UPDATE: Dropout Prevention, Intervention and Reengagement 2014

Authorizing legislation: RCW 28A.175
(http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.175)

Secondary Education and Student Support
Dan Newell, Assistant Superintendent

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Executive Summary

In Washington state, the class of 2013 had 10,305 students drop out of school. On average, 60 students disappear from Washington schools every day. The data is even less promising for our most vulnerable youth, including youth in foster care, the juvenile justice system, or without stable housing. 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.

But there have been improvements. Washington state graduation rates are increasing over the past 10 years. For the 2012–2013 school year, on-time (four-year) graduation rates reached 76.0 percent and extended (five-year) rates were 78.8 percent.

The Building Bridges program was established by the Legislature in 2007 to prevent students from dropping out of school and to reconnect students who are already disengaged. The program awards grants to help school-community-family partnerships build a multi-tiered dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement (DPIR) system. The program also supports the statewide Graduation: A Team Effort (GATE) initiative working to coordinate efforts and share what is working.

In 2014, Building Bridges efforts included:

- Funding grants for nine districts and one Educational Service District to develop a Dropout Early Warning and Intervention System (DEWIS) model, as well as sustainable evidence based processes and practices. (http://www.k12.wa.us/GATE/BuildingBridges/default.aspx)
- Expanding the Open Doors Youth Reengagement framework (RCW 28A.175.100-115) that reengages older youth who have dropped out with pathways to college and career. (http://www.k12.wa.us/GATE/SupportingStudents/StudentRetrieval.aspx)

In 2014, GATE:

- Partnered with Governor Inslee’s Results Washington (Results WA) initiative to help schools and communities coordinate student support resources that address specific barriers to learning and improve access to dropout prevention, intervention and reengagement efforts.
- Conducted an extensive review of district DPIR efforts that provided information to support targeted communication and professional development. (www.k12.wa.us/GATE/Results.aspx)

This report further summarizes the work that has taken place since December 2013.

Background

In 2007, the Legislature passed Substitute House Bill 1573, which established the Building Bridges Workgroup. This high-level workgroup, comprised of state legislators and state agency partners, is charged with the development of a common vision for dropout prevention, intervention and reengagement (DPIR) programming, as well as making annual recommendations to the Legislators and the Governor on DPIR best practices and system needs.

The legislature has continued to support the development of a DPIR system through various policy actions, such as: SSHB 1418 (2010) reengagement system (RCW 28A.175.100-115); HB 1599 (2011) (RCW 28A.175.035) (standard absence definitions, graduation coach policy and graduation incentive metric); HB 1556 (2014) (educational programming for suspension alternative and behavior best practices).

Since 2010, OSPI has supported Graduation: A Team Effort through the creation and facilitation of an Advisory Group, Leadership Committee, and several time-limited, task-focused ad hoc workgroups. The groups are comprised of individuals from state, regional and local agencies including community youth-serving organizations committed to increasing student success.

Update Status

Building Bridges Grants were implemented in three models for the 2013-14 school year.

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The DEWIS.EDU model facilitated professional development and team process for the DEWIS Planning and Implementation model grantees. This process was conducted through three institutes, monthly conference calls, and a website of resources and materials.

The DPI model grantees through the DEWIS.EDU institute work:

- Used data to identify a district problem of practice that negatively impacted graduation rates.
• Developed an action plan to address this problem of practice through a cycle of inquiry and evidence based practices.
• Identifies performance and outcome measures to evaluate and improve effectiveness of efforts.

Example:
The Evergreen school district team used data to discover that they had a higher number of students dropping out in 12th grade. They attributed the root cause of this to a lack of explicit non-cognitive skill development to help students persevere, self-advocate, and self-regulate through rigorous academic tasks.

To address this problem of practice they planned to increase evidence based, high quality instruction in both academic and non-cognitive skill development with tiered levels of support.

The outcomes they will measure will be course failure rates, particularly in core classes beginning in 9th grade, and graduation rates.

Building Bridges Demonstration Model grantees used data and evidence to identify essential and effective DPIR efforts currently in place while building sustainability.

1. Open Doors Youth Reengagement programs, created with SSHB 1418 (2010), expanded from 23 programs with 45 school districts to 36 programs incorporating 66 districts. Programs are expanding to include:
   • Increased requirements for face-to-face case management.
   • Consortium programs that combine funding and students from multiple districts which provides more options and resources for individual students.
   • Partnerships with community and technical colleges that reduce expensive remediation and connect students with college degrees and trade certification.
   • Partnerships with workforce agency allowing students to access workplace learning and real job skills.

2. OSPI convened the Building Bridges Workgroup to review the initial Building Bridges and inventory agency efforts relative to the Recommendations.
   • Suggested modifications to the initial Recommendations include: expand focus from high school to every grade level; include youth and family serving organizations in the efforts; and expand reengagement age. These comments will be reviewed and action steps will be determined relative to the feasibility of the requested change.
   • Effort highlights include: data-sharing, targeted programming and comprehensive initiatives.
   • Ongoing attention on: data informed programming, coordination of efforts and sharing of promising practices.

3. OSPI and Results WA have partnered to identify what is working and share those efforts. Specific examples include:
   • Completed a survey of districts to identify current efforts/areas of needs.
- Implemented four targeted projects related to: data, multi-tiered system of supports, wrap around services, and engagement.
- Created a monthly webinar series to share current research and effective practices.

4. Developed data analytics that identified districts with graduation rates across all populations that exceed state average, documented their system and programming, and created tools to share their success.

5. Created dropout prevention performance measures to be used across multiple systems to create shared vision and common measures of success. These include:
   - On-time and extended graduation rates
   - Attendance/chronic absenteeism
   - Suspension/expulsions
   - Passing ninth and tenth grade core courses

**Conclusion and Next Steps**

The collective impact of all programs working towards addressing dropout prevention performance measures will show significant quantifiable results in the identified performance measures including:

- On-time and extended graduation rates
- Attendance/chronic absenteeism
- Suspension/expulsions
- Passing ninth and tenth grade core courses

The Building Bridges Program will continue to partner with the governor’s office to increase graduation rates and increase access to dropout prevention programs for students and families through the following efforts:

- Highlight data-informed practices and develop data analytics for districts.
- Create multi-tiered system of supports and promotion of positive behavior supports.
- Develop student and family engagement rubric and identification of promising practices, and building capacity for Check and Connect – an evidence-based mentoring/academic engagement program.
- Coordinate wraparound services for students in need of intensive supports, including the piloting comprehensive student support specifically addressing mental health and substance abuse.
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