UPDATE: Gangs in Schools Task Force

2014

2007 Substitute Senate Bill 5097

RCW 28A.300.490 - Task force on gangs in schools

Secondary Education and Student Support
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Executive Summary
For several reasons, the Gangs in Schools task Force did not meet in 2014. Task Force reports from earlier years can be found on the School Safety Center Gangs in Schools web page.
Background
In 2007, the Legislature passed Substitute Senate Bill (SSB) 5097, which required the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to convene a Task Force to examine how gangs are affecting school safety. The Task Force was directed to annually report its findings and recommendations to the education committees of the Legislature. The Gangs in Schools Task Force has submitted legislative recommendations for several years. Currently, the Task Force is focused on three primary areas of activity with direct impact on gang activity in schools: data, policy guidance and training.

Update Status
1. **Data:** The Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) is given to students in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12 on even years. The Gangs in Schools Task Force identified eight potential questions – related to youth gang affiliation and activity – for inclusion in 2014. Of the eight, one was chosen: “Are there gangs at your school?” (In 2012, a similar question in the HYS asked whether the student had been a member of a gang.)

   To date, there is no category for gang activity in federal or state reporting. The issue has come up within the Student Discipline Task Force. Additional clarification and training would be required prior to adding “gang activity” into the data collection process.

2. **Policy guidance:** Previously, the Task Force examined local, regional and national policies and guidance for dealing with gang activity in schools. The information was used to draft policy guidance that districts and communities might use. Included are definitions and identification criteria for recognizing gang activity within a school setting. This guidance can be used by districts to create their own, local gang activity in schools policies and procedures. The guidance documents is posted on the OSPI [Gangs in Schools](#) web page. No changes were made in 2014.

3. **Trainings:** Since the previous report, no trainings have been offered through the Task Force.

4. **Meetings:** As noted above, the Task Force did not meet in 2014.

Conclusion and Next Steps
This Gangs in Schools Task Force report repeats the three recommendations to forward to the Legislature. If addressing gang activity within schools is to be a priority for schools and districts:

1. Additional funding to support future Task Force work would be needed.

2. Provide funding for training, data collection, implementation of innovative programs and promising practices. It is also recommended that funding be provided to support the work of promising, community-based efforts.
3. Provide a dedicated funding stream for transition/re-entry programs for adjudicated youth. As a component of its draft policy and procedural guidance, the Task Force recognizes the importance of wrap-around educational and re-engagement services for students who are suspended or expelled for gang-related activity. The Task Force recommends funding such activity.

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