



# THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

*A high-quality education system that prepares all students for college, career, and life.*

## SUMMARY OF THE SPOKANE COMMUNITY FORUM

Prepared for the August 2018 Board meeting

### Overview

The Washington State Board of Education (SBE) and the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC) co-hosted a community forum on July 10, 2018, in Spokane, to solicit input on highest priority issues to be addressed in the SBE 2018 strategic plan. Thirty-four participants attended the forum, plus SBE and EOGOAC members and staff.

SBE and EOGOAC board chairs opened the meeting. Board members and staff participated in the small group and full group discussions, serving as facilitators and notetakers at each roundtable discussion.

Participants were encouraged to share their perspectives on hopes and aspirations for students, as well as broad barriers to success. They were also asked to share their suggestions for state and district-level policies and strategies to overcome the barriers they identified.

The following themes regarding strategies to overcome barriers were noted in the discussions, staff notes, and participant-written suggestions:

1. Teacher preparation and professional development
2. Curriculum and learning environment
3. Early learning
4. Graduation and transitions beyond high school
5. Systems, structures and policies
6. Family, student and community engagement

### Themes

#### ***TEACHER PREPARATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT***

Students need teachers who are prepared to teach all of their students, using culturally, academically, and developmentally-appropriate methods, without bias. Teachers need innovative pre-service training, mentoring, and career-long professional development to continue to meet the needs of the changing demographics of their students – and to prepare students for the changing world in which they will be learning and working, beyond high school. Students who have an interest in education as a career should have a clear pathway, through advising and support through entry to pre-service programs.

Examples of strategies provided by participants include:

- “Promote teaching as a career earlier in the school system.”
- “Mentorship for teachers.”
- “Serious, intentional strategies to recruit and retain teachers of color.”
- “Required PD on anti-bias”

### ***CURRICULUM AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT***

Students need individualized instruction and support to meet their academic and social-emotional needs. A well-educated student needs a broad range of courses, taught in a manner that is suited for the student's individual learning style. Students and families need more support beyond that which a classroom teacher provides.

Examples of strategies provided by participants include:

- “Encourage students to find their passions, as well as career path; and bolster their path.”
- “More counselors, more community engagement coordinators, more nurses, more social workers.”
- “Break mold of white privilege, institutional racism, teacher diversity”
- “Have the school environment be warm, friendly, and especially safe.”

### ***EARLY LEARNING***

Students need to begin school with every opportunity for success. High-quality preschool should be available to all students.

- “Pre-K education opportunities for all students. Start them all w/same skills.”
- “Full access for all students to early education.”
- “Improve quality of preschool.”

### ***GRADUATION AND TRANSITIONS BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL***

Students can show what they know and what they can do through a variety of means. Flexibility is needed in graduation requirements. Student pathways toward their chosen careers should be clear of barriers at the transition from high school to colleges, technical training, or jobs. Graduation requirements – including all alternate pathways – should be communicated clearly to students and families.

- “Shift in language around CTE: "raise the trades."”
- “Re-evaluate the 24-credit diploma. Can there be options. Medical issues/trauma, etc.”
- “Look at articulation of credits to higher ed – why does the transition have to be so difficult and different at our state institutions?”

### ***SYSTEMS, STRUCTURES AND POLICIES***

Students need systemic support and education - without bias. Structures, policies and practices must support all students, eliminating systemic bias, barriers and inequities in education opportunities. Students in all districts and all classrooms should have educational opportunities to meet their needs.

- “Examine systemic institutional barriers that lead to racial inequity.”
- “Blow-up – figuratively! "Common School" model. Research and implement successful models.”
- “Study effects/impact of "local control." Is it working or not?”

### ***FAMILY, STUDENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT***

Students, families, and schools must work together to support student success. Communication and connections between schools and families require intentional strategies and consideration of language and cultural differences in the community.

- “Bring the knowledge of life possibilities to rural and isolated communities.”
- “Find ways to engage parents – outreach and activities.”
- “Encourage volunteerism.”

## Appendix A

### *Table facilitator notes*

Notes provided by SBE and EOGOAC members and staff, summarizing small group discussions.

#### **TABLE 1**

##### *Hopes and Dreams*

- Appropriate education – match student needs
- Options – prepared for choice (pathways)
- Hopes and dreams honored/not diminished/supported
- Challenge of high stakes assessment – percent too low, how to help
- Connect to students' experience
- Contextualize student learning to standards
- Other needs/besides academics (cultural context) that influence academic success

##### *Barriers*

- Obsession w/test scorers (test that prevents grad.)
- Teacher quality /experience/time/assignments
- Individuals' bias (institutional bias?)
- Funding w/equity in mind
- Punishments that are inappropriate/unfair (zero tolerance)
- Grad/mindset - rite of passage
- Adult decision – fixed mindset
- Inadequate funding - \$ directed to what end?
- Self-policing, by institutions (best interest of kids?)

##### *Strategies*

- Delinking assessment from graduation
- Strategies for family engagement must be contextual, but based on knowledge/belief (best practices)
- Pre-service teacher ed includes "tools" - P.D. know/use with fidelity
- Multiple pathways
- Encourage innovation...idea implementation continuous improvement
- Find what kids/parents care about/connect with
- Recipe for success
- Attendance penalties
- Community engagement
- Structural support for broader engagement
- Formalize volunteer programs (e.g. city govt) with schools
- Stay the course...
- Shift admin focus to CIA from bargaining
- Quality research/integrity in data collection – translate into implementation

##### *Other notes*

- Diverse communities
- Increase clarity of common vision

- Purpose – policy – program – practices – partners
- Awareness – desire – knowledge (know) - ability (do) - reinforce
- Be patient with ourselves as we grow from our collective expertise

## TABLE 2

### *Hopes and Dreams*

- Meaningful choices for graduates - opportunity to explore and realize full potential --options and choices
- Equal opportunity to
  - Explore passion and interest in high school
    - Kids need to develop confidence to know what path to take
    - Kids supported by schools - schools have the power to be a place that supports kids -- not happening for all kids.
    - Addressing learning challenges - need to get kid to 10th grade
      - Need a chance to explore and work on things they are good at -- play to strengths
    - Restructure the way schools work - learning environments that meet the needs of kids (e.g. kids that learn hands-on).
    - Put technical education programs back in schools
    - Every child can have pre-k education -- every child should have pre-school
  - [question - where does the funding come from for local pre-k programs?]
  - Opposition to head start in Spokane SD
  - Gap between how teachers are prepared in COE and what is needed in schools - more communication between higher ed and schools.
  - Mentoring
  - Learning practice
- Teachers and parents on the same page about student experience
- Requires more PD -- intentional focus
  - Need to look at ED TPA - teacher candidates complete the same time they are doing student teaching -- not reasonable to do those concurrently.
  - Classroom Aid for teachers -
  - How to capture wisdom from senior teachers
  - Teacher aid / teacher academy program

### *Barriers*

- Need better transition between K12 and higher education -- more cooperative talking between the two. Higher ed requirements may add barriers
- Consistency in AP
- 2 vs 3 years world language
- Dual CTE requirements - how to educate higher education on those requirements

### *Strategies*

- Longer student teaching exposure; need more recognition of PD and time that teachers spend working with students

- \$\$ / credits for student learning
  - Schools focused on shoving all kids to college -- need to give teacher and students opportunities for hands on training -- counselors attend career events in the trades
- Better pre-screening process to connect kids to career events
- Skills center good resource - but not getting teachers from academic areas or counselors
- Some barriers with employers - need to change the perception in the industry
- Need to be smart to be in the industry
- Teach work ethic; importance of being on-time; work every day
- Reevaluate the 24 credit diploma
  - Fail one class
  - Long-term suspended
  - Education piece for parents / PP
- Alternative learning experiences - what do we do for the kids who are behind? - alternative course not equivalent.
  - After school / summer -- punish the kid with school - creates a negative association
- Funding focused on performance -- leads to more focus on what can be measured... should emphasize what we value not simply what we measure
- 24 credit as "next testing barrier"
- Change structure of school so you're not limiting their options / interests
- Schools could function better without just focusing on tests
- Move language back to middle school (starting in 6th or earlier)
  - High school level to meet requirements
- More access to early learning - learn through play etc...Enrichment that occurs outside of the classroom important to the whole person development... tends to be local responsibility
  - Funding model need to look at enrichment in addition to basic education

### **TABLE 3**

#### *Hopes and Dreams*

- Giving all students choices – opportunity to explore so they know they have choices – passions and interests
- All develop confidence to know what they want to do
- Every child could have opportunity to attend preschool
- Every child has a well-prepared teacher
- Seamless cooperative transition K-12 and higher ed

#### *Barriers*

- Lack of soft skills being taught – on time, chronic absenteeism
- Unequal opportunities
- Unaddressed learning problems
- Recognition that "it's not about trying harder"
- School space issue
- Convincing parents of the need to make structural changes in program K-6, K-5
- Disconnect between school and home in making changes
- Graduation requirements are different at each
- Public colleges

- Honor time of mentor teachers \$
- All schools need to do the same level of HSBP
- All programs seem to be "deficit" types of activities

#### *Strategies*

- Bring trades back into schools
- Early interventions in learning disabilities
- Restructuring the ways schools teach
- Professional development for teachers to learn how to work with a variety of learning styles
- Impact teacher preparation programs. Look at ED-TPA
- H.S. need to quit pushing college for all
- Revisit all of the requirements made for teachers
- Mandate counselors attend career/skills events – making job too cumbersome
- More paraprofessionals in classrooms
- Develop teaching academy program
- Re-evaluate 24 credit
- Skilled trades need mentorship protege
- Need to change perception of the trades
- Parents need to understand personal pathways, 24 credit...it's all very confusing.
- Provide alternative learning experiences for students when they are [phrase ends]
- Place emphasis on what we value, rather than on what we measure and have the funding follow it

#### **TABLE 4**

##### *Hopes and Dreams*

- Learn to trust and rise above
- Learn to work through abuse issues
- Disrupt school to prison pipeline, discipline/opportunity
- Background knowledge to thrive in day-to-day life, understand different view
- Break mold of white privilege, institutional racism, teacher diversity
- Equity, opportunity to succeed, civics education, connecting/identifying.

##### *Barriers*

- No Native American role models, children do not see themselves in the school.
- Lack of opportunity, not knowing what is possible
- Superintendents/boards not educated in 21<sup>st</sup> century needs, not a priority
- Institutional resistance to change, not exposed to options
- Not teaching curricula
- Top down cultural competency training/should be bottom up
- Not knowing what is possible, not exposed to options, top down system with district/school leaders educated in outdated system.

##### *Strategies*

- Teach curriculum appropriately
- Flexible learning opportunities/flexible grad requirements/3 day class 2 day internships and other
- Educational audit – Native American history (e.g.) - auditor exception

- Discipline rates down but much disproportionality (shared responsibility by school/community/etc)
- Student advocates – get students what they need
- Early enrichment
- High school and beyond planning

## **TABLE 5**

### *Hopes and Dreams*

- Career opps & economic success
- Safety (shootings, culture, bullying)
- Equitable academic/enrichment opportunities – exposure
- Confident thinkers & self-assured. Know their worth.
- To experience "why" things happen. Learning and repeating the processes. Critical innovative thinkers.
- Learn to ask probing Qs
- A person's disability doesn't define them
- Graduate equipped to thrive in our tech-advanced world
- Feel valued and respected
- Fulfill individual potential
- Capable and competent to give back to the community
- Staying healthy (mental, physical)
- Develop kindness and compassion surrounded by supportive educators who are supported themselves
- Develop creativity; arts and STEM nurtured
- Joy
- Academic foundation of skills for ongoing development
- Be happy and secure in their skin
- Able to identify and achieve personal definition of success

### *Barriers*

- Adult biases in system include artificial stresses
- Poverty
- Lack of adults in system who represent students of color
- Curriculum not relevant to students of color
- Burnt-out educators

### *Strategies*

- Required PD on anti-bias
- More/multiple pathways to succeed
- More resources: \$
- Recruit, prepare and hire more POC
- Reform pedagogy and COEd, including Birth to 8
- Integrate program silos and resources
- No excuses!

**TABLE 6**

*Hopes and Dreams*

- Meet kids where they are and advance them no matter if gifted or not
- Options provided and prepared and not just 1 path. Give them choices
- Hopes and dreams honored and not diminished
- Not let down by teachers/staff
- Succeed (w/hope and love) pushed to succeed
- Math education
- Grad rates – kids pushed through w/o doing well on assessments
- Provide environment where experiences are integrated
- Curriculum where they see themselves and better educate teachers and prepare for changing demographics
- Place – align w/standards and what they need to learn. Students need emotional support and academic support.
- Social emotional learning – things are coming up. Cultural education. Looks at indicators.
- Kids leave and still want to learn/not having bad experiences
- Confident, creativity, kindness, joy, academics
- More individual attention
- Teaching life skills
- Meeting needs of students w/special needs, undiagnosed
- Equity and opportunity to connect and identify in schools
- Safe classrooms
- Inclusion environment for students to connect with each other
- Access to quality education – including special needs
- Greater personalization
- Supporting students in going to college or career
- Create multiple pathways for students and those who have barriers

*Barriers*

- Obsession w/test scores
- Find solutions so kids can learn – discover
- More investigation into barriers – find root causes
- More student learning sensitivity
- Making adult centered instead of child-centered
- Humiliating children – not letting them walk through graduation
- Not having a sense of urgency to fix problems
- Fixed mindset – that there's only one way to teach or show competency
- Inadequate funding
- In-house attorneys – self-policing – self policed state agencies
- Not knowing what's possible
- Top down system of school and district leaders
- School safety issues – bullying
- Relationship building
- Difference in local control
- Parents having to move

- College Career Paradigm is a problem
- State funded but locally controlled obsession takes additional resources

#### *Strategies*

- More speech pathologists and training for teachers in grades 1 and 2 to recognize unidentified communication difficulties in children and "at-risk" students
- Stop allowing self-policing – look at who school attorneys are – should be AG.
- Access to community college
- Flexible work hours
- College Bound Scholarships

### **TABLE 7**

#### *Hopes and Dreams*

- Teachers can reach out to all kids. Meet each student's needs before a behavior happens. Each child is cared for and given equal opportunity for education. (Inclusion for all students/teach the individuals, not the class. PD is needed. Her youngest deals with bullying.)
- Each child leaves school with tools for a meaningful life: part of community/has friends/has a job. This falls into education for the staff.
- Accept every child and put a child in general education if appropriate (law says: least restrictive environment.) Need to teach grade level material modified to meet their needs.
- Look at all my classmates and know everyone's getting the help they need/that we can support each other. /Support system/Building relationships/Building time into the day
- Overhaul so that SROs and counselors are available to students who need them.

#### *Barriers*

- Getting away from the person/teaching the person
- Students don't know how to communicate with each other/don't have the time to do so
- Lack of PD for educators (still doing things how we did them 50 years ago down to the bells)
- SD policy and procedures and barriers – boilerplate IEPs/meetings
- Fear – not feeling safe in schools
- Parent/school communication, lack of relationships
- Community should be included in education

#### *Strategies*

- Teaching SEL
- One dedicated full-time person to be available to help students with their emotional needs
- Open coffee for parents/guardians with a principal at Starbuck's once a month
- Interweaving (interdisciplinary) classes/grade levels (so student could be in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade math and 7<sup>th</sup> grade reading). Open classrooms to work as fast/as slow as you need to.
- In WA, to become a teacher, you take one class in special needs. Need to take more.
- Utilizing peer support in the classroom. Teaching teachers how to modify (and keep the rigor). Giving teachers the tools they need to be successful. More PD. Time for teachers to collaborate.
- Praising kids at the time they make good choices.
- Teach your students, not the class (have schools individualize education)

## Appendix B

### *PARTICIPANT SUGGESTIONS*

Transcription of suggestions offered by participants, grouped into common themes.

#### *Teacher preparation and professional development*

- Look at CTE: funding the requirements for CTE programs. All require CTSOs and the funding of these becomes very challenging.
- Promote teaching as a career earlier in the school system.
- Required PD for school staff (anti-bias, anti-racist)
- Professional development appropriate for their certificate.
- Mentorship for teachers.
- Train teachers in developmentally appropriate practice.
- More teacher training for gen-ed teachers on learning disabilities!
- Stop letting Pearson decide who will become a teacher – less focus on EDTPA and more on building skills.
- Serious, intentional strategies to recruit and retain teachers of color.
- Remove clock hour and replace w/true professional development.
- Not enough focus on innovation. Teach staff about bias and retaliation. Strategize.
- Cultural competency training for teachers, staff, and administrators.
- Provide additional professional learning days.
- Teacher training for ACES (trauma) soc/emotional.
- Professionalize teacher – time for collaboration – year 'round school.
- Equity-based teacher ed, curriculum, teaching strategies, school management. \* cultural relevancy and context.
- Preservice education programs content/outcomes/performance expectations
  - Coordination among all higher ed institutions involved in teacher preparation in Washington State
  - Pre-service
  - 5-year guided internship/mentoring once teachers hired in school districts.
  - Continuing, focused teacher education (after 5 years)
  - Fundamentals of teacher preparation.
    - Content knowledge
    - Pedagogical content knowledge
    - Diagnostic, formative, summative assessment practices
    - Lesson design practices
    - Classroom management
    - Research applications from cognitive science and learning sciences

#### *Curriculum and learning environment*

- Smaller class sizes, especially for new teachers, and mentor teachers to work with them.
- Teaching to meet the students' needs.
- Increased personalization or customization of education.
- Encourage students to find their passions, as well as career path; and bolster their path.

- Include life skills. Financial, resume, interview skills (I could go on and on). This class instead of a fine arts class.
- Teach civics. Make it part of education process.
- Teach what value really is.
- Don't forget or eliminate the arts and sports! Kids enjoy both.
- Contextualize math etc.
- Funding for enrichment programs could also be evaluated. Is this something that could be done at a state level.
- Fluidity in the correlation between common core and grade/age.
- More speech path at 1-2 grades.
- Improve 3-8 services and care.
- Meeting the needs of the whole child is a teaching strategy that does not depend on color/race, gender, econ status, location, life experiences, health.
- Protect and celebrate whole child through relationships.
- Measure soc/emotional as vigorously as academics with interventions for both.
- Apply inclusive pedagogy/culturally responsive pedagogy in classes.
- Note – inclusion is not just a "special ed" thing.
- Teaching and implementing inclusion - (not a place) meet the needs of each student – socially, emotionally and academically.
- Assessment problem – change that. Diversify teaching method – at university level.
- Have the school environment be warm friendly and especially safe.
- (student) I have had a hard time finding a program that has higher level work like general ed work and has a special ed setting. Also I have a hard time feeling safe in the school setting because I have disabilities that are misunderstood and are thought of as a bad thing. I would like there to be multiple assemblies to help the students with disabilities feel safe by presenting information about disabilities and ways they can help students feel safe and welcomed to talk or participate in school activities. So disabilities are understood and thought as a normal thing.
- Family support workers in every school.
- More counselors, more community engagement coordinators, more nurses, more social workers.

#### *Early learning*

- Pre-K education opportunities for all students. Start them all w/same skills.
- Early learning Pre-K.
- Full access of all students to early education.
- Improve quality of preschool.

#### *Graduation and transitions beyond HS*

- No cost strategy: Identify HS alumni who can be highlighted for post HS success.
- Shift in language around CTE "raise the trades."
- I counted college the word 20 times how about "technical school?"
- Re-evaluate the 24-credit diploma. Can there be options. Medical issues/trauma, etc.
- Look at articulation of credits to higher ed – why does the transition have to be so difficult and different at our state institutions?

### *Systems, structures and policies*

- Examine systemic institutional barriers that lead to racial inequity.
- Require all districts to draft/implement an equity policy.
- Recruit and retain teachers of color.
- Blow-up – figuratively! "Common School" model. Research and implement successful models.
- Useable data for frontline educators to influence/improve practice.
- Study effects/impact of "local control." Is it working or not?
- Eliminate public employee unions.
- Change our system from the one devised in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to one fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century – schools aren't factories.
- Before students can be ready to learn, their basic needs must be met. Braid existing funding used for needs assessments with local and statewide efforts.
- Be consistent in approach to teaching – not changing all the time.
- Useable data for teachers.
- Need data about access to internet or computers/printers.
- Be specific and consistent in data collection by admin.
- Invest in infrastructure. Get workgroups to strategize how to do this.
- Legislators fight for a state tax! If we want services we need to pay for them!

### *Family, student and community engagement*

- Use and expand upon student advocates toward a community health worker model to address social determinant of health needs.
- Bring the knowledge of life possibilities to rural and isolated communities.
- Engage immigrant parents who might not have a clear understanding of the U.S. education system.
- Language barriers fed \$ for migrant population.
- Find ways to engage parents – outreach and activities.
- Encourage volunteerism.