UPDATE: Dropout Prevention, Intervention and Reengagement
2013

Authorizing legislation: RCW 28A.175.075
(http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.175.075)

Secondary Education and Student Support
Dan Newell, Assistant Superintendent

Prepared by:
  • Dixie Grunenfelder (dixie.grunenfelder@k12.wa.us, 360-725-6045)
Executive Summary

Washington State graduation rates have increased over the past 10 years. For the 2011–12 school year, on-time (four-year) rates reached 77.2 percent and extended (five-year) rates were at 78.9 percent.

In the same school year, however, 10,646 students dropped out of high school.

About 60 students disappear from schools in our state every day. The data are even less promising for our most vulnerable youth, including kids in foster care, the juvenile justice system, or without homes. A coordinated system for targeted prevention, intervention, and reengagement is needed to keep students engaged in school and on track to graduate from high school.

The Building Bridges Program was established by the Legislature in 2007 to prevent students from dropping out of school and to reengage students who already have. The program awards grants to help partnerships of schools, families, and communities build a dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement (DIPR) system, and to support the statewide initiative Graduation: A Team Effort (GATE).

In 2013, Building Bridges:

- Trained districts on how to implement a Dropout Early Warning Intervention System (DEWIS).
- Matched students with graduation coaches using the early warning system watch list to provide support and case management.
- Helped schools coordinate community and school student-support resources to address specific barriers to academic success.
- Located youth who had dropped out and reengaged them in school programming.
- Identified alternative education programming to better meet student needs and ensure academic progress.

In 2013, GATE:

- Completed a data toolkit for districts.
- Completed an inventory of all dropout-related programs.
- Identified data sources to measure progress on DIPR.

---

Background

In 2005, the Legislature asked the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) why students drop out of school. They also wanted to know what practices and programs are successful at keeping students on track for graduation.

In the 2007–09 biennium, the Legislature passed Substitute House Bill 1573, which established the Building Bridges Workgroup. This high-level workgroup is comprised of state legislators and multiple state agency partners to oversee a shared vision for dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement (DPIR) programming. It makes annual recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor on DPIR best practices.

In 2011, the Legislature passed the PASS Act, House Bill 1599, which expanded the DPIR model and established the Graduation: A Team Effort (GATE) Initiative. GATE is a partnership between state, regional, and local entities. It focuses on effective use of data, sound policy, partnerships, and best practice programming. It helps the Building Bridges Workgroup.

The GATE Advisory Group was also created in 2011 with representatives from state and regional programs, statewide youth-serving organizations, school personnel, parents and youth, and several time-limited, task-focused ad hoc workgroups.

The new GATE Backbone Steering Committee, comprised of department secretaries and statewide leaders, will oversee and evaluate the effectiveness of GATE and individual projects funded by Building Bridges grants. They use information gathered by the GATE Advisory Group to make programming decisions.

Update Status

The items below summarize the work that has taken place since December 2012:

1. OSPI convened the Building Bridges Workgroup to serve in an advisory capacity. The GATE Backbone Steering Committee was formed to organize and coordinate efforts. Additionally, ad hoc workgroups were formed to work in specific areas, including:
   - Milestone Measures and Data Sources
   - Dropout Early Warning Systems
   - Youth Reengagement
   - Inventory of State Programs

2. OSPI continued its work on the implementation of a Dropout Early Warning Intervention System (DEWIS). DEWIS is a systemic approach to:
   - Identify at-risk students.
   - Assign appropriate services and interventions.
• Monitor student progress.
• Evaluate interventions for effectiveness.

3. Granite Falls School District, Vancouver School District, and Educational Service District 113 received Building Bridges grants to provide direct services to students at risk of dropping out. These grants help districts:

• Build partnerships between schools, families, and communities.
• Develop a comprehensive approach to DPIR.
• Use data to identify students at risk of dropping out.
• Provide timely interventions and supports.

In the upcoming biennium, Building Bridges will fund both “demonstration” models and DEWIS Planning & Implementation (DPI) models.

4. The regional District and School Data Teams, which began work in October 2011, completed in March of 2013. This project included:

• Creating a data toolkit containing protocols, templates, and informational resources.
• Training and certification of regional data coaches to support the establishment of data teams and use of inquiry to drive school and district improvement.

In 2012–13, each of the Building Bridges grantees were assigned a regional data coach. The coach helped grantees develop a data-informed action plan for DEWIS processes and program sustainability.

5. Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1418 (2010) is now referred to as Open Doors[1418] Youth Reengagement programs. In 2011–12 there were three approved programs, with growth across the state now serving youth at 23 sites, incorporating 45 schools districts. These programs serve older youth, ages 16–21, who have dropped out of school or are not expected to graduate from high school by the age of 21.

6. The Backbone Steering Committee created a graphic to help define the scope and focus of the work from a system level and individual student level.

7. As part of the GATE Initiative, OSPI launched a call to action focused on mentoring. Youth at risk of dropping out of school, or those who have already dropped out, often need a caring adult role model to help them reconnect with their educational goals and provide support. The call to action includes:

• Sponsoring a youth art contest.
• Promoting evidence-based mentoring programs.
• Hiring staff to inventory school mentoring efforts.
• Supporting OSPI staff to volunteer at local elementary schools.
Conclusion and Next Steps

The collective impact of all programs working toward dropout prevention and reengagement will show significant quantifiable, positive results over the next few years. Progress has been made to align graduation efforts across agencies and organizations.

Building Bridges will continue to focus on communication, prioritization, and collaboration relative to data-informed practices, multi-tiered systems of student support, student and family engagement, and community partnerships.

2014 Timeline

Ongoing:

- Share data across state, regional, and local levels to ensure effective and efficient program delivery. (Completed data sharing agreements with Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Children’s Administration, and Juvenile Rehabilitation. Other agreements will be developed as needs/barriers arise).
- Promote a multi-tiered system of support through the GATE website, training, and technical assistance.

February:

- Identify DPIR programs being implemented across the state as part of Results Washington process through Results Washington District Survey.

June:

- Develop shared DPIR outcome measures across agencies and organizations at the state, regional, and local levels using Milestone Measures.
- Develop a dropout early warning and intervention system toolkit through the GATE Early Warning System ad hoc workgroup.

August:

- Promote youth engagement best practices, including building capacity around the Check and Connect mentoring program by providing training and grants for implementation.
- Develop specific measures and data sources for family and community partnerships relative to DPIR through GATE data ad hoc workgroup.

September:

- Address gaps identified through the February 2014 Results Washington District Survey (contingent on funding).
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 including gender expression or identity, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical 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 or P.O. Box 47200 Olympia, WA 98504-7200.

Download this material in PDF at http://www.k12.wa.us/LegisGov/Reports.aspx. This material is available in alternative format upon request. Contact the Resource Center at (888) 595-3276, TTY (360) 664-3631. Please refer to this document number for quicker service: 13-0062.

Randy I. Dorn • State Superintendent
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Old Capitol Building • P.O. Box 47200
Olympia, WA 98504-7200