Graduation: A Team Effort (GATE) Advisory Committee

2025-26 Meeting #1

Time: 9:00 AM-11:00 AM
Date: December 9, 2025
Location: Zoom

Agenda

- Purpose & Background of GATE Advisory
- Advisory member's role
- Introductions and exploring members'/agencies relationship to dropout prevention, intervention and reengagement
- Graduation data review (trend and disaggregated0
- Review priority areas for potential recommendations

Meeting Resources

- Find the meeting presentation slides and discussion notes on the GATE Advisory Padlet

Meeting Notes

Advisory members' role

Notes from Breakout Discussion:

- Sandy G: Become clear what an ecosystem is represented in this group. We all have a huge stake in this but we don't have a system for harassing our influence and expertise to make system changes. Really important that we keep in mind the asks we put on school districts, especially smaller districts and those with less resources.

- Mandy P.: Striking about how much power we had represented in the breakout across the system continuum.

- Ekkarath S.: Thinking about disaggregated data. Who are the students most represented in the data on needs? What are their parents' socio-economic status? Life circumstances, etc? Important that we consider the circumstances in which parents and families make decisions about school and school participation. Sometimes attending school isn't the best decision at a given time for a family.

Ground with data
- Minor changes over the last 6-7 years
- Significant change between 2008-09 & 2023-24

Questions & Discussion:
- Kim S.: How does the graduation data reflect students that disengaged from school during the pandemic and never returned?
  - OSPI data considers students in a cohort based on incoming 9th grade classes. Graduation rates reflect % of students that entered in a 9th grade cohort who graduated in 4 years. OSPI also tracks 5 year graduation rates.

Links & Resources:
- [OSPI Report Card](#)

Review priority areas recommendations
Breakout Session Notes:
- Ella Sharrett: We talked about funding, and what will require a lot of money and what we can do to adjust the recommendations to require less funding. Melissa Beard: Community efforts outside of the school need to be a relationship between the school and community, and the efforts need to be on both parties, not just the schools' responsibility.
- Chris Simonsmeier: I do think it's a shared responsibility. Schools already have a large laundry list of things to do, so making the time and effort for students with more needs is a lot.
- Krissy: The statute was written years ago, and it was helpful for me to go back and look at it. Graduation is not just a k12 issue.
- Kim Sanchez: Pillar one is promising. There was a concern that the capacity of behavioral health navigators. Pillar 5 concerns, we want to see support for children under 16 years old, but there is not a lot available. Online school ends up being the default, but this may not be the best option for every child. Pillar 3, representatives would need to be fully funded, and smaller districts may not have the funding for that. What are some small wins that don't cost a lot? Pillar 6, policy changes. What is the capacity of school districts and how can we wrap ourselves around all the complexity that we are asked to handle.
- Alexi Castilla: Pillar 6, do youth and families understand this process or understand the intent behind it? It can be viewed as a negative thing even though that is not what the intent behind it is. We also talked about the responsibility of schools versus what they can provide. There is a misunderstanding of what communities expect schools to handle and what they can actually provide. We should focus on prevention, and you can do that by starting in kindergarten. We are missing that engagement from the beginning and an understanding of what parents and

students can get from their schools. We talked about setting expectations and supporting families in crisis. Why should families engage in schools? Why is education valuable?

Public Comment
No public comment.

Closing Reminders
Next meeting Tuesday, February 17, 2026, from 9-11am on Zoom.
Meeting feedback survey: https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/8610189/2488b1b59e39

Membership

- Alexi Castilla - Office of Juvenile Justice, DCYF
- Angela Steck - WA State Parent Teacher Association
- Christine Simonsmeier - WA Association of Juvenile Cort Administrators
- Cris Turner - North Mason School District
- Dana Phelps - WA Department of Social & Health Services
- Ekkarath Sisavatdy - Commission on Association Pacific American Affairs
- Jamie Kvistad - King County Prosecutor's Office
- Kimberly Sanchez - WA Department of Health
- LaKymbria Jones - Bold Solutions WA
- Melissa Beard - WA State Council of Presidents
- Nadine Philp - Office of Education Ombuds
- Nicholas Oakley - Center for Children & Youth Justice
- Nicole Hanson - WA Employment Security Division
- Nora Zollweg, - West Sound Technical Skills Center
- Peggy Carlson - WA Department of Children, Youth, & Families
- Representative Skyler Rude - 16th Legislative District
- Representative Steve Bergquist - 11th Legislative District
- Rhonda Schmidt - Ellensberg School District
- Sandy Gessner Crabtree Assistant Olympic Education Service District 114
- Senator Yasmin Trudeau - 27th Legislative District
- Susan Adams - SkillSource Regional Workforce Board
- Tamra Scheetz - Battle Ground Public Schools

OSPI Staff
- Mandy Paradise (Open Doors)
- Jenna Millett (9th Grade on Track)

- Francesca Mathias (Youth Engagement)
- Vicki Wood (Attendance)
- Krissy Johnson (Facilitator)
- Christian Stark (SESP Policy)
- Heather Rees (OSPI Government Relations)
- Ann Rhoades (Support)