

# Eliminating Gaps

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



Community  
Member

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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 **community member**, what I do makes a difference!

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

- **Gathering information:** How do I gather information and data about the schools in my communities? How can I determine if a school is performing well or not, as compared to other schools in my region? See the Washington State Reportcard on [www.k12.wa.us](http://www.k12.wa.us).
- **Matching my skills to data:** How do I determine which data is important for me to know—grades, attendance, discipline referrals, high school graduation rates, demographics, primary languages? How do I match my skills and experience with the needs expressed in the data of the schools in the area?
- **Sharing information:** Do I have access to other data or information about the community that could be useful for school personnel? Do I have relationships with other agencies that are connected to students that may be willing to share information about students in their lives outside the school building? How should I share that information with the school?

**Educators: I must help schools locate promising educators (particularly those of color), support them and provide training, when appropriate.**

- **Promoting education as a profession:** How can I utilize my position to promote education as a profession, particularly with members of the community who demonstrate promise? How do I assist those members of a community who may have promise but don't have the resources or access to information? How can I find information about teacher education programs in my local area, particularly those that serve adults pursuing education as a second career?
- **Making connections:** How can I help the school connect with people who could provide expertise in a classroom as assistants, guest speakers, or interpreters?
- **Providing training:** Do I, or an organization with which I am affiliated, provide training that would be beneficial for educators, such as cultural competence, budgeting or goal-setting? Would I be willing to donate this service to the school for free or at a minimal cost?

# As a **community member**, what I do makes a difference!

## **Family/community: I collaborate with local schools.**

- **Serving schools:** Am I a member of a small population or cultural group? How can I support educators at my local school with information about how to better communicate with members of my community?
- **Welcoming environment:** Do I feel welcome in the school building? Can I play a role in making feel welcome?
- **Matching skills to needs:** Are there ways I would like to participate in the education of the students in my community? Do I have skills, experiences, or resources that would be helpful to students—facilities, access to clothing, supplies, job-shadowing or volunteer opportunities? Am I willing to mentor, tutor, volunteer to serve in the lunchroom or on the playground, supervise an afterschool activity, translate, interpret or coach a team?
- **Supporting educators:** Am I able to provide breakfast or occasional small tokens of appreciation to the staff? Are there skills I have that would be helpful for teachers?

## **Student support: I need to give students the support they need to be successful.**

- **Resources for families:** Do I have access to resources that students or families need—housing, clothing, food, counseling, tutoring, mentoring, interpreting? Would I be willing to help families advocate for the needs of their students? Do I help to create an environment in my community that values education and believes all students are capable of success? Am I willing to mentor a student who needs an adult role model?
- **Career exploration:** Do I have expertise in an area that could be used to help students or educators? Am I willing to allow students to “job shadow” with me or someone I know to determine if they would be interested in working in a particular profession? Am I willing to hire students in my workplace?

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

- **Using my connections:** Do I have connections to a technical school, community college or 4-year institution that would be interested in working with students to help them prepare for college (important for students at every level—from kindergarten to 12th grade)?
- **Summer opportunities:** Are there opportunities I am aware of for students during the summer to keep them engaged in academic work? Would I be willing to allow a student to volunteer or complete an internship with my organization or business? Would I be willing to volunteer at the school if summer programming was offered?
- **Inner preparedness:** How can I help prepare 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:**

[www.yourlearningcenter.org](http://www.yourlearningcenter.org)  
360-725-6503

Washington State Report Card:  
[www.k12.wa.us](http://www.k12.wa.us)