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PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: Building Bridges: Dropout Prevention, Intervention, and Reengagement

2024

Authorizing Legislation: [RCW 28A.175.075](#)

Anna Marie Dufault

Assistant Superintendent of Student Engagement & Support

Prepared by:

- **Dixie Grunenfelder**, Executive Director Student Support & Engagement
dixie.grunenfelder@k12.wa.us | 360-878-0138
- **Kefi Andersen**, Assistant Director of Early Warning Systems

kefi.andersen@k12.wa.us | 360-790-1446

- **Mandy Paradise**, Associate Director of Reengagement

mandy.paradise@k12.wa.us | 360-789-3949

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Building Bridges is charged with creating a statewide program for comprehensive dropout prevention, intervention, and retrieval (DPIR) programming, and to make annual recommendations to the legislature and the governor on DPIR best practices and system needs.

Washington's graduation rate has steadily been increasing since 2021 with **83% of the class of 2023 graduated in four years**. Graduation rates have increased for most student groups, and by race and ethnicity. When grouped by race and ethnicity, student groups that may need additional supports include students who are Native American, Alaskan Native, Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander. Other student group categories include students experiencing homelessness, students with disabilities, and students who are identified as Gender X.

This year we saw a significant drop in students who dropped out for other or unknown reasons dropping from 50% to 40%. OSPI began collecting data on students who dropped out due to non-attendance and identified 4,662 students in this category. Unconfirmed transfers (a change of school not verified by receiving school) account for about 23% of students dropping out in 2022–2023. This remains the second highest category and is an opportunity for additional tracking and follow up. 527 more students dropped out compared to 2021–2022 for lacking progress or poor grades, which was one of the biggest changes compared to past years.

Early indicators that a student may need additional support are identified through attendance, behavior, and grades. Research also links the importance of caring adults and access to relevant and timely supports.

Building Bridges analyzes who is attending, displaying positive behavior, earning credits, and ultimately graduating. This provides system solutions and insight into the culturally-relevant, timely supports students need. Building Bridges Grants and innovation projects have had positive impacts that are providing additional capacity, infrastructure adjustments, and technical assistance to schools across the state.

Building Bridges is joining education serving agencies, organizations, and leaders across the state to collectively examine and identify system adjustments across the K–12 continuum, including:

- Establishment of an infrastructure to provide timely supports.
- Cradle to career, comprehensive supports.
- Stable state and federal funding.

In the meantime, progress has been made across the tiered continuum related to dropout prevention, intervention and reengagement, including:

- Prevention: GATE advisory group cross system conversations, district/school leadership network, equity webinar series, and monthly newsletter. All of these efforts focus on extended strong, foundational systemic efforts.
- Intervention efforts: Attendance & Reengagement project, ninth grade success teams project, and community-based organization grant program. This work

specifically targets geographic areas, student groups and organizations showing the greatest need for supports.

- Reengagement efforts: Open Doors Youth Reengagement programming is dedicated to students 16–21, who are severely credit deficient and likely not to graduate with their cohorts.

BACKGROUND

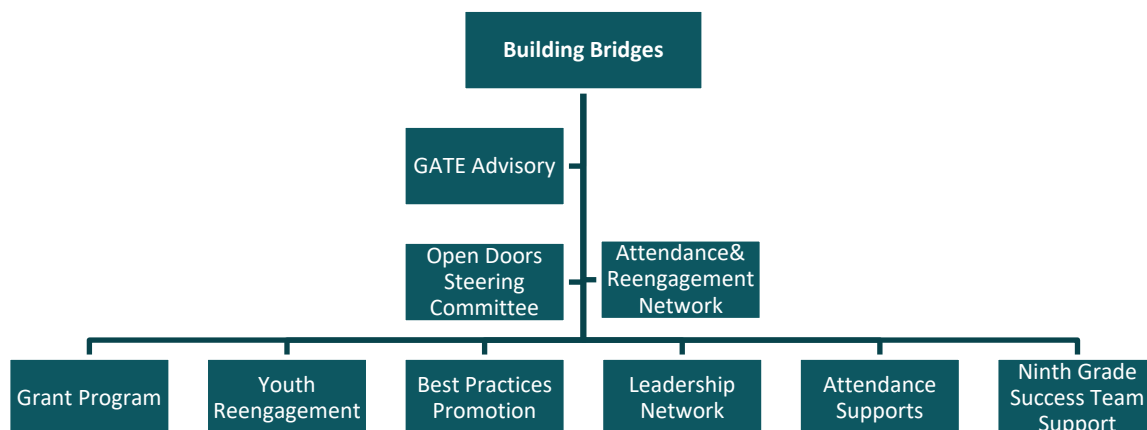
In 2007, the Legislature established the Building Bridges Workgroup, now known as the Graduation: A Team Effort (GATE) Advisory. This high-level workgroup, comprised of state legislators and state agency partners, was charged with creating a statewide program for comprehensive dropout prevention, intervention, and retrieval (DPIR) programming, and to make annual recommendations to the legislature and the governor on DPIR best practices and system needs.

The Workgroup created three primary recommendations which continue to serve as the guiding principles for DPIR programming:

- Set an educational goal for youth- and family-serving agencies, and coordinate efforts to achieve it.
- Build local dropout prevention and intervention system practices at every grade level.
- Create a dropout reengagement system for 16- to 24-year-old youth.

This work has evolved conceptually and been reframed as a continuum of engagement and reengagement supports. Building Bridges incorporates several projects and programs, offering proactive engagement and disengagement prevention. Grant funding supports innovation pilots. See the structure below.

Figure 1: Building Bridges Structure



For more historical context go to the [Building Bridges 2008 Legislative Report](#).

From the inception of Building Bridges in 2007, the concept of Early Warning Systems and the key indicators of Attendance, Behavior and Course Performance became central to Washington’s dropout prevention, intervention and reengagement efforts. Early studies used student data from public schools across the country to identify students who would later dropout and examine warning signs and steps that could have been taken to change the trajectory of these students’ lives.

Building Bridges has been intentional about creating coherence across recognized student support frameworks. The Washington model of [multi-tiered system of supports \(MTSS\)](#) integrates team-driven shared leadership, data-informed decision making, family, student, and community engagement, a continuum of coordinated supports, and evidence-based practices. The [Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol \(WISSP\)](#) echoes these categories in their

core components including: needs and strengths assessments, community partnerships, coordination of supports, integration of supports, and data-driven practices. Implementation and improvement science help to ground this work using teaming structures within a data informed framework.

In 2018, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) began to leverage the newly adopted [Washington School Improvement Framework](#), authorized under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, and the successes of the Building Bridges Workgroup to further accelerate graduation rates for all students. In support of academic success, dropout prevention and identification practices have been strengthened by the Improvement Framework's focus on school quality and student success indicators, such as regular attendance, ninth graders on-track for graduation, and dual credit course completion.

Advisory & Supplemental Committees

Graduation: A Team Effort Advisory

The recommendations produced in this report are an effort to convey the recommendations of the Graduation: A Team Effort (GATE) Advisory group.

The Graduation A Team Effort (GATE) Partnership Advisory Committee (Revised Code of Washington [Chapter 28A.175 RCW: DROPOUT PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND RETRIEVAL SYSTEM](#)) is a broad base of youth and family-serving state agencies, legislators (including Senator Yasmin Trudeau & Representatives Steve Bergquist & Skyler Rude), and community organizations that meet three times a year to provide a wide lens of input on the recommendations in this report and topics related to the development and implementation of a dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement system across cradle to career milestones.

Building Bridges released a committee member survey to our committee partners in fall 2024. The GATE Advisory group reconvened to gather feedback from members to help eliminate barriers to serving students. Their comments are incorporated in the recommendations section of this report.

OSPI's internal planning team worked with a consultant, Halliday & Associates to help shepherd the grant program forward based on experience with the state of Montana's initiative, Montana Graduates. This led to a new iteration of Building Bridges Grants to support holding community conversations on Early Warning Systems to be held through June 2025 and will inform next steps of grant supports.

Re-Envisioning Truancy Policies & Practices Project & Workgroup/GATE Supplemental Committee

Over the course of state fiscal year 2023 & state fiscal year 2024, OSPI set out to understand the impact of truancy policies in Washington state on students, families and educators. The Re- envisioning Truancy Policies and Practices Project conducted listening sessions and interviews of impacted youth and families across Washington state; as well as partners across and within the education system. The lessons learned informed OSPI's programmatic support in many ways. For example, OSPI is currently working on providing more robust implementation guidance and support to school districts on Community Engagement Boards, because we

learned that implementation of CEBs varies widely. OSPI created a workgroup to inform the GATE Advisory of attendance and truancy specific gaps and possible recommendations for exploration.

Reengagement Steering Committee/GATE Supplemental Committee

The Reengagement Steering Committee held in three meetings this year. Topics included improving awareness of statewide reengagement initiatives and examining implementation considerations relative to basic needs funding, barrier reduction funding, and incentives for reengagement students. This workgroup serves dual purposes in that it operates as steering committee for Open Doors Youth Reengagement and workgroup to inform the GATE Advisory.

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations for the 2023–2024 Building Bridges initiative are comprehensive and aimed at creating a robust support system for students. The following is a summary of recommendations and potential considerations for each recommendation:

Recommendation 1: Infrastructure for Timely Supports

1A. Staffing for Regional Resource Access (Priority Recommendation)

- **Regional Student Support Positions:** Creating positions to identify and connect with regional partners across various sectors (education, health, judicial, etc.) to streamline referrals and support systems.
- **Shared Data Referral System:** Developing a data system for resource mapping and tracking referrals to improve efficiency and coordination.

Considerations:

- **Coordination:** Ensuring that regional staff have the necessary training and authority to effectively bridge gaps between different systems.
- **Privacy:** Addressing potential concerns about data privacy and security in the shared referral system.

1B. Expand Data Access

- **Early Warning System:** Establishing a dashboard to help schools monitor and address issues based on evidence-based indicators.
- **Data Sharing Agreements:** Promoting data sharing between agencies to enhance support and coordination.

Considerations:

- **Interoperability:** Ensuring that different systems and databases can work together seamlessly.
- **Partner Engagement:** Engaging all relevant parties in the data-sharing process to ensure broad support and compliance.

1C. Support Regional Improvement Efforts (Priority Recommendation)

- **Improvement Networks:** Supporting networks that focus on scaling successful dropout prevention, intervention and reengagement strategies, especially during key transition periods like elementary to middle and middle to high school.

Considerations:

- **Evidence-Based Framework and strategies:** Continuously evaluating and updating the framework based on new research and feedback from the field.
- **Network Sustainability:** Ensuring that improvement networks have the resources and support needed to remain effective over time.

Recommendation 2: Cradle to Career Continuum of Support

2A. Create a Statewide Initiative for The Science of Hope

- **Adoption and Training:** Expanding the use of the Science of Hope framework and providing training and coaching to various state and local entities.

Considerations:

- **Implementation:** Ensuring that training is accessible and that the framework is adaptable to different local contexts.
- **Measurement:** Developing reliable methods for measuring hope and evaluating the impact of hope-centered interventions.

2B. Strengthen the Washington Integrated Student Support Protocol (WISSP)

- **Focus on Engagement:** Making student engagement a priority in Washington Integrated Student Support Protocol (WISSP) plans and expanding resource mapping to include early learning and health services.

Considerations:

- **Integration:** Ensuring that WISSP plans are integrated effectively with other support systems and frameworks.
- **Capacity Building:** Providing support to schools in developing and implementing effective WISSP plans.

2C. Fund Culturally Appropriate Youth Development & Mentoring Supports (Priority Recommendation)

- **Mentoring and Development:** Providing resources for community organizations focused on mentoring and youth development and creating a statewide system for these supports.

Considerations:

- **Cultural Competency:** Ensuring that mentoring and development programs are culturally relevant and tailored to the needs of diverse student populations.
- **Impact Measurement:** Developing metrics to assess the effectiveness of mentoring and development programs on student success.

Recommendation 3: Sustainable Funding

3A. Expand Access to Medicaid for Schools

- **Medicaid Services:** Re-envisioning school-based Medicaid services to include additional supports and offering technical assistance to schools.

Considerations:

- **Funding Flexibility:** Ensuring that expanded Medicaid services can be used flexibly to meet varying local needs.
- **Technical Support:** Providing ongoing support to schools to navigate and maximize Medicaid funding.

3B. Create Sustainable Student Support Personnel

- **Personnel Funding:** Ensuring every district has dedicated support personnel to connect with families and track student needs.

Considerations:

- **Staffing Needs:** Assessing and addressing the specific staffing needs of different districts to ensure effective support.
- **Retention:** Implementing strategies to retain skilled support personnel and prevent burnout.

3C. Expand Access to Open Doors Youth Reengagement (Priority Recommendation)

- **Expanding Access:** Increasing funding for Open Doors programs to support continuous academic and career skill development and address basic needs.

Considerations:

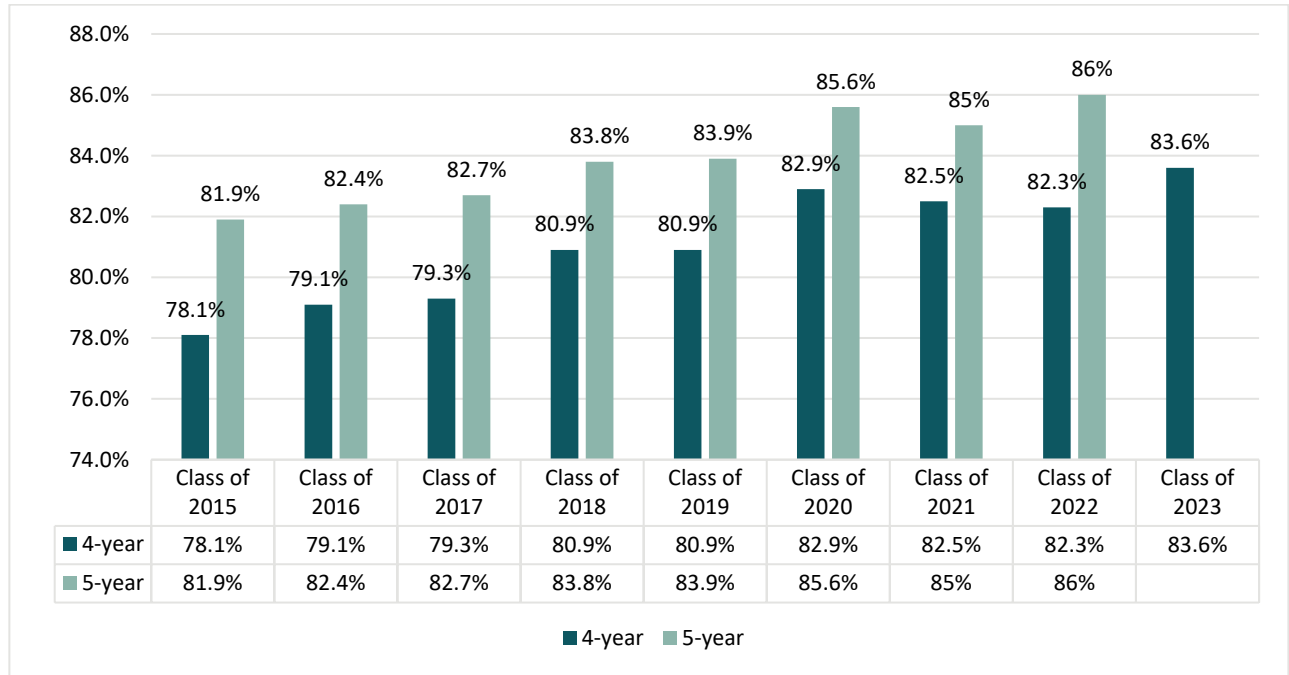
- **Resource Allocation:** Ensuring that funds are allocated efficiently and reach the students who need them most.
- **Barrier Reduction:** Addressing systemic barriers that contribute to student dropout and disconnection.

CURRENT DATA

Washington’s goal is that every student group will reach a minimum 4-year graduation rate of 90 percent by the 2027–28 school year (see [Washington’s ESSA Consolidated Plan, section A.4.iii. “Establishment of Long-Term Goals”](#)).

As you can see from the figures below, graduation rates continue to rise and are the highest they’ve ever been in Washington. Still, there is clear stratification between student groups, races, and ethnicities.

Figure 2: 4- and 5-Year Graduation Rates for All Students



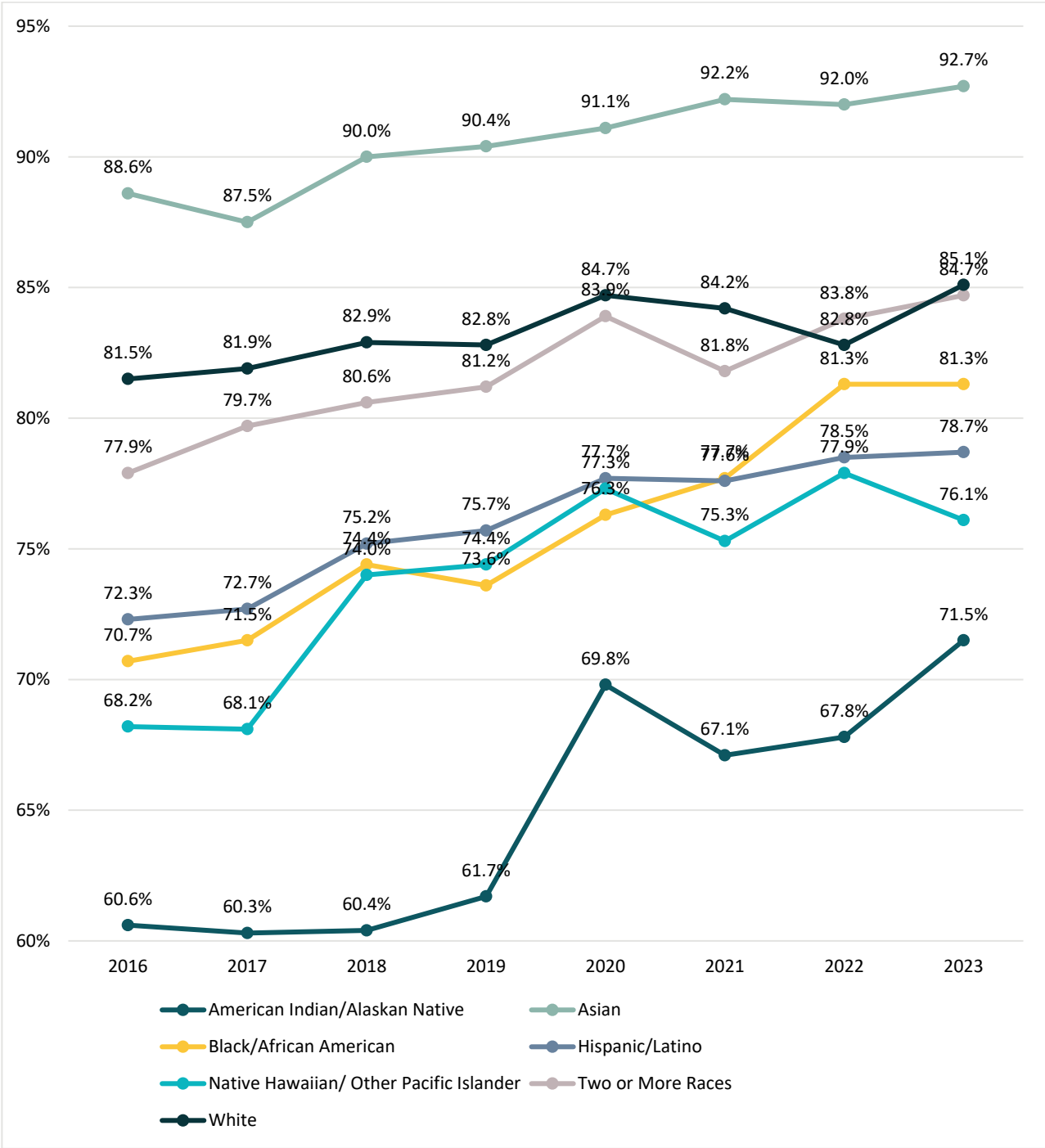
Source: Washington State Report Card, August 2024.

Figure 3: 4-Year Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity Over Time

Student Race/Ethnicity	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
American Indian/Alaskan Native	60.6%	60.3%	60.4%	61.7%	69.8%	67.1%	67.8%	71.5%
Asian	88.6%	87.5%	90.0%	90.4%	91.1%	92.2%	92.0%	92.7%
Black/African American	70.7%	71.5%	74.4%	73.6%	76.3%	77.7%	81.3%	81.3%
Hispanic/Latino	72.3%	72.7%	75.2%	75.7%	77.7%	77.6%	78.5%	78.7%
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	68.2%	68.1%	74.0%	74.4%	77.3%	75.3%	77.9%	76.1%
Two or More Races	77.9%	79.7%	80.6%	81.2%	83.9%	81.8%	83.8%	84.7%
White	81.5%	81.9%	82.9%	82.8%	84.7%	84.2%	82.8%	85.1%

Source: Washington State Report Card, August 2024.

Figure 4: 4 Year Graduation Rates by Race & Ethnicity Class of 2016-2023



Source: Washington State Report Card, August 2024.

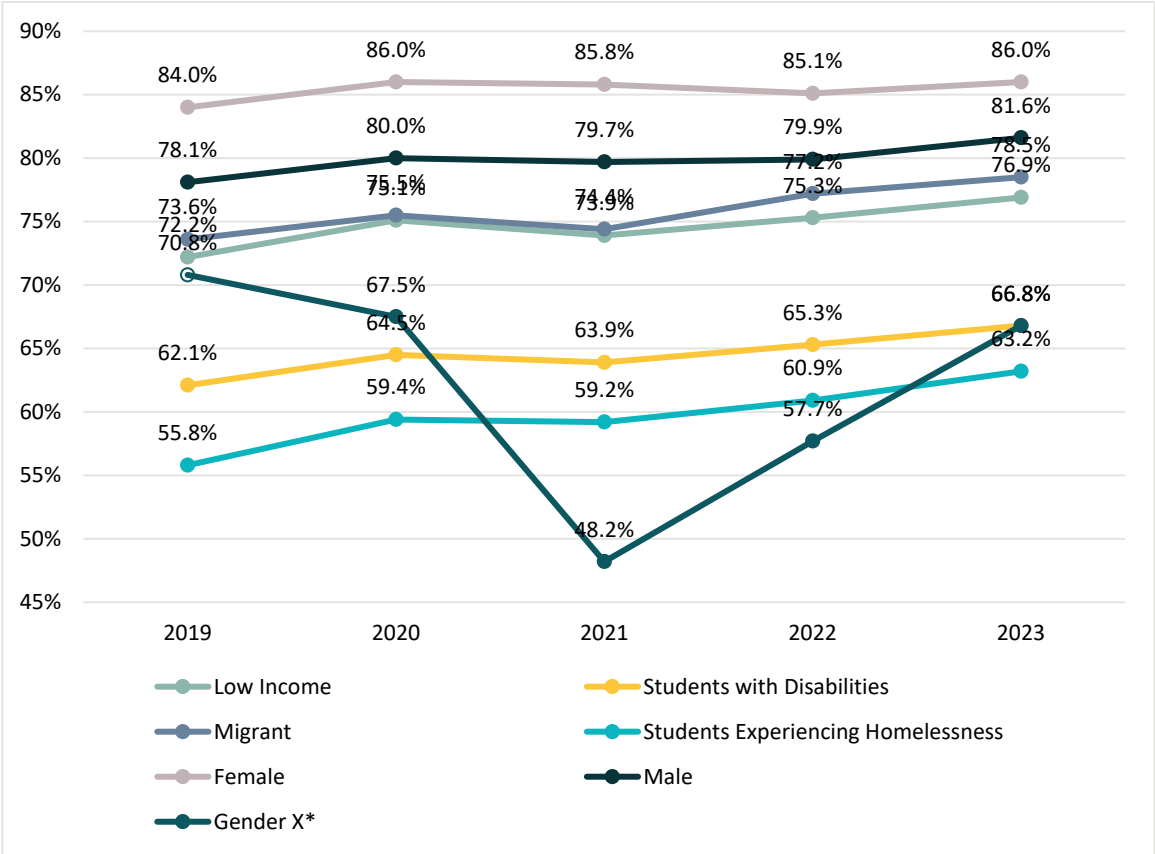
Figure 5: 4-Year Graduation Rates in Student Groups

Student Group	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
English Learners	57.6%	57.8%	64.2%	62.4%	68.4%	68.9%	69.8%	70.7%
Low Income	69.4%	70.0%	72.1%	72.2%	75.1%	73.9%	75.3%	76.9%

Students with Disabilities	58.1%	59.4%	61.7%	62.1%	64.5%	63.9%	65.3%	66.8%
Migrant	67.4%	68.2%	70.9%	73.6%	75.5%	74.4%	77.2%	78.5%
Students Experiencing Homelessness	53.2%	53.9%	55.5%	55.8%	59.4%	59.2%	60.9%	63.2%
Female	82.4%	82.6%	84.0%	84.0%	86%	85.8%	85.1%	86%
Male	76.0%	76.3%	77.8%	78.1%	80%	79.7%	79.9%	81.6%
Gender X*	-	-	-	70.8%	67.5%	48.2%	57.7%	66.8%

Source: Washington State Report Card, retrieved August 2024. *Gender X data began collection in 2019.

Figure 6: 4-Year Graduation Rates in Student Groups



Source: Washington State Report Card, retrieved August 2024.

BUILDING BRIDGES ANNUAL PROGRESS

Building Bridges programming is organized in a continuum from prevention efforts to intervention efforts, to reengagement.

- Prevention: Our advisory group, leadership network, webinars, and newsletter.
- Intervention efforts: Attendance & Reengagement project, ninth grade success teams project, and community-based organization grant program.
- Reengagement efforts: Open Doors Youth Reengagement program.

Prevention Efforts Updates

Powerless to Powerful (P2P) Leadership Network

Dr. Chuck Salina and Dr. Suzann Girtz lead the Powerless to Powerful (P2P) network using ideas developed in Sunnyside as a turnaround team. Their work supported Sunnyside in elevating their graduation rate from 48% to over 90% and beating the odds in highly diverse Title I school.

Powerless to Powerful network provides coaching that onboards school leaders to multi-tiered systems of support practices that are rooted in a school culture that honors connection, belonging, and envisioning the future. The P2P leadership framework is foundational in providing leaders with the tools needed to implement comprehensive student supports.

[Powerless to Powerful](#) (P2P) is a team-driven leadership framework designed for school leaders. This school year the network has evolved into a district and building leader network. District leadership teams meet periodically to discuss action plans, data, and problems of practice. Leadership training is centered on connecting, belonging, and envisioning the future through the lens of team driven data-informed supports. Powerless to Powerful emphasizes the need for leadership one-on-one conversations with staff and leadership action plans to organize system goals into tangible steps.

During the 2023–2024 school year P2P created a Canvas course where schools could share artifacts and collaboration resources. A leadership network with ten districts met three times in person to bring together building and district leadership to collaborate and share ideas. Continuous improvement partners from OSPI School Improvement were involved to cross pollinate ideas throughout their networks. Ideas were also presented at the AWSP WASA Conference. Data partners worked to support school information systems data collection aligned to leadership practices and school climate ideas explored in the P2P framework with schools.

State Tribal Education Compact schools participated in training with a book study on *Powerless to Powerful*.

Graduation Equity Webinar Series

Building Bridges wants to share insights from promising exemplars with schools across the state. The [Graduation Equity Webinar Series](#) focuses on sharing system and classroom best

practice models and highlights schools and education leaders pioneering those practices from across the country.

Based on requests, current research, and needs identified by education leaders, an annual theme calendar is created to guide best practice communications, focused on equitable outcomes for students. Some of the themes for the 2023–24 school year included: setting up your classroom for belonging, family engagement practices, restorative practices, and easing student transitions.

The webinars have continued to draw a wide audience across the state including administrators, school counselors and student support staff, and educators. As of May 2024, 1,779 participants were registered for the series, compared to 1,699 participants in 2023.

OSPI offered free Equity Clock Hours for participants and maintains accessibility for participants with sign language interpretation and live captions. Webinar recordings can be found on OSPI's [Graduation Equity Webinar YouTube playlist](#).

Engage Newsletter

The Engage Newsletter was created to share articles from practitioners and resources for best practices being highlighted in the Graduation Equity Webinar and are aimed at leadership teams. The newsletter goes out to over 15,000 subscribers each month.

Newsletters include feature articles from national education leaders, data from OSPI's Report Card and Healthy Youth Survey results, focused leadership team activities, and helpful videos, toolkits, and links. These materials are shared with schools identified for improvement and Educational Service Districts. See our [archive](#) for past newsletters.

Intervention Efforts Updates

Building Bridges Grant Program

During the 2020 school year Washington's schools faced changes to how school was delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic. Indicators that students needed additional supports such as attendance and grades faced accuracy challenges as districts counted hybrid attendance inconsistently and no-fail grading policies went into effect. Statewide indicators shifted and researchers drew attention to worldwide needs for mental health supports that expanded to gauging a sense of belonging, engagement, and connection. Even as students returned to school, the landscape of learning had changed and we saw an increased amount of disengagement.

To delve into needs for new types of supports, OSPI and Education Northwest (EdNW) partnered on a research project to identify current opportunities and challenges in the implementation of Early Warning Systems (EWS) in Washington and to support OSPI in refining its approach to EWS. An Early Warning System (EWS) is data-driven and designed to identify students at risk of falling behind or dropping out. By monitoring key indicators such as attendance, behavior, and academic performance, EWS allows educators to intervene early and provide targeted support to students who show signs of disengagement or academic struggles.

Additionally, this project included grants for seven school districts. These grants were to gauge the understanding of EWS in schools, identify the challenges in school district implementation, and provide OSPI with insights on how best to support a statewide EWS rollout in the future.

As part of this project, EdNW conducted the first round of pre- and post-interviews with school staff at three schools across the state and facilitated community conversations with school staff, community partners, families, and students at these same schools. In addition, EdNW conducted interviews and focus groups with seven participants who support schools regionally and statewide with EWS. Interim findings from interviews, focus groups, and community conversations are summarized below. The second round of interviews will be conducted in the Fall of the 2024–25 academic year.

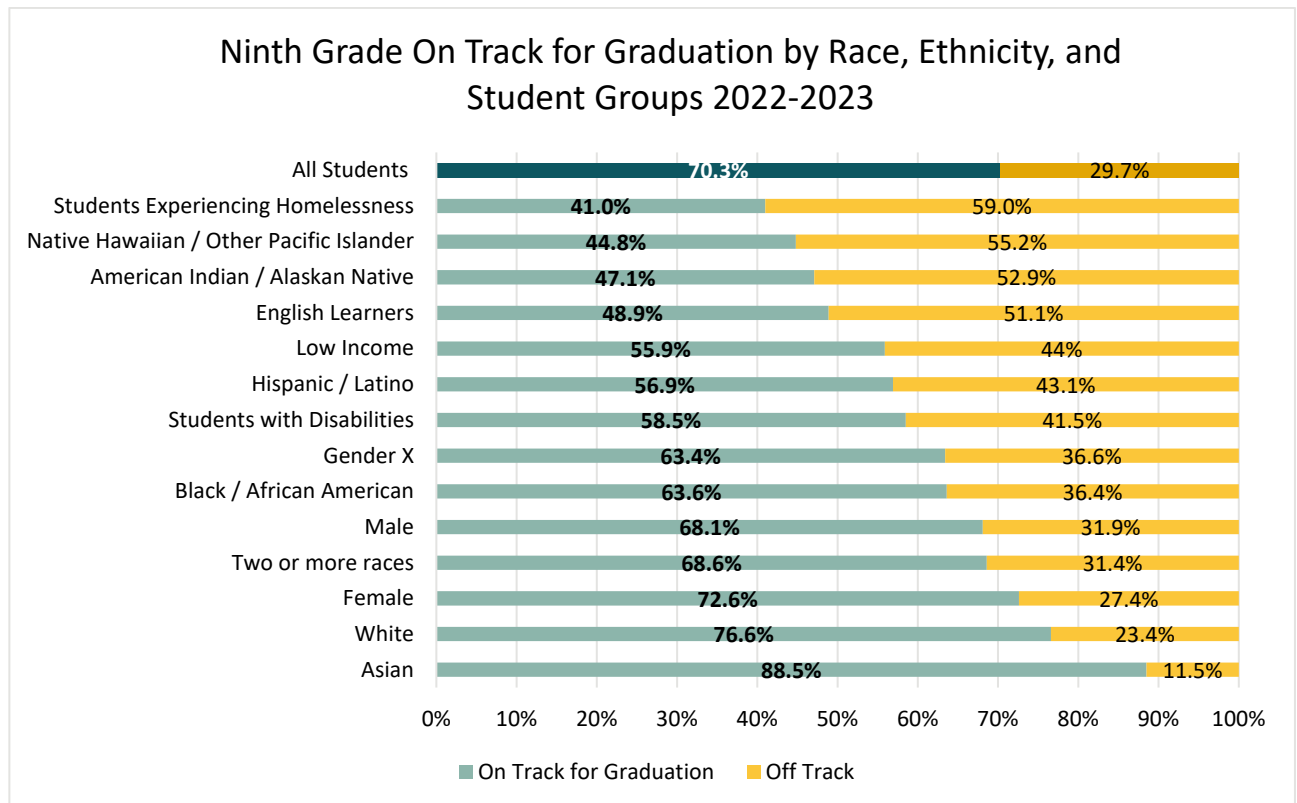
Our grantees demonstrated and shared that EWS across Washington is inconsistent, with some schools effectively using the system while others lack awareness or resources. Successes include improved student-educator relationships and increased community involvement in certain areas. However, challenges such as inadequate funding, leadership turnover, and limited family engagement hinder the system's overall effectiveness.

Key highlighted recommendations for enhancing EWS include prioritizing relationship-building, increasing collaboration between middle and high schools, and focusing on systemic changes rather than solely on student behaviors. To ensure the sustainability and success of EWS, grantees and community partners suggest that OSPI provide more guidance, professional development, and consistent funding while also promoting statewide collaboration, and public support.

Ninth Grade Success Project

According to OSPI’s most recent Report Card data, 70% of Washington’s students ended their ninth-grade year in 2022–2023 on track for graduation. Ninth Grade Success is more predictive of future graduation than attendance, race, ethnicity, level of poverty or test scores ([source](#)). Three in ten ninth graders is not on track to graduate.

Figure 7: Percent of Ninth Graders Earning All the Credits Attempted By Race, Ethnicity, and Student Group



Source: Washington State Report Card, retrieved August 2024.

In the 2023–2024 school year the Ninth Grade Success Project offered 40 grants to schools to implement ninth grade teacher success teams. Teams use a data dashboard on early indicators to identify if a student needs additional support and holds an asset-based interview with the student to design supports with an eye for potential whole school shifts.

This project has been funded inconsistently through state and federal funds 1–2 years at a time. Funding will run out in June 2025. Grant funds pay for teacher time to meet, professional development, barrier reduction funds, and supplies for ninth grade transition and community events. Teams were provided with coaching from Stand for Children’s Center for High School Success and evaluation support from Educational Data Consulting. Each success team receives coaching, grant funding, access to a network of regional peers also working on ninth grade success, and timely evaluation to guide their implementation.

As a result of participation, participants saw a 7% increase in ninth grade success in 2023–2024. Participants offered feedback that inconsistent funding was a challenge for full implementation. While teams embraced some of the structural changes like creating the team and taking time to meet, they are still grappling with some of the adaptive challenges like adjusting grading

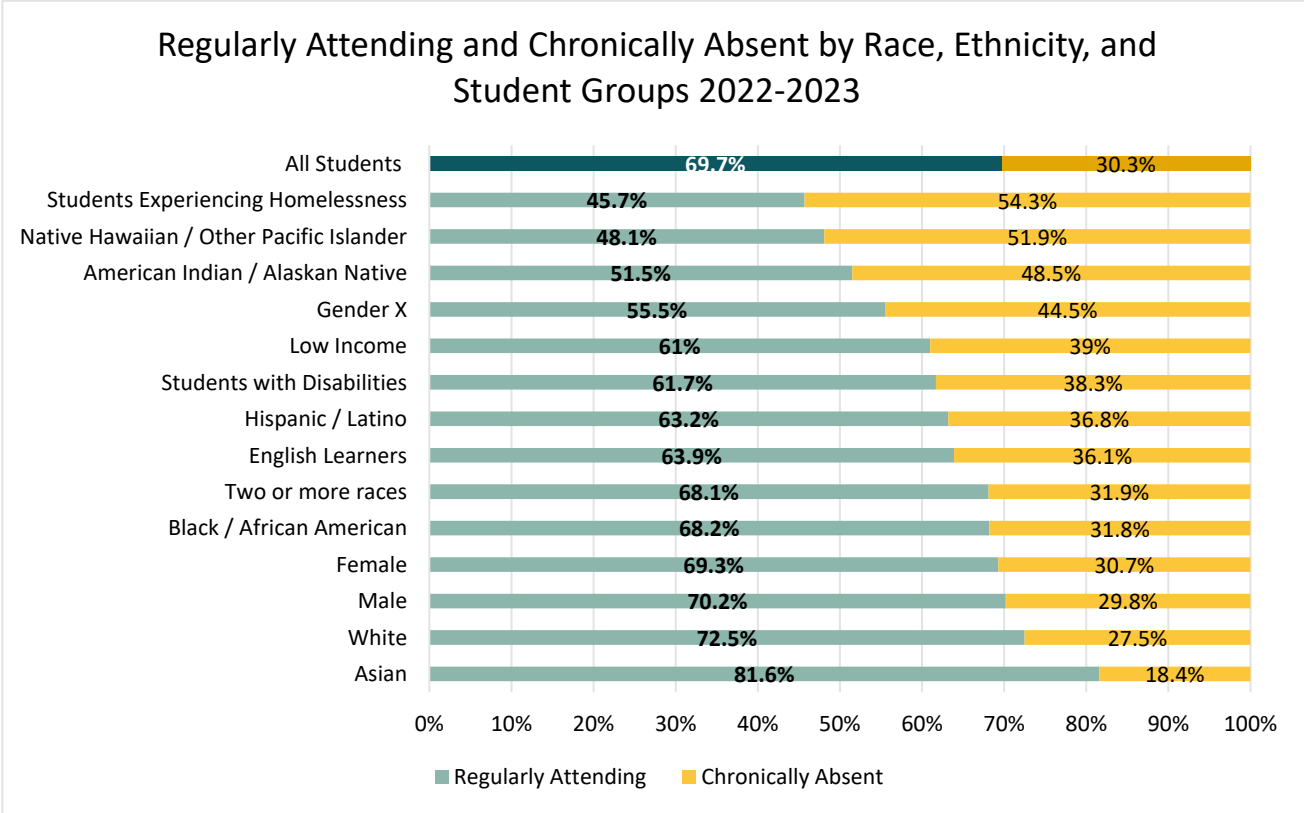
practices and schedules to align with a growth mindset. Another notable implementation challenge was inconsistent staffing, with districts facing turnover of leadership and other key staff.

Attendance & Reengagement Project

According to OSPI’s most recent Report Card data, in 2022–2023 about 70% of Washington’s students had fewer than two absences a month on average. School attendance is important because attendance is a powerful signal and leading indicator of equity. It can signal when students might need additional support and areas for system and school improvement. Chronic absenteeism impacts all students—no matter their age. Students that miss just two days a month for any reason are more likely to not read at grade level, and more likely to not graduate.

Following the COVID-19 Pandemic, attendance rates are still below pre-pandemic levels. In 2018–2019 about 85% of students had fewer than two absences a month on average over time, while in 2022–2023 there are about 70%. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, Washington students switched to remote learning. During that time many students stopped engaging with classes and when schools reopened, some students didn’t return.

Figure 8: Percent of Students With Fewer than Two Absences per Month



Source: Washington State Report Card, retrieved August 2024.

The ESSER Attendance & Reengagement Project aimed to reconnect youth & families that were disconnected from education or were at-risk of disengaging from school. The project funded staff in districts and educational service districts to conduct direct outreach, build relationships, access community resources and support students to remain engaged in school or to re-enroll in education. This project also aimed to support schools and districts to build systems that

address attendance and engagement (accessing and analyzing attendance data, teaming, and tiered supports). This was accomplished through funding regional supports (through educational service districts). For more information on this program, see [Attendance & Reengagement Project Overview](#). OSPI invested \$19.3 million of its discretionary ESSER dollars into the ESSER Attendance & Reengagement Project.

This project operated in all 9 ESDs, 67 school districts and 6 STEC schools from 2022-2024.

Data findings from Year 1 showed:

The districts and schools supported through the project **showed increases in their attendance rates**. These increases were **larger** compared to the increase in regular attendance in the state overall from 2021–22 to 2022–23, which moved from 67.2% to 69.7% a change of 2.5 percentage points¹. Specifically, we saw positive increases where schools and districts focused on building their attendance systems (teaming, data, and tier 1 school or district wide attendance strategies).

- **34 of 44 (77%)** schools had increases in attendance rates that were greater than the state increase.
- **22 of 28 (79%)** districts had increases in attendance rates that were greater than the state increase.

Student Outcomes of Students Receiving Tier 2 & 3 Support

56% of unenrolled students re-enrolled in school. Without this effort, it is unlikely these students would have reenrolled².

- Seventy-five percent (75%) of reenrolled students were still enrolled after three months.
- 94% of students that were enrolled at the beginning of the program were still enrolled at the end of the school year³.

Two significant lessons learned through this project were:

1. Many Washington school districts need support to access attendance and other early warning data, support to create a culture of inquiry around attendance trends that includes foundational processes like teaming and a focus on tier 1 universal supports. To accomplish, this a research-based approach to systems change is essential.
 - a. Therefore, during the 2025 SY, OSPI is supporting a small-scale effort including 3 regional Attendance Improvement Networks and 1 state-wide network that will build on these concepts, based on the Institute for Healthcare’s Improvement (IHI) Breakthrough Series Model. An OSPI decision package has been put forward to the Legislature to scale and spread this pilot.

2. Reengagement efforts require collaboration and partnerships across systems, agencies and community organizations. A regional coordinating body can provide significant value in identifying regional partners and increasing successful referrals of students and families that address barriers to reengagement.
 - a. Therefore, the GATE Advisory is recommending the creation of new regional reengagement coordinators, modeled after the ESD Behavioral Health Navigators.

For more information, see the [ESSER Attendance & Reengagement Lessons Learned](#).

Reengagement Efforts

Open Doors Youth Reengagement Program

Open Doors Youth Reengagement ([WAC 392-700](#)) is a reengagement system that provides education and services to 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.

Open Doors reengages disconnected youth through programs that encourage community partnerships, create multiple pathways for students to realize success, and provide an on-ramp to post-secondary achievement through a performance-based, individualized support model.

This year we saw a significant drop in students who dropped out for other or unknown reasons dropping from 50% to 40%. OSPI began collecting data on students who dropped out due to non-attendance and identified 4,662 students showed up in the category. Unconfirmed transfers account for about 23% of students dropping out in 2022–2023, which remains the second highest category and suggests an opportunity for additional tracking and follow up. 527 more students dropped out compared to 2021–2022 for lacking progress or poor grades, which was one of the biggest changes compared to past years.

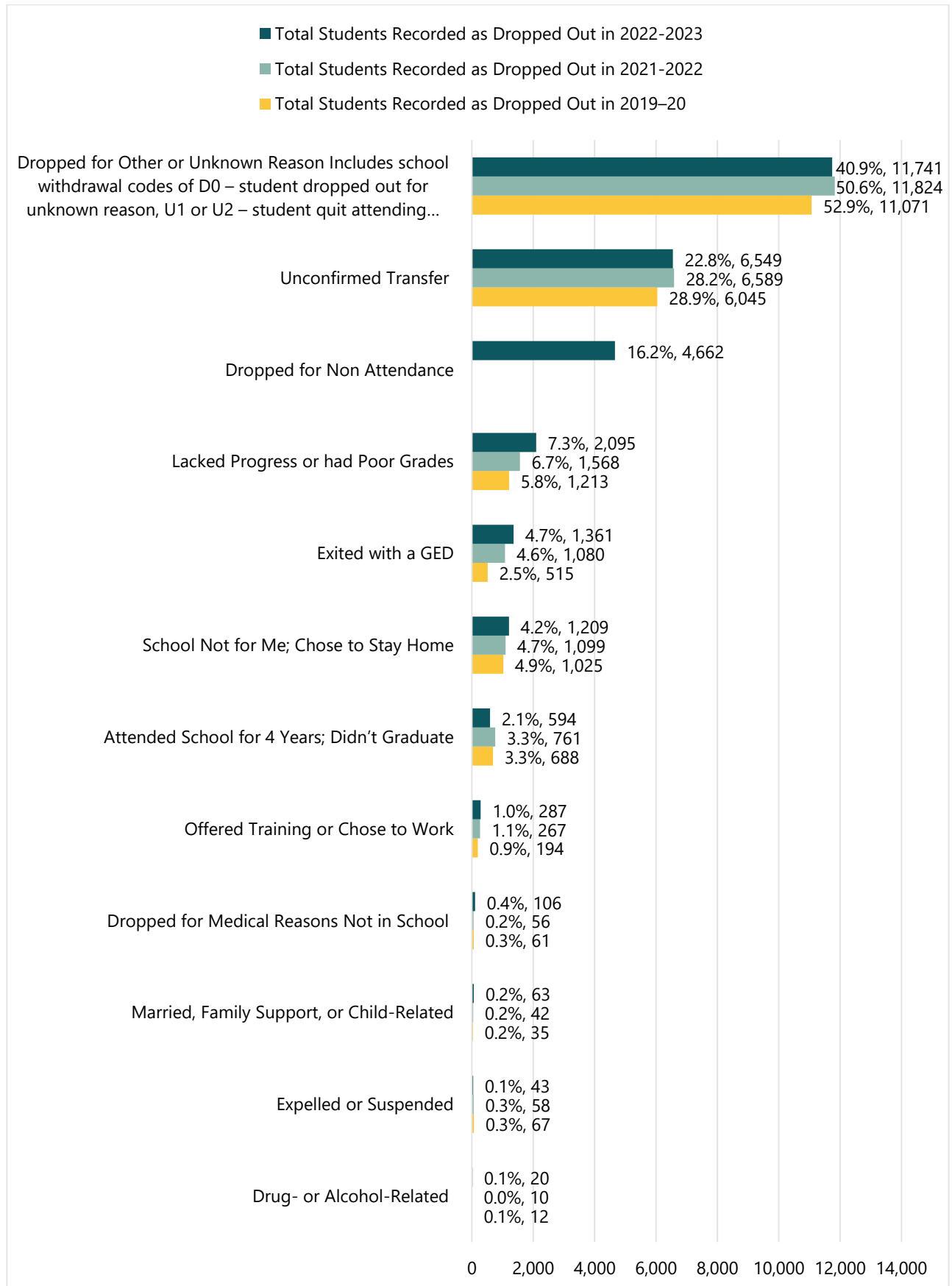
Figure 13: Reasons for Dropping out 2019–2023

Reason	Total Students Recorded as Dropped Out in 2019–20	Percent of Total Enrollment 2019–20	Total Students Recorded as Dropped Out in 2021–2022	Percent of Total Enrollment 2021–2022	Total Students Recorded as Dropped Out in 2022–2023	Percent of Total Enrollment 2022–2023
Attended School for 4 Years; Didn't Graduate	688	3.3%	761	3.3%	594	2.1%
Lacked Progress or had Poor Grades	1,213	5.8%	1,568	6.7%	2,095	7.3%
School Not for Me; Chose to Stay Home	1,025	4.9%	1,099	4.7%	1,209	4.2%
Married, Family Support, or Child-Related	35	0.2%	42	0.2%	63	0.2%
Offered Training or Chose to Work	194	0.9%	267	1.1%	287	1.0%
Exited with a GED	515	2.5%	1,080	4.6%	1,361	4.7%
Expelled or Suspended	67	0.3%	58	0.3%	43	0.1%
Drug- or Alcohol-Related	12	0.1%	10	0.04%	20	0.1%
Unconfirmed Transfer	6,045	28.9%	6,589	28.2%	6,549	22.8%
Dropped for Medical Reasons Not in School	61	0.3%	56	0.2%	106	0.4%
Dropped for Other or Unknown Reason Includes school withdrawal codes of D0 – student dropped out for unknown reason, U1 or U2 – student quit attending school, location, or status unknown	11,071	52.9%	11,824	50.6%	11,741	40.9%
Dropped for Non-Attendance					4,662	16.2%

Data collection began in 2022–2023						
Total	20,926	100%	23,354	100%	28,730	100.0%

Source: Washington State Report Card, retrieved September 2024.

Figure 14: Percentages and total number of students Reasons for Dropping Out in 2019–2023



Source: Washington State Report Card, retrieved September 2024.

We want each student in Washington to experience post-secondary success.

Through Open Doors Youth Reengagement, Washington boosts our state's future workforce and prospects among dropped out adolescents by reengaging over 13,000 youth aged 16-21 to continue their education.

- The Open Doors Youth Reengagement Program had 13,074 enrollments. This is an increase of 707 enrollments compared to the previous year.
- The new Summer Pilot Project served about 750 students July-August through ten proviso-funded Open Doors Youth Reengagement programs.
- There were 413 total participants in Open Doors hosted professional learning events focusing on improving conditions for post-resident youth students.

Open Doors is implemented by 139 school districts, direct-funded technical colleges, educational service districts (ESDs), and a tribal-education compact school. The local education agencies deliver, or partner with other entities to deliver, reengagement programming for older youth not likely to graduate by age 21 in the traditional or alternative education models.

In 2023–2024, Open Doors Youth Reengagement managed two limited funding sources in addition to Building Bridges proviso funds used for state operations: the Community Partnerships for Reengagement Initiative and proviso funding for piloting summer school access. Information on the summer school access pilot is contained in the emerging practices section. Summer Pilot Project funds end in fiscal year 2025.

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

The Building Bridges Project continues to provide innovative system supports for students who will need additional support in school that are making a positive impact.

Expansion to additional subcommittees will provide a broader base of recommendations in the year to come.

With added support through Washington's new Integrated Student Supports for community conversations and integrated partnerships, Building Bridges will continue to address barriers in infrastructure, cradle to career supports, and sustainable funding.

Work in the coming year will focus on innovation program sustainability, policy opportunities, and expanded partnerships through new committee partnerships.

APPENDICES

Partner Agency Performance Measures

Each year OSPI tracks performance measures and benchmarks based on student characteristics and outcomes specified in RCW 28A.175.035(1)(e). The Building Bridges partner agencies and organizations across the state may be collecting related performance measures and benchmarks based on student characteristics and outcomes, but the level of participation has not been tracked recently.

OSPI made an effort to connect with agency partners about the type of data collected and found related data collection happening.

Agency	Related Metrics Collected	Links
OSPI	<p>OSPI collects data on students' race and ethnicity, whether a student is a foster youth or youth involved in the juvenile justice system, whether a student is disabled, and the primary language spoken at a student's home, Washington assessment scores, dropout rates, on-time graduation rates, extended graduation rates, credentials obtained, absenteeism rates, truancy rates, and credit retrieval participation.</p> <p>The Healthy Youth Survey was created in collaboration with the Department of Health and Health Care Authority to show trends over time to help address issues impacting youth.</p>	<p>OSPI Washington State Report Card</p> <p>Healthy Youth Survey</p>
Department of Health	<p>Washington Tracking Network includes an extensive data portal with options to see community characteristics by region, including education level of high school diploma and some college attainment aligned to census data and determinants of health. Also includes household income with children living in poverty, and housing status information.</p>	<p>Washington Tracking Network</p>
Department of Commerce	<p>Youth experiencing homelessness dashboard showing active clients, households, households exited, destinations, improved income or benefits, improved health status, increased education, increased connectedness, and more.</p>	<p>Data and Performance Unit Housing Division Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project Performance Tracker</p>
Health Care Authority	<p>Dashboard includes regional information on community, family, school, early criminal justice involvement, and program outcomes.</p> <p>Athena Forum includes Risk Profiles by County with more detailed information.</p>	<p>Risk Profiles</p> <p>Athena Forum Risk Profiles by County</p>

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Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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