

# Ninth Grade Success

## Helping Students Start High School on Track

### Why Ninth Grade Success Matters

Ninth grade is a pivotal year and the strongest predictor of graduation—students on track are **4x more likely to graduate on time** ([Network for College Success](#)).

The Ninth Grade Success model, based on the [University of Chicago's Freshman Success Framework](#), uses collaborative educator teams, early warning indicators (attendance, behavior, course performance), and integration with Washington's MTSS supports.

By using this model, schools can reduce dropout rates, boost achievement, and advance equity.

### How It's Measured

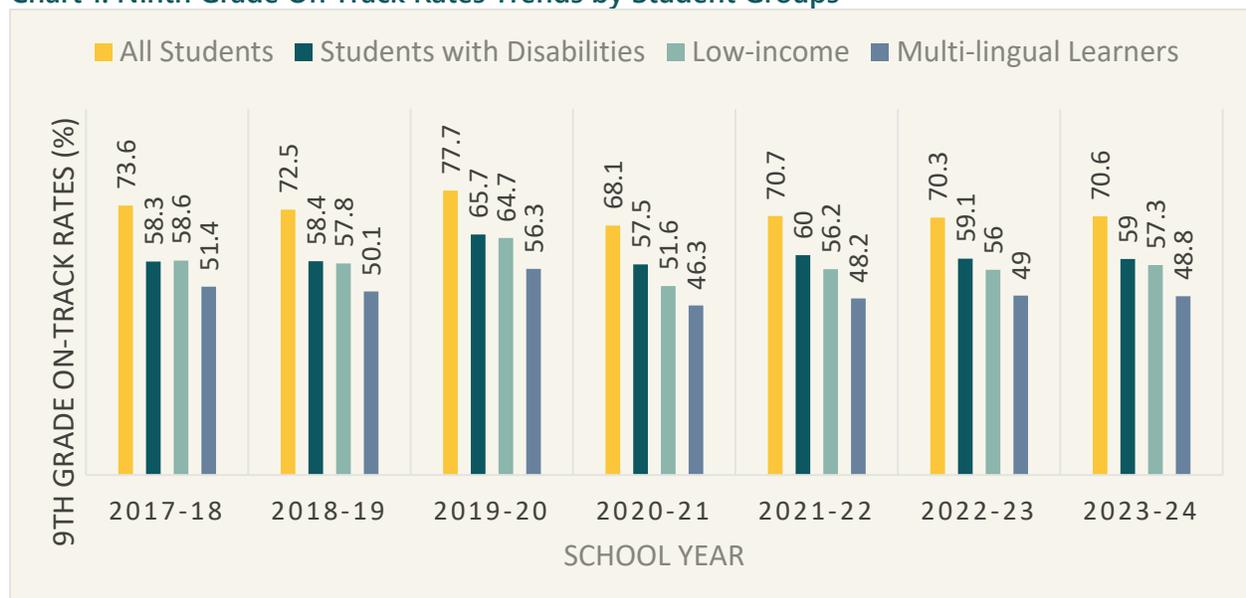
In Washington state, a student is considered on track if they pass all credits attempted in ninth grade. Ninth grade on track data is publicly available on the [OSPI Report Card](#).

### Statewide Trends Reveal Persistent Equity Gaps

All students hover around 70%, but rates are significantly lower for specific student groups.

- Low-income students average 10–15 percentage points lower than the state rate.
- Students with disabilities average 10-12 percentage points lower than the state rate.
- Multi-lingual learners consistently show the lowest rates, by 20 percentage points or more below the state rate.

Chart 1: Ninth Grade On Track Rates Trends by Student Groups



Source: OSPI Report Card – Ninth Grade On Track Rates

These disparities highlight systemic barriers that impact historically underserved students. Without targeted interventions, these gaps can widen, leading to lower graduation rates and fewer postsecondary opportunities.

## How the Ninth Grade Success Model Helps

The Ninth Grade Success model uses early warning systems and evidence-based strategies to:

- Monitor attendance, behavior, and course performance
- Provide timely, targeted interventions for at-risk students
- Strengthen school climate and relationships
- Promote equitable outcomes through early, data-driven action

## What is OSPI Doing About it?

OSPI continues to support a grant program for the 2025–26 school year, building on a successful pilot that began in 2018. The Ninth Grade Success program has grown from 5 schools in 2018 to 63 schools across 40 districts in 2024–25, reaching more than 16,700 ninth graders and 800 educators. 50 schools will participate during the 2025-26 school year.

### Through this grant program, OSPI provides:

- Funding for schools to implement Ninth Grade Success Teams and targeted interventions
- Coaching and technical assistance through [Stand for Children’s Center for High School Success \(CHSS\)](#), including:
  - Team formation and meeting structures
  - Data-informed intervention planning
  - Professional development and peer learning

Together, these investments give schools the tools, training, and support needed to ensure every ninth grader starts high school on track—and stays on the path to graduation.

### Key Resources:

- [Ninth Grade Success](#)
- [High School Success - Stand for Children Washington](#)
- [University of Chicago’s Freshman Success Framework](#)

## Contact

For more information, please contact Jenna Millett at [jenna.millett@k12.wa.us](mailto:jenna.millett@k12.wa.us).