

Identifying Volunteers for Your Community Engagement Board

OSPI recommends identifying key stakeholders for the CEB based on a student's needs assessment and/or information provided by school staff. To accomplish this, effort must be made before launching the CEBs to identify a pool of community members and partners who are representative of the school or district's population based on culture, ethnicity, and lived experience. This pool should also include community partners experienced in working with youth and/or able to bring resources to address the root causes of absenteeism. This representation and intentionality regarding community involvement will go a long way to creating a more inclusive environment. OSPI's aim is for Community Engagement Boards across the state to reflect the diversity of students and families attending CEBs and provide culturally relevant and responsive support through the process. The intentional recruitment of community organizations and members is therefore a critical aspect of your CEB.

School districts can create a plan for recruiting volunteers by collaborating with their district's department or staff responsible for volunteer recruitment and background checks.

Understanding Needs of Students & Families

A key step to understanding whom you should consider inviting is understanding the needs of your students and families that may experience truancy. OSPI recommends that you begin this process by reviewing your data.

Sample Data

- Who experiences truancy the most in your school district? Disaggregated by student group and characteristics:
 - Race/ethnicity
 - Free and Reduced Lunch Status
 - Special Programs: McKinney Vento, Special Education, Migrant, etc.
- What are the most common barriers that emerge for students in your district?
 - A data source to answer this question is your district's truancy screeners or assessments that have been conducted over the past several years
 - Consider if your district has any student or family surveys that can be correlated to absences.



Qualities of CEB Members

During a CEB, there is often sensitive information disclosed as to why a student is not attending. Look for the following skill set in all board members to ensure that the student and their families' well-being is at the center of the meeting.

Empathy

- The ability to understand and share the feelings of others is crucial for supporting students and families effectively

Inclusivity

- Valuing diverse perspectives and ensuring voices are heard and respected

Listening Skills

- The ability to listen actively to understand needs, identify gaps, and respect the expertise of the student and family

Commitment to Service

- A strong dedication to help where needed most, showing persistence, and a problem-solving mindset

Consistency

- Reliability in showing up and following through on commitments, which builds trust and effectiveness

Passion for the Cause

- A commitment to the mission of improving student attendance and engagement

Authenticity

- Being genuine and honest, which helps in building trust and inspiring others

Strong Communication Skills

- The ability to convey ideas clearly and effectively, reducing misunderstandings, and fostering collaboration

Willingness to Learn

- Openness to new ideas and continuous learning to better serve the community

Outreach & Recruitment of Volunteers

Conducting outreach and recruitment efforts is essential to engage stakeholders in the CEB. Utilize multiple channels, such as community meetings, social media, newsletters, and personal invitations, to encourage participation and representation from all segments of the community.

OSPI strongly recommends recruiting volunteers from within your professional community. Recruiting such volunteers is often more efficient and yields higher rewards, as they are more likely to provide the necessary support and resources to meet the needs of the students and families that are scheduled for the CEB. Volunteers who are knowledgeable about privacy and trauma-informed practices can enhance the effectiveness of the CEB for students and families.

It is helpful to recruit volunteers that provide the following availability to support Community Engagement Board needs:

- **Flexible Schedule Volunteers:** These volunteers can adapt their availability to meet the varied needs of students and families, providing support at various times and locations as required
- **Static Schedule Volunteers:** These volunteers have set availability and can provide consistent support at specific times, ensuring reliability and regularity in the assistance provided.

Consider the following community assets and partners for your recruitment of CEB volunteers. OSPI recommends that you check with your district's community engagement department or other entities in your community — who are likely to have already identified community assets appropriate for supporting youth engagement — prior to mapping community assets. Someone may have already begun this work.

The following sectors or agency types may be good candidates for providing relevant supports for youth:

- Youth development nonprofits
 - [Cause IQ](#) and [Elevate Washington](#) provide a state directory
- Local mental health or substance use professionals
- [Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative \(CPWI\) Coalitions](#)
- Medical professionals
- Local government
 - Youth and Family Services Departments
 - Parks and Recreation Departments
 - Public Health Departments
 - Juvenile Justice Departments
 - Workforce Development Councils (WDC's)

Consider these people as assets to assist you in your recruitment when reviewing your professional community:

Engagement Staff

- Leverage the expertise of school district engagement staff to connect with potential volunteers

ESD Supports

- Utilize support from Educational Service Districts to broaden outreach efforts

School District Volunteer Recruitment

- Collaborate with school district personnel who support volunteer recruitment

Board Members Recruitment

- Encourage current board members to recruit new volunteers

Other Community Stakeholders

- Connect with stakeholders for recommendations to ensure diverse representation, such as:
 - Banks
 - Business owners
 - Coaches
 - Community Agencies
 - Community Colleges and/or University programs with internships
 - Community Leaders, Elders, or influential individuals
 - Cultural associations
 - Faith-based organizations
 - Family Community Resource Coordinator
 - Housing Authority
 - McKinney Vento Liaisons
 - Parent Groups
 - Parent-Teacher Associations
 - Rotary Club
 - Safety and Security Personnel from the district
 - School nurse
 - School personnel: Counselors, Equity Leaders, Administrators—a person who can support decisions developed within the plan

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction conducted a listening tour, and the following quote highlights the importance of community involvement:

*"Community partners want to be invited in and need education about how to engage with the school cultures. They often don't feel welcomed, because they don't know. Need to coordinate about timing, goals, cultures, hopes, desires, and dreams."
-Washington District Leader¹*

It is essential to let your volunteers know that they are valued, appreciated, and that their voices matter in supporting families. Community Engagement Boards require the participation of key stakeholders to help families understand that their students are integral members of the community, and that attendance is the first step in obtaining their education. The community becomes stronger when students earn their diploma or complete an approved educational pathway.

Contact

For questions, please contact Attendance@k12.wa.us.

¹[OSPI Module 2- Systemic Engagement: How are we using 360-Degree Communication](#)