

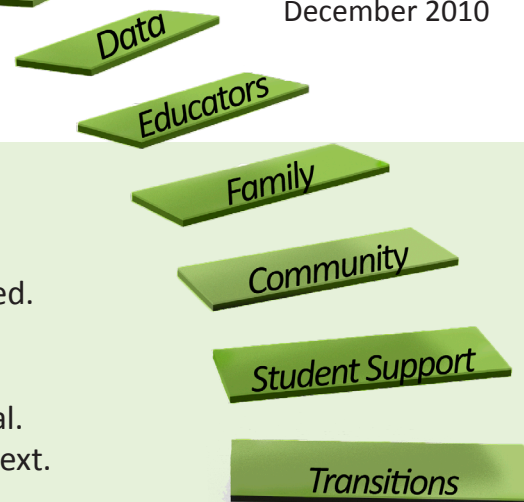
Eliminating Gaps

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



Teacher Education
Program

December 2010



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.

What we do in our teacher education program makes a difference!

Data: We need to prepare teachers to understand what data is important to know about students in a classroom and what do to with that data to improve instruction.

- **Academics:** How do we help teacher candidates understand which information about students they need to know and what to do with that information? How do we help candidates know how to address the diverse learning needs of students in special programs – English language learning, special education, gifted/highly-capable? How do we help candidates understand how to make accommodations for students on 504 plans and the different learning styles that exist in every classroom? How do we help educators focus on the strengths and talents of their students?
- **Non-academic:** What non-academic information would be helpful to know about students to improve the learning experience? How does our program help teachers learn how to gather and make sense of this information?

Educators: We need to recruit more diverse students and professors into our teaching programs, retain them, and train them to be able to work more effectively with diverse populations.

- **Leadership:** Are my walk and talk consistent when it comes to talking about “the opportunity gap”? How does our program demonstrate cultural sensitivity in the admissions process and in classrooms? Do my colleagues believe I really care about equity and social justice? Are they also committed to doing what is necessary to prepare educators for a diverse student population?
- **Promoting education as a profession:** How do we intentionally recruit high school students of color into the teaching profession? How do we seek out current undergraduate students of color to join the teacher education program? How do we provide supports for these students through the process and ensure that each and every student completes the program? How do we connect these students to mentors who can walk with them through their education?
- **Staffing the department:** How do we actively recruit department staff from communities of color? How do we support professors and instructional staff of color to ensure retention? How do we ensure that every professor and department staff gets the training needed to be effective with students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds?
- **Professional development:** How do we prepare teacher candidates with relationship-building skills (adult to adult and teacher to student)? How do we communicate the critical connection between relationship and student engagement? How do we ensure that we prepare every teacher candidate to be culturally competent and skilled in language acquisition strategies?

What we do in our teacher education program makes a difference!

Family/community: We need to prepare teachers to connect and partner with families and the community to improve learning for students.

- **Building partnerships:** How do we help teacher candidates develop skills in learning about the communities in which they work? How do we prepare candidates to know how to communicate with diverse families and community members? How do we help candidates figure out ways to partner with the community to increase learning opportunities for their students?
- **Getting feedback:** How do we collaborate with current and former students of color to attract potential students into our teacher education program who look like them? How can these students provide feedback about their experiences at our institution? How can we use that feedback to improve the admissions and retention processes at our school? How do we help teacher candidates understand the importance of getting feedback from their students and families to improve instruction?

Student support: We need to prepare teachers to know how to recognize and address students' academic, physical, social-emotional, and cultural needs.

- **Connecting students:** How do we help teacher candidates think about the kinds of supports their students might need —housing, clothing, food, tutoring, transportation, social/cultural support groups, etc.? How do we help candidates learn how to connect students and their families to the resources they need?
- **Academic support:** How do we help teacher candidates recognize when a student has an academic need? How do we prepare teachers to know how to help students and not “do” the work for them? How do we help teacher candidates think about connecting to other people or programs that can help students be academically successful?
- **Cultural support:** How do we help teacher candidates think about supporting students culturally? How do we help candidates connect to community members who could provide assistance in this arena?

Transitions: We need to help teachers understand how to help students make seamless transitions from one academic level to the next.

- **Alignment of curriculum:** How do we prepare teacher candidates to understand state standards in their content areas and the importance of teaching to those standards? How do we help candidates understand how to align curriculum? How do we help candidates understand how to assess where their students are as they begin a school year, throughout the year, and as they prepare their students to advance? How will candidates know their students are prepared for the next level?
- **Life skills:** How do we help teacher candidates prepare their students with the social and life skills they will need to move successfully from one level to the next? How do we train teacher candidates to do goal-setting with students at all levels to help them prepare for life beyond school?



For more information about addressing opportunity gaps:

www.yourlearningcenter.org
360-725-6503

Washington State Report Card:
www.k12.wa.us