

An Overview of the Council

Our purpose

The broad mission of the Washington Student Achievement Council is to increase educational attainment in Washington. The Council proposes ways to continually adapt the state's educational institutions to evolving needs, and it emphasizes the economic, social, and civic benefits of higher education.

How we support student access

The Council is a cabinet-level state agency composed of nine members. Five Governor appointees (including one higher education student) represent the public, and the remaining four represent major education sectors. A staff of about 100 supports the Council's work.

The Council provides a variety of programs and services to promote student success and educational achievement:

- **State financial aid** programs help keep college affordable for all.
- **The GET** (Guaranteed Education Tuition) program helps families save for college.
- **Early outreach** and success programs target under-represented middle and high school students (College Bound Scholarship; GEAR UP).
- **College admission standards**, transfer and articulation policies, and credit-for-life-experience guidelines support student preparation, progress and completion.
- **Authorization of** out-of-state institutions to operate in Washington protects students as education consumers.
- **Advocacy for students** and a more seamless statewide higher education system promote access, success, affordability, and accountability.



The Ten-Year Roadmap

The Council's top priority for 2013, the Ten-Year Roadmap, will outline strategies and policies for increasing educational attainment in Washington.

The Roadmap, which is due to the Legislature in December, will focus on five educational issues representing both obstacles and opportunities for improving Washington's P-20 education system:

1. **Student readiness**
2. **Affordability**
3. **Institutional capacity and student success**
4. **Capturing the potential of technology**
5. **Stable and accountable funding**

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A closer look at the Council's work

The Legislature created the Washington Student Achievement Council in 2012 to address concerns that too few Washington residents are completing postsecondary education programs. Increased educational attainment is critical to the state's social and economic well being.

A Roadmap for educational attainment

The Council is required to propose goals for increasing educational attainment and to suggest ways of achieving them, taking into account current economic conditions and resources. Priorities are established in the 10-year Roadmap; recommendations for addressing the priorities are contained in a Strategic Action Plan updated every two years.

The first Strategic Action Plan, adopted in late 2012, identified five topics for more intense examination in the Roadmap: Student Readiness, Affordability, Institutional Capacity and Student Success, Technology, and Funding.

In early 2013, the Council launched the Roadmap process with a listening tour to hear from citizens in eight communities across the state. Several themes emerged that will help shape the Roadmap report:

1. Collaboration and innovation happen locally but must be encouraged statewide.
2. Promote "systems thinking" to support students.
3. Be cautious of change for change sake.
4. "One size fits all" solutions may not be best.
5. Consider socioeconomic factors in solutions.
6. Funding and prioritization are critical.

Next Steps

Leaders from the education community are collaborating with Council members and staff to examine issue areas and develop the final Roadmap. The Council is expected to adopt the Roadmap in November and forward it to the Legislature and Governor by December 2013.



Raising educational attainment benefits the economy and society

As educational attainment increases, students develop into citizens who are more capable of critical thinking, more aware of their world and its diversity, more creative in their problem-solving, and more successful in addressing social and economic challenges of the future.

Education is perhaps the most important engine of economic growth and individual and financial health. Success in growing a stronger economy and democracy and lifting incomes and well-being depends upon increasing educational attainment.

— Council Authorizing Legislation