preparing administrators at 295 separate school districts for the new standards and assessment system. Although there are many resources available, reaching all educators is daunting. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is doing great work to support teachers. For example, in addition to the

Washington State Fellows Network and ongoing face-to-face professional learning opportunities, OSPI provides a full suite of informational and instructional support materials on their Teaching and Learning web page.[15] The Smarter Balanced Digital Library provides additional instructional tools and resources for educators. One member of the ISLS team is a senior policy analyst at the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB), which has incorporated Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in their pre-service program standards for educators. And WSAC administers a federally funded professional development program called *Educators for the 21st Century* under Title II of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Currently, WSAC is collaborating with OSPI to administer two professional development projects designed to help 6th-12th grade educators implement the CCSS and the state's science standards.

Educators would also benefit from resources that would allow them to clearly communicate pathways to college and careers to all students and parents. Currently, there is no clear messaging to describe the pathway for students who score a 1 on the high school SB assessment. The ISLS group will address this communication need through an infographic or handout explaining specific paths for each of the four scores.

Washington State's exit exams and graduation requirements are also changing, and the SB will be added as a graduation requirement for students graduating in 2016-2019. The State Board of Education (SBE) will set the SB exit exam cut score for high school graduation on August 5, 2015, which will be lower than the college and career ready cut score used for 11th grade accountability.

There is some confusion among students, families, and schools about the new requirements and exams, especially because they are changing each year. To remedy this, SBE has created an interactive webpage[16] that shows the changing graduation requirements each year.

There are additional challenges for students with disabilities, who may be exempt from statewide testing and have alternative options for graduation. More communication is needed for these students and families with the changes in graduation and testing requirements.

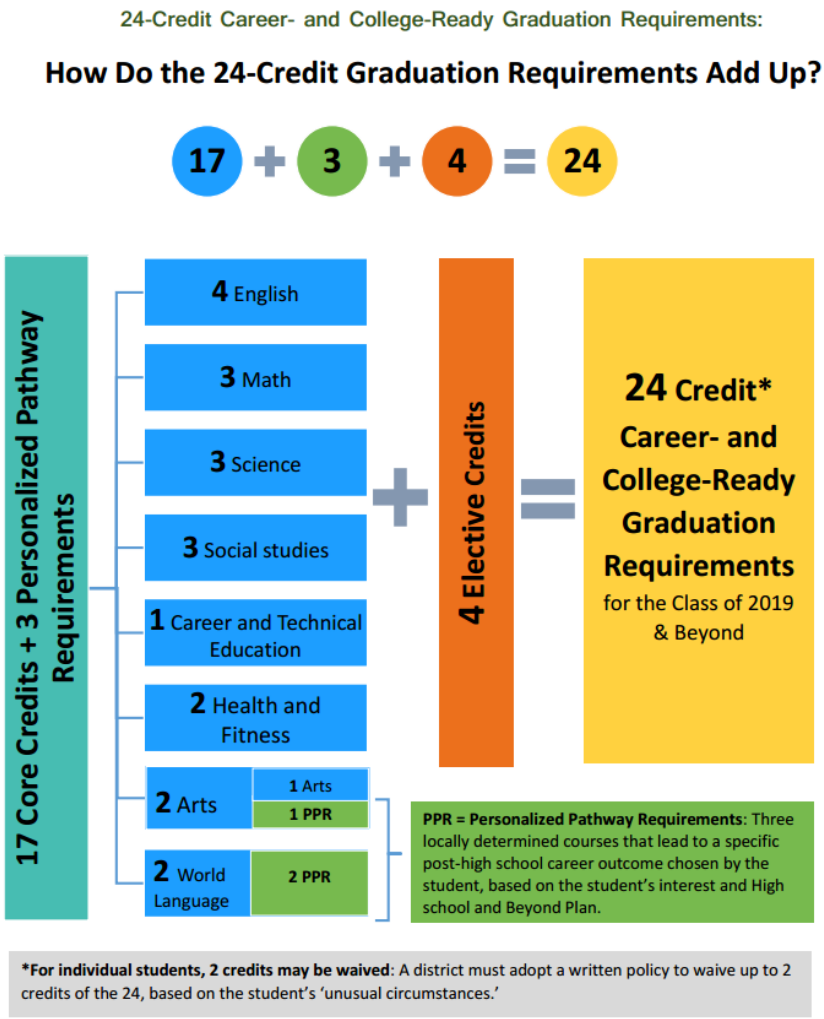
In Washington State, community colleges serve students who need Adult Basic Education classes or remedial coursework to prepare for entry-level college coursework. We are hopeful that with more rigorous standards at the K-12 level, the number of students needing to take these courses will decrease. However, for those students who are over 18, and scoring at the level 1, an option to continue their Basic Education on the higher education campus may be fitting. If so, it may be helpful to have a broader lens for what qualifies for the Basic Education Allocation.

Another challenging factor for Washington is that the state is not yet as far along on the career readiness aspect of the standards as the college readiness aspect. Much has

been accomplished to improve college readiness and transitions from K-12 to postsecondary education, including expansion of dual-credit courses, creation of transition Bridge to College courses, and SB placement agreements at postsecondary institutions. Future work for ISLS will include a stronger focus on career readiness, and possibly creating a statewide definition for career readiness.

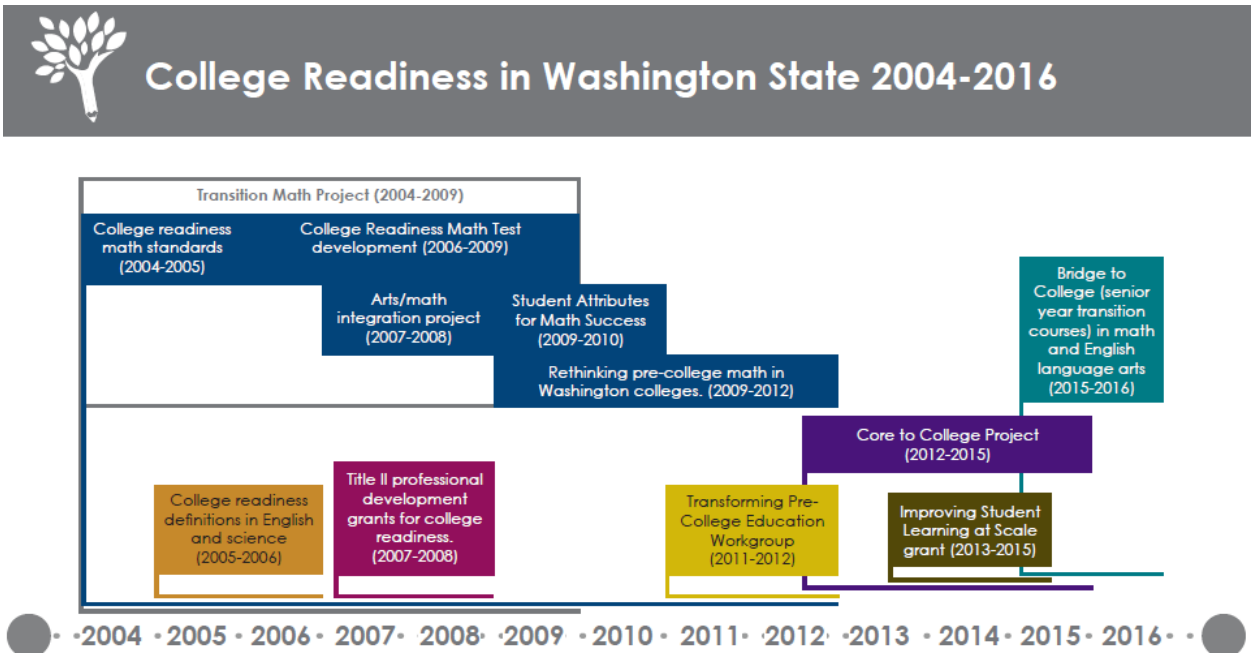
What factors in your state are advantageous to advancing college and career-readiness standards? How have you used these advantages to leverage support for improving college and career readiness?

Washington State has many strengths that help advance college- and career-readiness standards. Washington adopted career- and college-ready graduation requirements and diploma for the class of 2019. These more rigorous standards include a new 24-credit framework and more Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses. Below is a visual depiction of the requirements.



Source: State Board of Education website[17]

Another strength is Washington's history of cross-sector collaboration among state education agencies and organizations. Washington has a number of entities working on various education initiatives and policy, which can be difficult if efforts are not coordinated. Washington has succeeded in joining our efforts in the past, especially related to college readiness. Below is a list of some of Washington's college readiness efforts since 2004. All of these projects had cross-sector representation and couldn't have been successful without input from all educational partners.



Washington also has a strong early learning system, overseen by the Department of Early Learning (DEL). The Early Learning Advisory Council is a cross-sector group with the goal of providing input to DEL. The Council includes early learning providers, statewide regional advisors, K-12, higher education, and the Governor's Office. This broad representation ensures that our early learning system is always focused on the whole continuum of education, and not solely birth to five years of age. DEL also offers a number of educational assistive programs for eligible children and families, such as ECEAP and Head Start.[18]

In the arena of teacher preparation, Washington created the Teacher Principal Evaluation Project in 2010. Through eight pilot projects, districts developed criteria for evaluations, created evaluation forms, and identified appropriate measures of student growth. Statewide implementation began after the pilot projects. This represented a transformation in how we evaluate teachers and principals. Anecdotally, some

principals are saying this new framework allows for some of the best conversations they have had with teachers.

Lastly, Washington State has developed outstanding capacity to link data across sectors. The Education Research and Data Center (ERDC)[19] "conducts analyses of early learning, K-12, and higher education programs and education and workforce issues across the P-20 system." As a state we need to continue to improve our ability to analyze these rich data sources to provide better information to policymakers and practitioners.

What are the steps your state needs to take next? How will your state address these steps OR What is your state's sustainability strategy? What forms of assistance will be helpful to your state going forward?

To prepare for the upcoming Smarter Balanced score release in August, much more internal and external communication will be needed. Some of this work is being done by the ReadyWashington (ReadyWA) coalition,[20] which is composed of some of the same members as ISLS. ReadyWA has created many communications materials for students and families related to the CCSS and SB assessments (some in collaboration with ISLS), including handouts, FAQs, videos, and more. Many of the resources have been translated into multiple languages. Some of the future work includes tele-town halls and putting information in students' back to school packets. ISLS plans to continue coordinating efforts with ReadyWA and building more of an infrastructure around their communications materials.

Specifically, some of the communications materials we would like to create are:

- A student voices video: "What I wish I knew in high school"
- A visual depiction of the paths/options for students who receive lower SB scores (1 or 2)
- A handout, document, or graphic that provides information and explains differences between the Smarter Balanced postsecondary placement agreements
- An informational insert about dual credit options to be included with the score reports for the SB assessment.
- A document that provides resources for parents, explaining the SB assessment, the system of testing, and how they can better communicate with and help their kids
- A document/graphic depicting the changing exit exams and/or graduation requirements

We will also need to deepen and broaden our communication within educational sectors, particularly postsecondary education. In the past, Washington higher

education institutions have been hesitant to get involved in K-12 issues. Higher education institutions in Washington have taken a great step by establishing postsecondary placement agreements for students who demonstrate they are college ready on the SB assessment. However, higher education could do more to take a stronger stance in support of the new standards. One way to encourage this would be to get more colleges to sign in support of *Higher Ed for Higher Standards*. [21]

In addition, we need to align communications efforts between sectors and other organizations to produce a common message to educators about Smarter Balanced scores. We plan to accomplish by this creating joint messaging among team member organizations at upcoming conferences. That is, as ISLS team agencies present at the wide range of conferences over the next year, each presentation could include key messaging about the SB assessments, Bridge Courses and SB placement agreements. Conference examples include: Washington Educators' Conference, Washington State School Directors' Association Annual Conference, Washington School Counselors Summer Institute, and the Parent Teacher Association Conference.

In all efforts, the ISLS team will seek the support of K-12 teacher partners who can serve as advocates or spokespeople in a community. Materials will also highlight the districts where testing and communication goes well.

Financial assistance from the NGA will make these communications ideas a reality. In addition, it would be helpful to have one more cross-state meeting to share lessons learned amongst the early adopter states.

What benefits did your state realize from participation in this project? What were the project's successes and challenges?

It has been extremely valuable to have a space where all sectors and groups are represented in a single forum, and where open conversations about challenges, bumps along the road, and strategies for successful implementation can be shared. Cross-state meetings have allowed state participants to learn from other states facing the same challenges, have dedicated team time, and build relationships.

Tangible products of the ISLS work include the materials developed with the optional $10,000 communication funds. The ISLS group contracted with Strategies 360 to develop FAQs for guidance counselors [22]and postsecondary educators [23]and an infographic for students and families.[24] The ISLS group coordinated with ReadyWA to send the infographic to all Washington schools, along with a letter and a video narrative [25]to accompany the infographic.

Another success has been that the ISLS forum has allowed for the various postsecondary sectors (community and technical colleges, four-year public

baccalaureates, and private independent colleges) to have an open space to communicate. This led to the postsecondary placement agreements that each sector has now established:

- Public baccalaureates [26]
- Community and technical colleges [27]
- Private independent colleges [28]

Of the meetings, support, and financial resources provided to your state, what was most helpful? What could be improved in future projects?

Team members found it helpful that WSAC staff were able to provide facilitation and convene meetings, since our agency's mission has a lot of overlap with this work. Please note that we used some of our contractual funding to help with staff salary for the project leads, Anne Messerly and Noreen Light.

Technical assistance from NGA staff was also quite valuable. Kate Nielson and Sarah Silverman were both proactive and responsive in their communications with the ISLS team and WSAC staff, and they attended many of our team meetings. It was also helpful that NGA staff provided us with resources and research along the way that they thought might be helpful.

For future projects, it may be useful to have more funding dedicated specifically to communications. The $10,000.00 was certainly appreciated, however we found the need to supplement this amount through other sources. ReadyWA sought and received funding through State Farm Insurance to distribute the final infographic product to all schools.

In all, we would like to express our gratitude for the financial support, technical assistance, and skilled facilitation provided through the funding partners. Much of the work accomplished through the ISLS team would not have been possible without this support.

Contact the Authors

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