Why do we have an OSPI Style Guide?

Is it email or e-mail? Preschool or pre-school? When do you capitalize state? What’s the difference between an en dash and em dash? Ask these questions in a room full of OSPI staff and you’ll get many different answers. Why is that?

- We were not all taught the same thing. We’ve had different teachers, attended different schools, and had professions in a variety of industries. Yes, there is general agreement on many rules, but there isn’t agreement on everything.

- Language, including the rules of what’s “right” and “wrong,” is not static. Like it or not, meanings of words change, and new words appear. Grammar rules change, too.

It’s ok to have an opinion about these things, but as an organization, it’s critical that OSPI show consistency across all channels of communication: email, newsletters, websites, reports, tweets, bulletins, and anything else in print and online.

This is where the OSPI Style Guide comes in. A style guide is a resource for writers and editors. It helps communicate clearly and consistently across all media to all audiences.

What is the OSPI Style Guide?

The OSPI Style Guide is used by staff, contractors, and partners when they are writing and editing content for OSPI. It ensures effective editorial styles and standards for OSPI print and electronic communications. The guide is organic, meaning it adapts to authors’ and editors’ needs, as well as the personality of OSPI.

The OSPI Style Guide is housed on the OSPI intranet (under Communications).

Am I required to use the OSPI Style Guide?

Yes. Whenever you are writing or editing on behalf of OSPI, you are required to follow the OSPI Style Guide.

A copy of the OSPI Style Guide should be given to contractors and partners who are writing content for OSPI.

Who is the Style & Brand Committee?

Volunteer members with backgrounds in writing, editing, and communications. Members are well-versed on the organizational structure and dynamics of OSPI and consider the needs of all programs and departments when making rules.

Please visit the OSPI intranet to see the current list of committee members.
The committee:

- Is sponsored by the Chief of Staff and Communications.
- Maintains the OSPI Style Guide.
- Responds to questions related to the OSPI Style Guide and its standards.
- Meets as needed to rule on questions of style and usage.
- Advocates and promotes the work of the committee.
- Communicates to team members regarding updates and changes to the Style Guide.

How are decisions made?

Decisions are made by the OSPI Style & Brand Committee. The committee respects and considers every recommendation and request:

- Discussion and rulemaking is conducted by email or through a committee meeting.
- To inform our decisions, we refer to authoritative guides, including but not limited to The AP Stylebook, The Gregg Reference Manual, dictionaries, and other government style guides.
- A vote of seven committee members (one of which must be from the Communications office) is required to make a change to the OSPI Style Guide.

When a decision is made to change a rule, it is noted in the OSPI Style Guide and is date stamped. We communicate critical changes through the OSPI weekly newsletter.


Any staff person may recommend a change to the OSPI Style Guide, request clarification on something, or suggest a new entry. Send questions and suggestions to style@k12.wa.us. Please be as specific as possible. If you believe something in the Style Guide needs to change, cite references that support the need for the change.

What if I can’t find something in the Style Guide?

The backbone of OSPI communication is the Associated Press (AP) style, and if you don’t find the answer in the Style Guide, defer to AP style. Generally, you can find these answers through Google, but you can also reach out to Communications at commteam@k12.wa.us for assistance.
abbreviations
If the word is an abbreviation, use a period:


academic degrees
bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, associate degree, doctoral or doctorate degree
Bachelor of Arts, Master of Science, Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)
Use abbreviations only to identify many individuals by degree:

John Smith, Ph.D., Tina Jones, Ph.D., and Lisa Law, Ph.D.

acronyms
Do not use an acronym/initialism if the entity is mentioned only once.
Spell out for first citation and follow with the acronym in parentheses:

The Legislature created the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning (CISL). CISL works in collaboration with agency staff.

To make an acronym/initialism plural, add an “s”: GLEs
Do not use periods between each letter
To form the singular possessive, add an apostrophe:

OSPI’s staff
To form the plural possessive, add an “s” plus an apostrophe:

NBCTs’ attendance

ages
Do not spell out. Always use figures for ages.

age 16
The boy is 5 years old.
The 6-year-old girl is in a class for students aged 5–7.

ampersand (&)
Use only if part of a formal name:

Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics (STEM)
Otherwise spell out and: science and mathematics
**bulleted lists**

Use bulleted lists to improve a document’s readability.

Use a colon to introduce lists. Capitalize the first letter of each item in the list and end each section of the list with a period, unless the items are only a few words.

Reference lists intended as a menu of options need no punctuation. Lists with complete sentences do.

Keep all items parallel by using the same language structure throughout the list.

**Bulletin**

Bulletins are official correspondence from OSPI.

To cite a Bulletin:

1. Bulletin No. 045-14 School Apportionment and Financial Services
2. School Apportionment and Financial Services (B045-14)

**capitalization**

The general rule is to capitalize only when it is part of a proper name or formal title:

Superintendent:

*State Superintendent Chris Reykdal*

State: Lowercase state when referencing the state of Washington or Washington state

City and county:

*Royal City, city of Olympia, Thurston County*

Committee, commission, board, department, or director:

*As the director of the department, XYZ Director Jane Smith will lead the board meeting, county board of commissioners.*

Federal:

*Washington receives approximately $950,000 in federal funding each year to support the education of youth experiencing homelessness.*

Program:

*Consolidated Program Review, School Construction Assistance Program, BUT not program in Homeless Children and Youth program*

If using a proper noun that has embedded caps (capitalized letters that are not the first letter of the word), follow the example of the subject of the noun:

*YouTube, PowerPoint, CorePlus*

Avoid ALL CAPS unless for critical information; it is harder to read and is generally perceived as shouting at the reader.
century
Capitalize “Century” only when it’s part of a proper name:

21st Century Community Learning Centers

class of (graduating class)
Always capitalize “Class” when referencing a single class:

Class of 2019.
Use lowercase when referencing a range:

classes of 2017–19; classes of 2017 and beyond.
Use an en dash for a range:

classes of 2017–19

commas
Serial comma: Also called the oxford comma, it clarifies meaning when placed before conjunctions (and, or, but) in a series of words in a sentence.

OSPI uses the serial comma to avoid ambiguity and to make lists easier to comprehend.

Common Core State Standards, CCSS
Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics
CCSS is used to refer to the entire standards set (ELA and Math).
The standards are part of the Washington State K–12 Learning Standards.

composition titles
Use italics for book titles. Do not underline a book title unless it is a hyperlink.

Put quotation marks around computer game, movie, poem, album, song, radio, and television titles, and the titles of lectures, speeches, and works of art.

contractions (can’t, we’re, you’re)
Contractions are acceptable in most informal writing, such as email, newsletters, and webpages.

Do not use contractions in official correspondence, such as bulletins and legislative reports.

curriculum, curricula
Curriculum is a collection of subjects taught.
Curricula is the plural of curriculum. Curriculums is also allowed, though not preferred.
There should be no spaces between dashes and the adjacent material.

**hyphen (-):**
- Indicates breaks within words that wrap at the end of a line
- Connects compounded words like “data-sharing”
- Connects grouped numbers, like a phone number: XXX-XXX-XXXX
- The hyphen does not indicate a range of numbers, like a date range, which is the job of an en dash

**en dash (–):**
- Depending on the context, the en dash is read as “to” or “through”
- Represents a span or range of numbers, dates, or time:
  - the 2018–19 school year
  - grades 4–6
  - 11 am–noon
  - If you introduce a span or range with words such as from or between, do not use the en dash: He served as superintendent between 2000 and 2004.
  - If the compound modifier is two or more words:
    - high school–level curriculum
    - New York City–area hotels
- Conflict or connection:
  - The liberal–conservative debate
  - The Los Angeles–Seattle flight
  - The railway runs south–north
- To add an en dash, either hold down ALT and quickly type 0150 on the number pad, or hold down the CTRL key and press the minus key on the number pad.

**em dash (—):**
- Depending on the context, the em dash can take the place of commas, parentheses, or colons:
- In place of commas to enhance readability; dashes are more emphatic than commas:
  - When the patient was finally discovered—nearly three days after his fall down the mountain—he had severe hypothermia and was barely conscious.
In place of parentheses to give the content more emphasis:

- Upon discovering the error in the test booklet, the tests—all 50,000 of them—were recalled.

In place of colon to emphasize the conclusion of the sentence:

- The jury finally reached a verdict—guilty.

To add an em dash, either hold down ALT and quickly type 0151 on the number pad, or hold down the CTRL-ALT-Minus (Minus key on number pad)

**data**

A plural noun, it usually takes plural verbs and pronouns: The data have been carefully collected.

**data-sharing agreement**

Always hyphenate.

**dates**

Strive for consistency. Rewrite or rephrase to keep a consistent style across publications.

Omit the year for a future event if it’s the current year, or if it is clear or implied.

Do not use superscripts (June 12th).

Do not use a comma between month and year.

Common uses:

February 2009 was a cold month.
The report will be released on Monday, February 26.
On February 26, 2019, the school board presented its materials.

**deadlines**

Make your deadlines stand out, either by bolding or placing separated from the rest of the content. Avoid wordiness.

Applications are due **November 1, 2020**

**department**

Preference is to spell out: Department of Education.

When abbreviation is necessary, use Dept.

**directions and regions**

Lowercase when referring to compass direction: east, west, north, south.

Capitalize when they designate regions: She has a Southern accent. The North was victorious. The students in Western Washington had several snow days. The students in Southern California never have snow days.
disability

RCW 44.04.280 requires the use of terminology (in state laws) that puts the person before the disability. As a best practice, the terminology listed below should replace the terms disabled, developmentally disabled, mentally disabled, mentally ill, mentally retarded, handicapped, cripple, and crippled.

individually with disabilities
individually with developmental disabilities
individually with mental illness
individually with intellectual disabilities

disaggregated data

Refers to numerical or non-numerical information that has been (1) collected from multiple sources and/or on multiple measures, variables, or individuals; (2) compiled into aggregate data—i.e., summaries of data—typically for the purposes of public reporting or statistical analysis; and then (3) broken down in component parts or smaller units of data.

dollar amounts

$12 million: Spell out and lowercase million, but do not spell out the number.

Abbreviate when tight on space, such as charts and tables, and in headlines (Three Districts Share $10M Grant)

NOT $12 million dollars (redundant)

dropout (n.), drop out (v.)

Schools are trying to reduce the dropout rate.
The number of high school dropouts in Washington decreased.
Students drop out of the program every year.

E-Certification

When referencing the OSPI E-Certification portal, always capitalize both the E and C, and include the hyphen.

e-learning

Lowercase e, unless at the beginning of a sentence: E-learning is here to stay.

early learning

From birth through grade 3

Education Data System, EDS

NOT Educational Data System

Elementary and Secondary Education Act, ESEA

The national K–12 education law
ellipses (…)

An ellipsis (plural: ellipses) is a punctuation mark consisting of three dots without spaces on either side, or between each dot.

Use an ellipsis when omitting a word, phrase, line, paragraph, or more from a quoted passage.

Ellipses save space or remove material that is less relevant:

- Full quotation: “Today, after hours of careful thought, we vetoed the bill.”
- With ellipsis: “Today...we vetoed the bill.”

e-mail

No hyphen, no capitalization

ESD, Educational Service District

Spell out on first reference: There are nine Educational Service Districts in Washington.

ESD or ESDs on second reference: The school board in ESD 101 will meet this week.

Use the apostrophe when possessive: The ESDs’ phone numbers are listed below.

etc.

Spelled out as et cetera

Use a comma before and after etc. except at the end of a sentence.

Do not use at the end of a series introduced by as such or for example.

Please send extra school supplies for the school supply drive, such as pencils, pens, and notebooks.

Every Student Succeeds Act, ESSA


FAQ, Q&A

FAQ stands for frequently asked questions and implies a short and targeted list of questions and answers.

Q&A stands for question and answer and is a useful format for dialogue-type questions:

Q: Do I need to apply for a Washington state license? A: Yes

federal court

Lowercase

financial aid

Lowercase

fiscal year

The 12-month period that a governmental body uses for bookkeeping
purposes.

Washington state’s fiscal year is July 1–June 30.
The federal government’s fiscal year is October 1–September 30.

Form Package
Capitalize: Form Package 408

formative assessment
Lowercase

fractions
two-thirds
1/2, NOT ½
For mixed numbers, use 1 1/2 with the space between the whole number and the fraction.

free and reduced-price meals
Add the hyphen, even though the U.S. Department of Agriculture does not.
Do not drop the word “price.” NOT: free and reduced meals

full time, full-time, FTE
Hyphenate when used as a compound modifier. Use FTE on second reference.

The distribution is based on the average number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students in the school district during the previous year.

Parents and guardians of students who were enrolled full time or part time in Washington public schools during state testing may view their child’s test.

government
Always lowercase, never abbreviate
the state government, the federal government, the U.S. government

governmental bodies
Capitalize the full proper name of governmental bodies: The U.S. Department of Education
Also capitalize the name if flip-flopped but omits “of”: The Education Department

Governor
On first reference: Governor Jay Inslee
On second reference: the Governor
But lowercase governor in other instances and when not referring to a specific governor: The governors convened in Washington, D.C.
grade level, school grades

- kindergarten, 1st grade, 2nd grade, 3rd grade, 4th grade, 5th grade, 6th grade, 7th grade, 8th grade, 9th grade, 10th grade, 11th grade, 12th grade
- Do not use superscript (e.g., 3rd).
- Do not capitalize grade levels, including freshman, sophomore, junior, senior

Single grade reference:

- 3rd grade: The state assessment is taken in 3rd grade.
- 5th-grader (use hyphen): The 5th-graders were excited about graduation.
- 5th-grade teacher

Use en dash for sequential grades: The school teaches grades 1–4.

headlines, headings, and subheads

- Use title case for headlines, lowercasing prepositions that are three letters or fewer: How to Apply for a Grant
- Use numerals for all numbers: 80 School Districts Receive Competitive Grants to Improve Safety
- Use single quotes for quotation marks: Michelle Obama Says ‘Cheese Dust Is Not Food’
- Abbreviate millions/billions figures: 3 Districts to Share $10M Grant

If there is a colon, capitalize the first word after the colon

high- (adj.)

- Hyphenate when adjective: high-quality assessments
- BUT: The assessments are high quality.

high-need, high need

- Hyphenate when it modifies: high-need schools
- Do not hyphenate when it does not modify: schools with high need
- Always singular: high-need student, student with high need

When referring to students receiving special education services, consider another word choice, because “high need” is an abstract term without specific definition. Would one of these work better or just as well?

Students who receive special education services
Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
Students with disabilities

home school

- home school, home schooler, home schooling, home schooled
  - The bill would require parents to sign a statement if they plan to
home school. A home schooler from Olympia said she supported the bill.

A hyphen is necessary when it modifies: Home-schooling laws are followed by home-school families and home-schooled students.

Also called home-based instruction

iGrants

The i is lowercase. One word. Plural.

NOT iGrant, igrants, iGrants system

individualized education program, IEP

Not capitalized. IEP on second reference. The p stands for program (not plan).

in regard to

Do not use ‘in regard to’ as it is not plain talk. Consider using about, concerning, or on.

internet, intranet

Lowercase

K–12

Use en dash (not a hyphen), which indicates range (from grade K to grade 12).

Do NOT write K12 without the en dash.

K–20 Education Network

Use the en dash, which indicates range (from grade K to grade 20).

The K–20 Education Network is a high-speed, high-capacity network that links K–12 school districts, libraries, colleges, and universities across 476 locations in Washington.

Both K–20 Education Network and the shortened K–20 Network are acceptable.

kindergarten

Do not capitalize.

Both kindergartener and kindergartner are acceptable, but keep consistent throughout document.

learning standards

Washington State K–12 Learning Standards

legislative, legislative session

Do not capitalize. The 105-day Washington state legislative session begins Monday.

Annual legislative sessions are identified by the year in which they occurred: Lawmakers wrapped up the 2014 session with a flurry of bills.
**Legislature, legislature**

Proper titles:


Retain capitalization when the state name is dropped but the reference is specifically to that state's legislature. The Legislature will vote on the K–12 budget this week.

Lowercase state when its needed for clarification. If approved by the state Legislature this year...

Lowercase when used generically: No legislature has approved the amendment. Across the country, the legislatures are discussing this topic.

**Legislative Citations**

**Legislation that passed:**

- First reference: House Bill/Senate Bill 1234 (YEAR) Session Law (link to bill page on leg website)
- Every Reference thereafter: HB/SB 1234 (YEAR) (do not link)

**Legislation that has not passed:**

- Indicate the version of the bill being referenced, for example:
- Initial reference: Fourth Substitute House Bill 1541 (YEAR) or Substitute Senate Bill 5656 (YEAR) (link to bill page on leg website)
- Every Reference thereafter, use the acronym: 4SHB 1541 (YEAR) or SSB 5656 (YEAR) (do not link)

**Key:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House = H</td>
<td>Engrossed = E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate = S</td>
<td>Second = 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill = B</td>
<td>Third = 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitute = S</td>
<td>Fourth = 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**liaison**

*Parent Liaison* (is capitalized) when referring to OSPI’s Special Education Parent Liaison. This term replaces Ombudsman.

**local educational agency, LEA**

educational, not education

The local educational agency must submit the application by November 1.

Plural: *local education agencies, LEAs* (no apostrophe)

**long-term, long term**

Hyphenate when a compound adjective: *We have a long-term solution.*
Two words when the phrase modifies an adverb or when it is the object of a preposition: *Your solution will not work in the long term.*

**Memorandum (singular), Memoranda (plural)**

Sunset in 2017, Memoranda were official correspondence from OSPI.

There are two ways to cite a Memorandum:

1. Memorandum No. 029-14 Student Transportation
2. Student Transportation (M029-14)

**months**

Spell out the full month, unless when short on space, such as in tables and graphs.

*He was born in January 1993. He was born on January 10, 1993.*

Place a comma after the calendar year if it does not conclude the sentence: *Submit your application by January 1, 2010, for first consideration.*

**multi-**

- *multi-agency, multi-state, multi-use*

The dictionary’s primary spelling will vary on which *multi-* words should have a hyphen, but the hyphen never changes the meaning; use the hyphen when in doubt.

**multiple-choice**

Always hyphenate.

**n-size**

The minimum number of students in a particular racial or ethnic group for which disaggregated data must be reported.

Include the hyphen. Lowercase n. No quotation marks.

**news release**

An official statement published by the OSPI Communications office.

**non-public**

Hyphenate: non-public schools, non-public agency. NOT: *NonPublic*

Office of Non-Public Education (U.S. Department of Education)

**numbered list**

Use numbered lists for instructions. This shows at a glance how many steps there are and ensures the user follows them in order, reducing the chance of missing a step.

*To create an account:*

1. *Log in to EDS*
2. *Select your application*
3. *Select My Preferences*
4. **Select Change My address**

Do not use a numbered list if specific steps are not required. Instead, use a bulleted list.

A list does not require end punctuation.

**numbers**

In general, spell out one through nine. Use figures for 10 or above and whenever preceding a unit of measure or referring to ages of people, events, or things. Also, in all tabular matter, and in statistical and sequential forms.

Abbreviate to no. when indicating position or rank (No. 1).

Expressions: spell out

\[ \text{A thousand times yes!} \]

\[ \text{The bus stop is a quarter of a mile from his house.} \]

Percentages: spell out, unless in a chart

\[ \text{A pay increase of between 12 and 15 percent.} \]

Dollar amounts

\[ $12 \text{ million} \] (NOT: $12 million dollars, which is redundant)

Lists/sequence of figures:

\[ \text{There were 5 children on the bus and 25 waiting to be picked up.} \]

In this case, 5 and 25 are considered a list/sequence.

Try not to begin a sentence with a number:

\[ \text{Due to bad weather, 10 people canceled.} \] (NOT: Ten people canceled due to bad weather.)

**office**

Capitalize when part of the proper name: Washington State Office of the Attorney General.

Lowercase all other instances: The office of the attorney general.

**Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the**

NOT the OSPI

NOT Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

Use the only when the proper name is spelled out: According to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction...

On the OSPI website, use OSPI on first reference.

**Ombuds**

Replaces Ombudsman: The Office of the Education Ombuds

**paraeducator**

One word, no hyphen
**percent**

Percent means parts per hundred.

Use percent symbol (%): *The poll shows 26% agree with the governor.*

Spell out percent with spelled out numbers or for informal uses: *five percent; there is a large percentage of students who receive services.*

Repeat percent with each individual figure: 10% to 15%.

**phone numbers**

Use hyphens: XXX-XXX-XXXX

**point of view**

Use third-person speech in formal writing at OSPI. Formal writing is any writing that bears the OSPI logo. (*OSPI has developed new discipline rules, here’s what districts should know.*)

Use first-person speech in informal writing. Examples of informal writing include when writing internally, or on social media. (*We’ve developed new discipline rules, and we’re looking for internal feedback.*)

When representing the agency as oneself, informal writing may be used (i.e hosting a webinar, in email, etc.).

**policymaker, policymaking**

One word

**possessive apostrophe**

No possessive apostrophe if it is meant in a descriptive sense, and “for” or “by” is implied:

- sports for boys = boys sports

Use possessive apostrophe when “of” is implied:

- The boys’ clothes were soaked (clothes of the boys)

**possessive pronouns**

Use a person’s preferred pronouns when known.

If unknown, or referring to people generally, use “they” in place of he/she, him/her, (s)he, s/he, himself/herself, etc. unless required by policy or law.

*Students shall have 24 credits to graduate with their class.*

NOT: *He/she shall have 24 credits to graduate with his/her class.*

**post-**

postgraduate, postsecondary, postscript

Hyphen is needed only when it precedes a capitalized word: *post-Darwinism*

**prekindergarten, PreK**
Lowercase, no hyphen. Spell it out when not listed in a grade span.
All ages before kindergarten, from birth through preschool.
PreK when listed in a grade span, such as PreK–3

**prepositions**

It’s acceptable to end a sentence with a preposition: *What did you step on?*

Attempts to rewrite *(On what did you step?)* are admirable, but not necessary.

Don’t end the sentence with a preposition when it’s not necessary:

Instead of: *Where are you at?*
Drop the preposition: *Where are you?*

Don’t add a preposition in a sentence when it’s not necessary:

Instead of: *She jumped off of the rock.*
Drop the preposition: *She jumped off the rock.*

A short list of the more common one-word prepositions

as, at, but, by, for, from, in, of, off, on, onto, than, to, up, with

**preschool**

The age or grade span that preschool encompasses can vary.
Examples of how preschool may be defined:

*All learning and situations prior to the start of formal schooling, anything preschool or birth–age 5.*

*Educational programs for 3- and 4-year-olds*

Lowercase, no hyphen. Spell it out when not listed in a grade span.

**professional learning vs. professional development**

*Professional learning* is a comprehensive, sustained, job imbedded, and collaborative approach to improve educational outcomes for all students.

In contrast, *professional development* is a one-time event without follow-up.

**proven**

Use only as an adjective: a proven strategy

**quotation marks**

Use double quotation marks to quote someone, except when it’s a headline/title.

Use single quotation marks in headlines to quote someone, or for a title:

*‘Everybody Stretches’ Without Gravity, Says NASA Study*

*‘Spotlight’ Wins Big at 88th Academy Awards*
Use double quotation marks to emphasize a word:

*The term “children” is defined in the program regulations as persons 18 years of age and under.*

*Select “Next” and then “Submit.”*

The ending period and comma always go within the quotation marks.

When indicating a spoken quote with a question mark, the dash, semicolon, question mark, and exclamation point go within quotation marks when they apply to the quoted matter only:

*He asked, “How long will it take?”*

They go outside when they apply to the whole sentence:

*Who wrote “Gone with the Wind”?*

Sometimes rewriting the sentence is better:

*She asked who wrote “Gone with the Wind.”*

**ratios**

Use figures and hyphens: *the ratio was 2-to-1, a ratio of 2-to-1.*

**reengagement**

No hyphen

**Report Card**

An online database that is maintained by OSPI: [http://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us](http://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us)


Not to be confused with the Nation’s Report Card: [http://www.nationsreportcard.gov](http://www.nationsreportcard.gov)

**rulemaking**

One word, no hyphen

**school**

Capitalize when part of a proper name: *Evergreen Elementary School*

Capitalize when part of a program name: *the Mental Health and Schools Program*

Do not capitalize a general reference: *Private schools have access to federal supplemental education programs.*

**school board**

When referencing a specific school board, use the proper title.

*North Thurston Public Schools Board, The Board of Directors of Spokane Public Schools*

When in doubt, check the school board’s website.
There are 295 school districts in Washington.
Do not capitalize unless it is in the proper title.
When referencing a specific school district, use the proper title. Some do not use School District, but Public Schools. When in doubt, check the district’s website.

One word, no hyphen

Washington State Senate, the Senate, state senators.

Hyphenate when it modifies: The sign-up form is at the back of the room.
Use two words in verb form: Sign up for the newsletter.

Use only one space between sentences.
To remove all double spaces in a document (and replace with a single space), do a global Find and Replace:

- In the “find” field, hit your spacebar twice
- In the “replace with” field, hit your spacebar once
- Select “replace all”
If you’re not sure you want to replace ALL, click on “find next” to see what effect the Find and Replace will have before you implement it

the state Legislature
the state Treasury Department

Capitalize when part of a proper name: Washington State School Directors’ Association

First reference: State Superintendent Chris Reykdal
Second reference: Superintendent Reykdal

One word, no hyphen

Always hyphenate

Capitalize when used as a formal title before a name: State
Superintendent Chris Reykdal, Superintendent Reykdal
Do not abbreviate unless to fit a character limit, such as for social media: Supt or Supt.

**teacher-leader**
Always hyphenate

**theatre**
As a discipline, use theatre: The arts standards include art, dance, music, and theatre.
BUT: The students toured the new theater.

**time, time of day, time zones**
am and pm, (NOT a.m. and p.m.)
Use a colon to separate hours from minutes: 3:30 am
Exclude minutes if it’s on the hour: 5 pm (NOT 5:00 pm)
Use the en dash between times, with no spaces before or after the en dash: 9 am–noon.
Noon is 12 pm. Noon is preferred, but the latter is also acceptable. Midnight is 12 am, and is part of the day it begins, not the day it ends.

**Title**
When introducing it, provide its full, proper name description.
On first reference: Title V, Part A - Innovative Programs
On second reference: Title V, Part A
Consider the reader when referencing; the reader may not be familiar with Title V but know Every Student Succeeds Act.

**toward**
NOT “towards”
Teachers are moving toward the new standards.

**tribe, tribal**
Capitalize tribe when it follows the name of a specific tribe: The Yakama Tribe began the program in 2006.
Retain capitalization when the tribe’s name is dropped but the reference is specifically to that tribe: The Yakama Tribe owns the land and rejects calls from local developers for the Tribe to sell the property.
But tribal is capitalized only when part of a formal name. The Muckleshoot Tribal Council approved the agreement, the result of talks between county and tribal negotiators.

**unfunded**
No hyphen

**U.S.**
Abbreviation is acceptable as noun or adjective for the United States.
Washington state

Omit the word state whenever possible. Often, it’s unnecessary.

Lowercase state when it is necessary, such as when discussing the state in a national context: The national Teacher of the Year award went to a Washington state 1st-grade teacher.

Capitalize state when it is part of the proper name: The Washington State Legislature voted on the bill.

Use state when necessary to distinguish the state from the District of Columbia.

Washington State K–12 Learning Standards

The full, all-encompassing name for all learning standards in all content areas, including the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics and the Next Generation Science Standards.

When specifying a content area, use the following construction: [content area] [K–12 Learning Standards]:

Integrated Environmental and Sustainability K–12 Learning Standards

Social Studies K–12 Learning Standards

well-being

Always hyphenate

who

who = subject, whom = object

Best analogy is “he” and “him” or “she” and “her” or “they” and “them”

who = he, whom = him. Who hit whom? He hit him.

workgroup, task force

Either is acceptable, but use one or the other and be consistent.

year, years

school year 2015–16 (Use en dash)

Use commas with a month and day: On September 7, 2009, she celebrated her 5th birthday.

Do not state the year for a future event if it’s in the current year, or if it is clear or implied: The next meeting is June 5.

year-end (adj.)

Always hyphenate

yearlong

One word
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word 1</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Word 2</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>To agree to receive or do</td>
<td>Except</td>
<td>Not including</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverse</td>
<td>Unfavorable, harmful</td>
<td>Averse</td>
<td>Strongly disliking; opposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice</td>
<td>Noun. Guidance or recommendations about what to do</td>
<td>Advise</td>
<td>Verb. To recommend something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect</td>
<td>To change or make a difference to</td>
<td>Effect</td>
<td>A result; to bring about a result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All together</td>
<td>All in one place, all at once</td>
<td>Altogether</td>
<td>Completely; on the whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All ready</td>
<td>Everything is ready</td>
<td>Already</td>
<td>An action is completed by a certain time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Along</td>
<td>Moving or extending horizontally on</td>
<td>A long</td>
<td>Referring to something of great length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aloud</td>
<td>Out loud</td>
<td>Allowed</td>
<td>Permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternately</td>
<td>Taking turns</td>
<td>Alternatively</td>
<td>As an option; instead of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Among</td>
<td>Used for three or more (she had to choose among three colleges)</td>
<td>Between</td>
<td>Used for two things (she had to choose between Harvard and Yale)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraise</td>
<td>To assess</td>
<td>Apprise</td>
<td>To inform someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assent</td>
<td>Agreement, approval</td>
<td>Ascent</td>
<td>The action of rising or climbing up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beside</td>
<td>By the side of, separate from</td>
<td>Besides</td>
<td>In addition to; also</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biannual</td>
<td>Twice in one year</td>
<td>Biennial</td>
<td>Every two years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bimonthly</td>
<td>Every two months</td>
<td>Semimonthly</td>
<td>Twice a month (biweekly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitol</td>
<td>A building that houses a government’s legislative branch</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>A town or seat that is the seat of state government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word 1</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Word 2</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Censure</td>
<td>To criticize strongly</td>
<td>Censor</td>
<td>To ban parts of a book or film; a person who does this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cite</td>
<td>To quote or mention</td>
<td>Site</td>
<td>A place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complacent</td>
<td>Smug and self-satisfied</td>
<td>Complaisant</td>
<td>Willing to please</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complement</td>
<td>An addition that improves something</td>
<td>Compliment</td>
<td>To praise or express</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compose</td>
<td>To make up (the class is composed of students of several grades)</td>
<td>Comprise</td>
<td>To consist of, or include (students of several grades comprise the class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concurrent</td>
<td>Simultaneous</td>
<td>Consecutive</td>
<td>Successive; one after another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continual</td>
<td>Repeated with breaks in between</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>Without stopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convince</td>
<td>To cause another to feel sure or believe something to be true</td>
<td>Persuade</td>
<td>To talk someone into doing something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>A group of people who manage or advise</td>
<td>Counsel</td>
<td>Advice; to advise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion</td>
<td>Singular (there is one criterion for this job)</td>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Plural (several criteria need to be met for this job)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cue</td>
<td>A signal for action; a wooden rod</td>
<td>Queue</td>
<td>A line of people or vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently</td>
<td>At this time; now</td>
<td>Presently</td>
<td>Soon; in a little while</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defuse</td>
<td>To make a situation less tense</td>
<td>Diffuse</td>
<td>To spread over a wide area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denote</td>
<td>To indicate specifically; to mean (home denotes a place where you live)</td>
<td>Connote</td>
<td>To imply or suggest (home connotes warmth and safety)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discreet</td>
<td>Careful not to attract attention</td>
<td>Discrete</td>
<td>Separate and distinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disinterested</td>
<td>Impartial</td>
<td>Uninterested</td>
<td>Not interested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elicit</td>
<td>To draw out a reply or reaction</td>
<td>Illicit</td>
<td>Not allowed by law or rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word 1</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Word 2</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g.</td>
<td>For example; to make certain</td>
<td>i.e.</td>
<td>In other words; to give specific clarification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure</td>
<td>To make certain that something will happen</td>
<td>Insure</td>
<td>To provide compensation if a person dies or property is damaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Envelop</td>
<td>To cover or surround</td>
<td>Envelope</td>
<td>A paper container for a letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyday</td>
<td>(adjective) commonplace, ordinary</td>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>Each day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fewer</td>
<td>Things that can be counted (fewer students)</td>
<td>Less</td>
<td>Quantities of things that can’t be counted (less coffee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flaunt</td>
<td>To show something in a very open way to that other people notice</td>
<td>Flout</td>
<td>To break or ignore a law or rule without showing fear or shame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>An introduction to a book</td>
<td>Forward</td>
<td>Onwards, ahead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>An important occurrence that stands out in history</td>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>Any occurrence in the past, having the character of history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imply</td>
<td>To suggest indirectly</td>
<td>Infer</td>
<td>To draw a conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s</td>
<td>It is; is has</td>
<td>Its</td>
<td>Belonging to it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loath</td>
<td>Reluctant, unwilling</td>
<td>Loathe</td>
<td>To hate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loose</td>
<td>To unfasten; to set free</td>
<td>Lose</td>
<td>To be deprived of; to be unable to find</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Militate</td>
<td>To be a powerful factor against</td>
<td>Mitigate</td>
<td>To make less severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescribe</td>
<td>To authorize use of medicine; to order authoritatively</td>
<td>Proscribe</td>
<td>To officially forbid something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Most important; the head of a school</td>
<td>Principle</td>
<td>A fundamental rule or belief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word 1</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Word 2</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quote</td>
<td>To state the exact words someone else said (she quoted Hemingway in her paper)</td>
<td>Quotation</td>
<td>An actual statement being quoted (she read a quotation every day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectfully</td>
<td>Politely; with respect</td>
<td>Respectively</td>
<td>The order in which things are given back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight</td>
<td>The ability to see</td>
<td>Site</td>
<td>A location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometime</td>
<td>Indistinct or unstated time in the future</td>
<td>Some time</td>
<td>A considerable period of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationary</td>
<td>Not moving</td>
<td>Stationery</td>
<td>Writing materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Than</td>
<td>Used to compare (she thinks she is smarter than us)</td>
<td>Then</td>
<td>A time that is not now (it would be better to meet Friday because then I’ll be ready)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Til</td>
<td>A contraction of until</td>
<td>Till</td>
<td>To cultivate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To</td>
<td>Toward</td>
<td>Too</td>
<td>Also</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Versus</td>
<td>In comparison or opposition to</td>
<td>Verses</td>
<td>Plural of verse, a line of poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who</td>
<td>What or which person(s) (who was elected?)</td>
<td>Whom</td>
<td>Used as an interrogative or relative; object of a verb (the man whom you wrote to)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This section outlines contract language that may differ from this style guide. Please contact the OSPI Contracts Office if you have questions about this section.

**data-sharing agreement**

Datasharing or Datashare is one word.

**dollar amounts**

Dollar amounts are spelled out, followed by the number in parentheses. The contract/agreement shall not exceed twelve million dollars ($12,000,000).

**figures**

In agreements and contracts, numbers are always spelled out first and then followed in parentheses. You are required to facilitate twenty-one (21) meetings.

**fiscal year**

The twelve- (12-) month period must be spelled out first with the number in parentheses.

**numerals**

Numbers are spelled out first, then in parentheses. Nine (9) days.

**prepositions**

In contract writing, do not end a sentence with a preposition.

**shall, will**

Shall is a mandatory requirement. Will is a preferred requirement.

**spacing between sentences**

Double spacing is preferred in agreements and contracts.

**Superintendent**

Capitalize Superintendent or Superintendent’s Designee in agreements and contracts.

**time, time of day**

Time zone is required in all contract documents, especially RFPs/RFQs/Informal Solicitations. The solicitation audience may or may not be from Washington.

**Washington State**

All templates and special/general terms have State capped when it follows the state name. Do not capitalize state when it precedes the name of the state: The state of Washington.
Please note: Some terms are not capitalized when used in context. For example, individualized education program (IEP). Contact commteam@k12.wa.us with questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21CCLC</td>
<td>21st Century Community Learning Centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALE</td>
<td>Alternative Learning Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Advanced Placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWSP</td>
<td>Association of Washington School Principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEAC</td>
<td>Bilingual Education Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEST</td>
<td>Beginning Educator Support Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAA/CIA</td>
<td>Certificate of Academic Achievement/Certificate of Individual Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CACFP</td>
<td>Child and Adult Care Food Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBA</td>
<td>Classroom-Based Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSS</td>
<td>Common Core State Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDARS</td>
<td>Comprehensive Education Data and Research System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEP</td>
<td>Community Eligibility Provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNS</td>
<td>Child Nutrition Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPR</td>
<td>Consolidated Program Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSTP</td>
<td>Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTE</td>
<td>Career and Technical Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAC</td>
<td>District Assessment Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCYF</td>
<td>Department of Children, Youth, and Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLD</td>
<td>Digital Learning Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOH</td>
<td>Department of Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSHS</td>
<td>Department of Social and Health Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDS</td>
<td>Education Data System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>English Language Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELL</td>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELP</td>
<td>English Language Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELPA21</td>
<td>English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOC</td>
<td>End-of-Course (exam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOGOAC</td>
<td>Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESA</td>
<td>Educational Staff Associate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESD</td>
<td>Educational Service District (There are 9 ESDs in Washington)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESEA</td>
<td>Elementary and Secondary Education Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESSA</td>
<td>Every Student Succeeds Act (replaces No Child Left Behind)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAPE</td>
<td>Free Appropriate Public Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDP</td>
<td>Food Distribution Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEPPP</td>
<td>Financial Education Public-Private Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FERPA</td>
<td>Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFVP</td>
<td>Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GATE</td>
<td>Graduation: A Team Effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLE</td>
<td>Grade Level Expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCP</td>
<td>Highly Capable Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIB</td>
<td>Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIPAA</td>
<td>Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSPE</td>
<td>High School Proficiency Exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HQ</td>
<td>Highly Qualified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HQT</td>
<td>Highly Qualified Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IB</td>
<td>International Baccalaureate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDEA</td>
<td>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEP</td>
<td>Individualized Education Program (NOT “Plan”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iGrants</td>
<td>iGrant System (the “s” in iGrants stands for “system”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAP</td>
<td>Learning Assistance Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>Local Education Agency (not synonymous with school district)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEP</td>
<td>Limited English Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ+</td>
<td>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRE</td>
<td>Least Restrictive Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOE</td>
<td>Maintenance of Effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSP</td>
<td>Measurements of Student Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTSS</td>
<td>Multi-tiered System of Supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEA</td>
<td>National Education Association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| LGBTQ+  | is the preferred agency acronym.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAEP</td>
<td>National Assessment of Educational Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBCT</td>
<td>National Board Certified Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBPTS</td>
<td>National Board for Professional Teaching Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCLB</td>
<td>No Child Left Behind (See also: Every Student Succeeds Act)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSLP</td>
<td>National School Lunch Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OEO</td>
<td>Office of the Education Ombuds (NOT Ombudsman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OER</td>
<td>Open Educational Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONE</td>
<td>Office of Native Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSPI</td>
<td>Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PESB</td>
<td>Professional Educator Standards Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSE</td>
<td>Public School Employees of Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parent-Teacher Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QEC</td>
<td>Quality Education Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REAP</td>
<td>Rural Education Achievement Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFP</td>
<td>Request for Proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFQ</td>
<td>Request for Qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTI</td>
<td>Response to Intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTL</td>
<td>Readiness to Learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBAC</td>
<td>Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC is the group, NOT the test)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBE</td>
<td>State Board of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBP</td>
<td>School Breakfast Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCTS</td>
<td>Standard Choice Transfer System (an application within EDS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEA</td>
<td>State Education Agency (OSPI is the state education agency in Washington state)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEAC</td>
<td>Special Education Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL</td>
<td>Social Emotional Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Supplemental Educational Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMP</td>
<td>Special Milk Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSFP</td>
<td>Simplified Summer Food Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFSP</td>
<td>Summer Food Service Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLDS</td>
<td>Statewide Longitudinal Data System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLE</td>
<td>Supportive Learning Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLP</td>
<td>Student Learning Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMP</td>
<td>Special Milk Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSAE</td>
<td>Student Support and Academic Enrichment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSO</td>
<td>Seamless Summer Option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STARS</td>
<td>Student Transportation Allocation Reporting System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEAM</td>
<td>Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM</td>
<td>Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBIP</td>
<td>Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ToY</td>
<td>Teacher of the Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPEP</td>
<td>Teacher and Principal Evaluation Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USDA</td>
<td>United States Department of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAAS</td>
<td>Washington Alternate Assessment System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WaKIDS</td>
<td>Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASA</td>
<td>Washington Association of School Administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEA</td>
<td>Washington Education Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEC</td>
<td>Washington Educators’ Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WELPA</td>
<td>Washington English Language Proficiency Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WINS</td>
<td>Washington Integrated Nutrition System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WISSP</td>
<td>Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRC</td>
<td>Washington Reading Corps (Corps is not an abbreviation, so no period)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSAC</td>
<td>Washington Student Achievement Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSIPC</td>
<td>Washington School Information Processing Cooperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSPTA</td>
<td>Washington State Parent-Teacher Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSSDA</td>
<td>Washington State School Directors’ Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTECB</td>
<td>Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Creating Content for Web-Based Audiences

The goal of most websites is to create dynamic content that engages the intended audience and answers their questions. At OSPI, our content is of interest to a variety of audiences, with varying levels of knowledge about the public education system and our role as a state agency. This presents opportunities and challenges in creating web content—the most easily accessible type of content for these audiences—to develop greater understanding of OSPI’s roles, priorities, and programs.

Content Process

Creating content is a five-step process.

Content Governance

Web content at OSPI is governed through five core levels:

1) Content Leads
2) Content Contributors
3) Communications
4) Website Governance Committee
5) Executive Leadership

The roles and information about these groups will be expanded and included here as final decisions are made.

Before You Write Your Content

After identifying the need to create new content for your page, or create a new page entirely, you’ll need to take a few minutes to plan your content. While this step may seem unnecessary, it is a vital step to identify the goal, organization, and layout of your content.

Identify Your Audience

Before you begin, take some time to identify the audience for your content. If you need to create a page outlining the program requirements for a grant, understand that parents and families are not likely going to read it (nor should they). We are invested and interested in our work—that’s why we’re here. But not everyone is, and it’s best to develop content specific to the people who’ll be using it.

So, who are our audiences?

During the web redesign project, OSPI used survey data to identify five main audiences. In your planning process, identify one or two audiences who needs this information, and develop the content with them in mind. The five audiences are below.

District Staff: This audience makes up about a quarter of traffic to the website. They are often looking to log in to EDS, or need to find school or district performance data. They are interested in up-to-date
information that is easy to find, as they know information often changes.

**Educators:** Educators make up nearly half of the people who visit our website. They are looking primarily for licensing and certification information, learning standards, and professional development opportunities. They like to be able to easily find what they are looking for.

**Educational Support Staff:** This group does not visit the site often. When they do, they are looking for licensing information, professional development, and health services information. They want information that is visual and has people-friendly language.

**Families:** One of our smallest audiences, families are often visiting our site when they have not been able to find answers at their local district level. They are looking for testing information, learning standards, help with civil rights issues, and dual credit information. They want to find their information quickly, so the fewer clicks, the better.

**Community Members:** Making up a small portion of our audience, this group is often looking for data, learning standards, and licensing or certification information. They are interested in the tangible work that OSPI is doing, why we do it, and how it helps students.

**Plan Your Content**

After you have identified the audience you will be writing for, the next step is to plan your content. Think about why your audience is coming to your webpage and what they are looking for. Then think about what they need to know. Your goal is to combine these two things into a neat, helpful package that is easy to read and understand.

**Chunk Your Content and Identify Meaningful Headings**

Many people, especially here at OSPI, are used to developing technical assistance documents and guidance, and are tempted to create long, wordy webpages that include hundreds of words on every scenario that may arise.

*Don’t do that.*

Focus on the most important information, the things that your audience will need to know, and break your information down into manageable sections. These sections should have two to three sentences, and address something specific. Spending some time identifying your headings is an important step and can serve as a guide for your audience to the information. People will be scanning your page for what they are looking for. Give it to them in the heading and provide the answer in the two or three sentences below.

**A Note on Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

For years, people have developed Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents as a way to easily share the most pertinent information for their audience. They have provided this information as a shortcut around their lengthy, dry content. The FAQ has become so common, in fact, that recent research has shown that it is losing effectiveness, because people increasingly will not read a lengthy, 30-word question to understand what the section is about.

Instead of developing a FAQ, use information that would be in the document on your webpage, separated by meaningful headings, with the topic of the section as close to the beginning as possible.
**Inverted Pyramid**

The inverted pyramid is a style of newswriting that is very helpful when developing content for the web. When writing in the inverted pyramid style, you should start with your key point. Users will often only read the first few words in a section before deciding if it is going to answer their question. If they do not immediately see the answer they are looking for, they may jump down to a bulleted list, or they may just leave.

Once you have created your meaningful headings, organize them logically, but with the most important sections first. Begin with broad sections that the largest portion of your audience will be interested in knowing about, and provide specific and detailed information further down. Few will get to the end, but those who do will be the ones who need the information and have found it on your page.

**Writing Your Content**

**Write for Your Audience**

Remember to focus on your intended audience. What do they need to know to complete their task? Do they need to know about the history of the program? If you provide links to resources and examples, will your audience realistically be able to use them? Avoid providing too much information because you know someone will want it occasionally. Keep your page clean and concise, and let them contact you if they cannot find what they need.

**Active Voice**

Use active voice whenever possible. Writers should put the action first when writing in active voice.

For example, “The report was reviewed in draft form by about a dozen people” is written in the passive voice. The subject, about a dozen people, are being acted upon by the action, the review of the report.

Putting the subject first gives us: “About a dozen people reviewed the report in draft form.”

This is much more readable and adds credibility. Here is another example of active voice.

**ACTIVE:** Melanie will lead the discussion.

**PASSIVE:** The discussion will be led by Melanie.

Learn more about active voice on plainlanguage.gov

**Plain Talk**

For more on Plain Talk, check out the Plain Talk section, but remember these basic guidelines:
• Understand your audience’s needs
• Include only relevant information
• Use words your customers use
• Use active voice
• Keep sentences and paragraphs short
• Design clear pages

Keep Content Current/Write for Medium-Term

While your content does not need to be ‘evergreen,’ or applicable during any time, it is good to realistically think about how often you will update this page and how the information will look the day before it’s updated. If you are looking at this page in three months, or six months, will it still make sense? Will it be outdated?

Use Templates and Style Guides

Refer to the OSPI Style Guide and make sure your content aligns with agency style, tone of voice, level of professionalism, and Plain Talk and readability guidelines outlined in this guide. If you are unsure, ask for help from a Content Contributor or check in with the Communications office at commteam@k12.wa.us.

After You Have Written Your Content

Check for Understanding

When you have finished writing your content, provide it to someone in your audience and have them review it. Do they understand it? You can also provide it to someone elsewhere in the agency who does not know your program very well. Do they learn what you want them to know? Do they know what steps you want them to take? If not, you will need to revise your content.

Revise

Revise your content to make sure it is optimized to answer the questions your users have when they come to your webpage. When you finish, check for understanding again.

Update Content Often

Programs are always changing. It is imperative that you go back and review your content every few months. When you post your content, set a calendar reminder for three months to go back and review your updates to make sure the content is current, and make additions and removals as necessary.

The new website also has an option to automatically unpublish your page after a certain amount of time. If the information on your page is time-sensitive, set the unpublish function, and don’t worry about broken links. The web team monitors for them and can help you get them updated when your content expires.

Become a Content Wizard

This Writing for the Web section is only a starting point for OSPI staff. Some other incredible resources include:
• **Letting Go of the Words by Ginny Redish.** Copies of this book reside around the agency. Communications also has a couple, so reach out to them if you want to check out a copy.

• **Writing for the Web training.** Provided by the Department of Enterprise Services (DES), this one-day training features a ton of helpful information and hands-on instruction.

• **Hemingway App.** This [web-based text editor](#) can help you test your content for readability using Plain Talk principles. It doesn’t save content though, so make sure you take it with you!

• **Flesch-Kincaid checker in Word.** This feature analyzes your text to let you know the grade level for your content. [Learn how to turn it on](#).
Plain Talk and Readability

What is Plain Talk?

Also known as *plain language*, Plain Talk messages are clear, concise, and visually easy to read. Plain language uses common words, rather than jargon, acronyms, or unnecessary legal language.

A popular plain language myth is that you have to “dumb down” content so everyone can read it. That’s not true. Plain language allows you to write for your audience using language the audience understands and feels comfortable with.

Plain Talk is Required

- Plain language is not optional—*it is required*. OSPI will use Plain Talk guidelines in all communication with customers, including website content and email.
- In Washington state, [Executive Order 05-03](#) requires all state agencies to use simple and clear language when communicating with constituents and businesses.
- At the federal level, U.S. federal departments must comply with the [Plain Writing Act of 2010](#). The [Federal Plain Language Report Card](#) evaluates compliance.

Basic Guidelines of Plain Talk

- Understand customer and audience needs
- Include only relevant information
- Use words your customers use
- Use active voice
- Keep sentences and paragraphs short
- Design clear pages

Tools and Resources

- To help you “Plain Talk” your text: [HemingwayApp.com Editor](#) and [StoryToolz Readability Checker](#)
- State and federal guidance: [Washington Plain Talk Guidance](#) and [Federal Plain Language Guidelines](#)
- For government agencies: [Center for Plain Language](#) and [Usability.gov](#)

Plain Talk Tips

Aim for an average of:

- < 3 sentences per paragraph (< 2 for web copy): Readers skip long paragraphs.
- < 14 words per sentence: Sentence length is one of the top two predictors of readability. When sentences are fewer than 14 words, comprehension is 90 percent higher. Vary your sentence
length to build drama, create rhythm, and make your points powerful.

- < 2 syllables per word: Words of three or more syllables add to reading difficulty.
- < 5 characters per word: Word length is one of the top two predictors of readability.

5 Steps for Making Your Text Readable

Sources: The Center for Plain Language and Plainlanguage.gov

Step 1. Identify and describe the target audience.

Know your audience. Take your audience’s current level of knowledge into account. Know the expertise and interest of your average reader and then write to that person.

- Research and define the target groups that will use the document or webpage.
- List and prioritize top tasks or goals by audience group.
- List what people need or need to know.
- List characteristics of the groups that should influence design (e.g., age, computer experience, students, teachers, families, community members, etc.).
- Address the user
  - Use pronouns to speak directly to the reader (e.g., “you must provide a copy of the grant application”)
  - Define pronouns clearly, ensuring that readers understand what pronouns refer to.
  - In a question-and-answer format, use “I” in the question to refer to the user
  - Avoid using “he” or “she,” and address the reader directly
- Address audiences separately.

Step 2: Structure the content to guide the reader through it.

Organize the information so readers can quickly and confidently find the information they are looking for.

- Organize the content so it flows logically
- Present important information first in each section, subsection, and paragraph. Break content into short sections that reflect natural stopping points
- Write headings that help readers predict what is coming up
- Have a topic sentence
- Place the main idea before exceptions and conditions
- Use transition words
- Use lists
Step 3: Write the content in plain language.

Readers should understand the words and grasp the intended message quickly and confidently. **Choose your words carefully and be consistent in your writing style.**

- Keep it short and to the point
  - Write short but logical sentences
  - Write short paragraphs that cover one topic per paragraph
  - Minimize abbreviations
  - Minimize definitions
  - Use the same terms consistently
  - Include the details that help the reader complete the task
  - Leave out details that don’t help or may distract readers, even if they are interesting
- Set a helpful tone—use a conversational, rather than legal or bureaucratic, tone
- Use positive language
- Pick the right words
  - Use strong verbs in active voice
  - Use present tense
  - Use contractions
  - Use examples
  - Use “must” to indicate requirements
  - Use words the audience knows—use technical language appropriate for audience
  - Avoid jargon—words that are unnecessarily complicated used to impress, rather than inform
  - Make elements of titles or lists parallel (for example, start each with a verb)

Step 4: Use information design to help readers see and understand.

**Writing that is legible and well-organized is far easier to read.** You can use design elements to help users read and understand information.

- Use headers and sub-headers to organize the information
- Use typography (font size, color, bold, etc.) to guide the reader’s attention
- Use whitespace to organize the information
- Use images (e.g., charts, tables, visuals) to make content easier to understand
- Highlight important concepts using bold or italics (underlining draws attention but is harder to read)—but don’t overdo it
- Minimize cross-references
### Simple Words and Phrases: Instead of... Try...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead of...</th>
<th>Try...</th>
<th>Instead of...</th>
<th>Try...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional</td>
<td>More, added, other</td>
<td>In accordance with</td>
<td>By, per, under</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist, assistance</td>
<td>Aid, help</td>
<td>In the process of</td>
<td>(omit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempt</td>
<td>Try</td>
<td>Is applicable to</td>
<td>Applies to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commence</td>
<td>Begin, start</td>
<td>Modify</td>
<td>Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comply with</td>
<td>Follow</td>
<td>No later than</td>
<td>By</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing ongoing efforts</td>
<td>Efforts</td>
<td>Previously</td>
<td>Before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critically important</td>
<td>Critical or important</td>
<td>Prior to</td>
<td>Before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently</td>
<td>(omit), now</td>
<td>Provided that</td>
<td>If</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate</td>
<td>Show</td>
<td>Request</td>
<td>Ask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate</td>
<td>Cut, drop, end</td>
<td>Require</td>
<td>Must, need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employ</td>
<td>Use</td>
<td>Subsequently</td>
<td>After, later, then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure</td>
<td>Make sure</td>
<td>Successfully complete</td>
<td>Complete, pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expedite</td>
<td>Speed up, hasten</td>
<td>Terminate</td>
<td>Stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalize</td>
<td>Complete, finish</td>
<td>The month of</td>
<td>(omit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Utilize</td>
<td>Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify</td>
<td>Find, name, show</td>
<td>Validate</td>
<td>Confirm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement</td>
<td>Carry out, start</td>
<td>We would appreciate it if...</td>
<td>Please</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Get more at [PlainLanguage.gov](http://PlainLanguage.gov), or visit [ScienceGeek](http://ScienceGeek) for a list of education jargon to avoid (and to have a little fun with the “jargon generator”).
OSPI’s primary official font: Segoe UI (Sans Serif)

**Segoe UI 11:** The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. 12345678910 **BOLD italics**

**Segoe UI 12:** The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. 12345678910 **BOLD italics**

Segue (SEE-goh) is a typeface, or family of fonts, that is best known for its use by Microsoft. The company uses Segoe UI in its online and printed marketing materials, including recent logos for a number of products. Additionally, the Segoe UI font sub-family is used by numerous Microsoft applications.

**Use:**
- General email communications (Outlook and GovDelivery)
- Print and online publications
- Templates

OSPI’s secondary official font: Palatino (Serif)

**Palatino 11:** The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. 12345678910 **BOLD italics**

**Palatino 12:** The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. 12345678910 **BOLD italics**

Palatino has larger proportions, increasing legibility. Palatino was particularly intended as a design for trade or ‘jobbing’ use, such as headings, advertisements and display printing, and was created with a solid, wide structure and wide apertures that could appear clearly on poor-quality paper, when read at a distance or printed at small sizes. Linotype licensed Palatino to Adobe and Apple who incorporated it into their digital printing technology as a standard font.

**Use:**
- Official correspondence
- Contrasting font option for design
- Available as an alternative to Segoe UI

*Using an application that does not offer the OSPI font standard of Palatino or Segoe UI? When in doubt, contact communications.*
A standard email signature block presents a professional and consistent image for OSPI. The information we ask you to include will help the public and other agencies recognize your email as OSPI correspondence. If this guidance does not address your specific need or question, contact commteam@k12.wa.us. For a quick video on how to create your signature in Outlook, go here: Outlook Help.

Create an email signature block in Outlook. See page 4 for technical instructions.

**External email:**
- At minimum, include your full signature when you initiate an email or when replying to an email string for the first time. Follow the standard outlined on page 2.
- Your email signature block may vary based on the recipient(s) of the email. You may want to create more than one signature (see examples on page 3).

**Internal email:**
- Using an internal email signature is very helpful to colleagues.
- Include name, job title, program area, and phone number.

**DO:**
- Use the ADA-compliant, printer-friendly, agency standard: Black, Segoe UI, size 11*.
- Link to OSPI’s website: [k12.wa.us](http://k12.wa.us)
- Use the agency vision statement: *All students prepared for post-secondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement.*
- The OSPI vision statement is italicized. Include both commas, **DO add punctuation to the end of the vision statement.**
- **Use the OSPI Style Guide.** For example, phone numbers are hyphenated and email addresses are lowercased.

*Take audience accessibility into consideration. E.g., if your audience needs larger font for visual impairment, continue to use Segoe UI in a larger size consistently.*

**DO NOT:**
- Do not include backgrounds, quotations, images, nonstandard fonts or colors, additional hyperlinks, or social media hashtags to your signature.

**OPTIONAL:**
- Questions about special exceptions to your signature should be directed to the Communications Office.
• Connect with us goes to a “landing” web page with links to the GovDelivery subscription page and OSPI social media accounts: www.k12.wa.us/connect

• If your program/department uses GovDelivery for bulk communications, you may include a customized “Subscribe to email updates” link. This is for GovDelivery subscriptions only. Contact the Communications Office for support.

• The nondiscrimination statement and legal disclaimer are optional, but is added when the email content and/or audience requires one or both. Visit the intranet for nondiscrimination statement guidance and translations: http://insideospi/sites/PoliciesForms/Pages/NonDiscriminationStatement.aspx

• Gender pronoun preference is optional for inclusion on OSPI's standard signature. See the example for Alex Conley.

• Email sent from your mobile device should follow the standard as closely as possible. See page 4 for iPhone instructions, or refer to your email client’s instructions.

Anatomy of the OSPI Signature

**Anatomy of the OSPI Signature**

**Segoe UI 11**

**Point Black**

Put your name in bold, the rest in regular font. Do not use a “fancy” font for your name.

Lowercase email addresses and hyperlinks.

Do not add to your signature:

- Backgrounds
- Quotations
- Photos, logos, animation, or other images
- Additional hyperlinks
- Nonstandard fonts or colors
- Social media hashtags

If your program uses GovDelivery for bulk email, a customized “subscribe to email updates” link may be added to the signature block.

Contact the Comm. Office for your custom link.

**Full Name**

Required

**Job Title**

**Program/Department**

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

P.O. Box 47200 | 600 Washington St. SE

Olympia, WA 98504-7200

Office: 360-725-XXXX | Cell: XXX-XX-XXXX

first.last@k12.wa.us

www.k12.wa.us

**All students prepared for postsecondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement.**

Connect with us

www.k12.wa.us/connect

Subscribe to email alerts

[insert your custom GovDelivery link]

Optional

**Nondiscrimination statement**

OSPI provides equal access to all programs and services without discrimination based on sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. Questions and complaints of alleged discrimination should be directed to the Equity and Civil Rights Director at 360-725-6162/TTY: 360-664-3631; or P.O. Box 47200, Olympia, WA 98504-7200; or equity@k12.wa.us.

Optional

**Legal disclaimer**

This communication, including attachments, is intended solely for the use of the individual to whom it is addressed, and may contain information that is privileged, confidential, proprietary or otherwise exempt from disclosure under applicable state and federal laws. If you are not the addressee, or are not authorized to receive for the intended addressee, you are hereby notified that you may not use, copy, distribute or disclose to anyone this communication or the information contained herein. If you have received this message in
error, immediately advise the sender by reply email and destroy this message.

**Legal disclaimer (abbreviated)**
This information is for informational purposes only. It does not provide legal advice or establish an attorney–client relationship. Please contact an attorney for legal advice specific to the facts and circumstances of your individual situation. All communications with OSPI are subject to public disclosure under state law (Chapter 42.56 RCW).

**Notice of public disclosure**
Public documents and records are available to the public as provided under the Washington State Public Records Act (RCW 42.56). This email may be considered subject to the Public Records Act and may be disclosed to a third-party requester.

**ADA Notification for events**
To arrange accommodations for persons with disabilities, please contact [First Name Last Name] at [phone number], TTY 360-664-3631 or by email, [email address] within three business days of this event - [date here]. Please note that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not require OSPI to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services, or impose an undue financial or administrative burden.

### Examples

**STANDARD SIGNATURE with all required elements:**

Benjamin Franklin  
Fiscal Analyst  
Agency Financial Services  
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)  
600 Washington St. SE | Olympia, WA 98504-7200  
Office: 360-725-6000  
benjamin.franklin@k12.wa.us  
www.k12.wa.us

All students prepared for postsecondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement.
STANDARD SIGNATURE with connect link, fax, gender pronouns:
Alex Conley
Pronouns: she, her, hers
Director of Health and Fitness Teaching and Learning
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)
P.O. Box 47200 | Olympia, WA 98504-7200
Office: 360-725-6000 | fax: 360-555-1234
alexandra.conley@k12.wa.us
www.k12.wa.us

Connect with us
www.k12.wa.us/connect

All students prepared for postsecondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement.

When writing on behalf of another person, such as a director:

Sherry Johnson
On behalf of Mary Smith, Assessment Director
Assessment and Student Information
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)
P.O. Box 47200 | Olympia, WA 98504-7200
Office: 360-725-6000
sherry.johnson@k12.wa.us
www.k12.wa.us

All students prepared for postsecondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement.

NOTE: If you are sending from Mary Smith’s email address, using “on behalf of” is not necessary.

How to Customize Your Signature in Outlook

1. Home tab > New Email
2. Insert tab > Signature dropdown > Signatures... [This opens the Signature dialog box]
3. Click New
4. Type a name for the signature – such as “Full Signature” or “Internal” or “Sig with Legal Disclaimer”–whatever label works best for you.
5. Create the signature block according to the OSPI signature standards.
6. Click OK when finished.

To set your default signature, follow steps 1 and 2. Then, under “Choose default signatures”, select your default signature for “New messages” and “Replies/forwards.”
When you need to insert a signature other than your default into a message: Insert > Signature > Select the one you want to use from the dropdown. It will take out the default signature and replace it with the one you selected.

**On an iPhone**

You can create one custom signature per email address.

1. Settings
2. Mail, Contacts, Calendars
3. Signature
4. If you have more than one email address on your iPhone, select ‘Per Account.’
5. Customize the signature field.

The signature will auto-populate when you create a new email and when you reply to an email.
July 17, 2019

Newly rewritten guide

Added to Guide:

- Writing for the Web (May 2018)
- Email signature block standard (May 2018)
- Agency Font Standards (May 2018)

Updates to Guide:

- am/pm (March 2019)
- percent (June 2019)
- He/she vs. their (June 2019)
- First vs. Third person speech (March 2019)
- Legislative Citations (May 2018)
- Latinx (October 2018)
- Executive Correspondence standards

Removed from Guide:

- Punctuation, Grammar and Usage (added to A-Z Reference)
- OSPI Departments and Programs
- Language Use for Individuals with Disabilities (will be in Culturally Responsive Style)
- Usability and Digital Content
- Educational Service Districts (ESDs)
- School District/ESD Lookup
- Basic Education Act
- Style Sheet Template
- How to Request a Change to the Style Guide (added to About)
- Removed ‘percentage point’ entry as Style now allows the use of the percent symbol (%) in writing.