

Eliminating Gaps

Eliminating gaps will require the collaboration of all members of a community, not just staff in a school building and students' families.



Building
Administrator

Data

Educators

Family

Community

Student Support

Transitions

Eliminating gaps will require changes in how I think about and work in the following areas:

Data — what and how data is collected; who sees it and how it is used.

Educators — recruitment, hiring, placement, retention, and training.

Family/community — engagement in students' education.

Student support — academic, physical, social-emotional, and cultural.

Transitions — students' transitions from one academic level to the next.

As a building administrator, what I do makes a difference!

Data: I need to consider multiple data elements and use data differently.

- **Data systems:** What data do I intentionally, consistently gather? Does our school gather data about the talents and strengths of students or about the activities in which students are engaged? Where are they doing well? How do I organize all of the data my school gathers about students into one place and make it understandable and accessible to my staff, the students, and their families? How do I ensure that staff, students, and families know how to interpret the data and what to do with the information they have? Do I disaggregate data into ethnic subgroups (i.e. not only "Asian" but also "Vietnamese", "Cambodian", etc.) to look at specific patterns?
- **Equity:** How do I ensure that students are represented equitably in SPED, 504, LAP, ELL, gifted and honors programs based on the demographics of my school? How do I analyze the performance of students being served in these programs? How do I evaluate attendance and discipline referrals?
- **Assessments:** How do I ensure that all teachers are using formative assessments to catch learning gaps early? How do I expect teachers to use the results of formative and summative assessments to increase student performance? How do I look intentionally for performance gaps in my building data (grades and assessments)?

Educators: I need to become more effective as a leader.

- **Leadership:** Are my walk and talk consistent when it comes to talking about the performance of students of color in my school? How do I demonstrate cultural competence? Does my staff believe I have "fire in my gut" for really doing what I know works to close opportunity and access gaps? Do I consider equity and social justice as I hire and build my school improvement plan? What motivates my passion for an equitable education for all children?
- **Placement:** How do I place teachers intentionally so students are matched with the teacher who best meets their needs? How do I ensure that my teachers are at least NCLB qualified and teaching in his/her endorsement area? How do I ensure that the most effective teachers are placed with the students in greatest need? What efforts do I make to hire qualified teachers who look like and understand the cultures of the students they are serving?
- **Professional development:** How do I create a climate in my building of collaboration and continuing growth? How do I use a school-wide professional development plan to address the patterns I see in my data? How do I tie professional development for individual teachers to evaluation? How do I engage the community in celebrating the work of my educators?
- **Communication:** Do I know the names of all staff and students? Do I model the importance of strong relationships and clear communication? How do I ensure that teachers are able to communicate clearly and effectively with all students and families? How do I provide access to translators and interpreters? How do I ensure that teachers all have the skills and resources to differentiate instruction in a way that recognizes different learning styles, with cultural and linguistic relevance?

As a building administrator, what I do makes a difference!

Family/community: I need to engage families and communities.

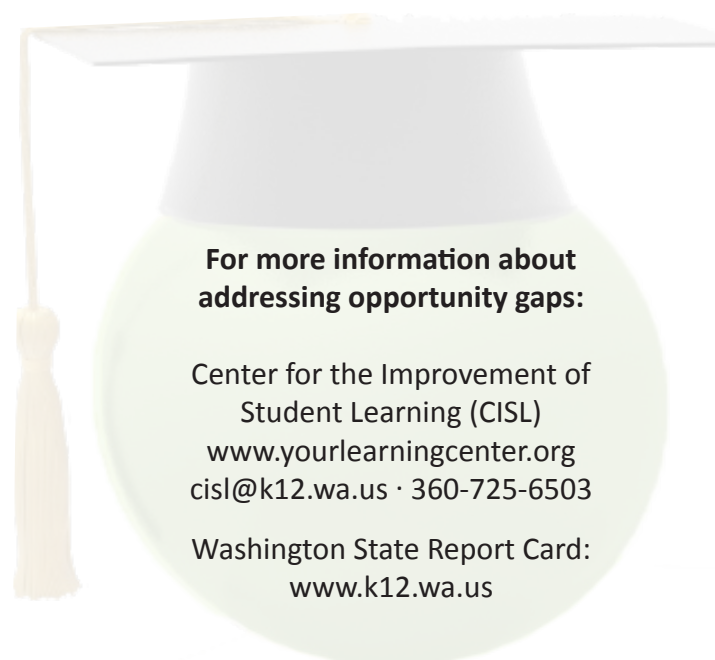
- **Engagement plan:** What is my school-wide plan to engage family and community? How do I ensure that families feel welcome in my building? Do I go out of my way to greet families when they are in my building or when I see them in the community? How do I ensure that families are welcomed in the building by all staff?
- **Community partnerships:** Do I encourage staff to connect with families and community members off-campus? Do I partner with family/community to bring guest speakers, tutors and mentors into my building?
- **Participation:** How can families provide feedback about the experience for their children? How do I know that families/community members know their participation is welcomed and valued? How do I ensure that all families understand the policies and practices of my building?
- **Support systems:** Have I done an asset map of my community to determine the resources available to students and families—housing, clothing, food, tutoring, transportation, social/cultural support groups, etc.? Have I created a resource guide or a central location for families to get information about these resources? How do I ensure my families are able to access this information? How do I support families who may not speak English or be able to connect with the support they need?

Student support: I need to recognize and address students' academic, physical, social-emotional, and cultural needs.

- **Academic supports:** Do I have intervention strategies in place to ensure the academic needs of all students are being met? Are there opportunities in my building for students to receive tutoring before, after, and during the school day?
- **Inclusiveness:** How do students see themselves in the staff, curriculum and décor? How do I ensure the expectations for behavior are culturally-relevant? How do I support students who are not among the dominant population?

Transitions: I help students make seamless transitions from one academic level to the next.

- **Curriculum alignment:** How do I ensure alignment of curriculum from one grade level to the next? How much time do I provide teachers to do this work? How do I ensure that all teachers in the building have the same high expectations for students from one classroom to the next?
- **Collaboration:** How do I collaborate with the feeder schools on both ends of the spectrum to assure that students are prepared academically and socially to move seamlessly from one level to the next? Do students have the opportunity to visit those locations and meet teachers prior to a transition?
- **Extended learning:** Does my school provide summer programming or connect students to existing summer programming to ensure that students maintain their academic skills over the long period they are away from school?
- **Inner preparedness:** How am I preparing my students to become more responsible, to take initiative and persevere in solving problems, and to care about and work cooperatively with others?



For more information about addressing opportunity gaps:

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Washington State Report Card:
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