



REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: Gangs in Schools Taskforce

2017

Authorizing legislation: [2007 Substitute Senate Bill 5097](#)

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?year=2007&bill=5097>

[RCW 28A.300.490 - Task force on gangs in schools](#)

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.300.490>

Tennille Jeffries-Simmons
System and School Improvement

Prepared by:

- Mike Donlin, mike.donlin@k12.wa.us ; 360.725.6044

Executive Summary

A Gangs in Schools Task Force was created under [RCW 28A.320.490](#) to examine current adult and youth gang activities that are affecting school safety. The Task Force met regularly from 2008–2013 to examine current adult and youth gang activities affecting school safety and to make recommendations to the Legislature.

The Gangs in Schools Task Force submitted legislative recommendations for several years. Ultimately, the Task Force chose to focus on three primary areas of activity with direct impact on gang activity in schools: data, policy guidance, and training. The Task Force stopped meeting in 2013 and reiterates the previous recommendations as submitted to the legislature. 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 submitted legislative recommendations for several years. Ultimately, the Task Force chose to focus on three primary areas of activity with direct impact on gang activity in schools: data, policy guidance and training. However, due to turnovers in organizational staffing and task force membership, and a lack of legislative support for earlier years' work, the Gangs in Schools Task Force has not met since 2013.

Update Status

Data: Eight potential Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) questions were identified for inclusion on the 2014 survey. The questions relate to youth gang affiliation and activity. Ultimately, one question was selected for inclusion in the 2014 survey. Response to the new question is available through HYS.

It should be noted there is *no category* for reporting gang activity defined in current state or federal reports.

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 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. Guidance documents are posted on the OSPI [Gangs in Schools](#) web page.

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

Meetings: As noted above, the Task Force is no longer meeting. If gang activity in schools issues were to arise, they would be addressed within the School Safety Advisory Committee.

Conclusion and Next Steps

As noted above, if issues around gang activity in schools arise, they will be addressed within the School Safety Advisory Committee. The Gangs in Schools Task Force report reiterates the three recommendations previously forwarded to the Legislature. If addressing gang activity within schools is to be a priority for schools and districts:

1. Provide funding to support future Task Force work.
2. Provide funding for training, data collection, implementation of innovative programs and promising practices. It is also recommended funding be provided to support the work of promising, community-based efforts.
3. Provide a dedicated apportionment 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.

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://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: 17-0044.



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