

Washington State Equity Plan: Ensuring Equitable Access to Excellent Educators

Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback

In order to meaningfully engage with stakeholders and provide multiple opportunities for feedback, OSPI engaged in stakeholder meetings, conducted focus groups, and employed a working conditions survey. The stakeholders identified in the table below represent key components of the educational system and/or consumers of public education, with a particular focus on the both educators and communities of color. OSPI met with all of the stakeholder groups to present the Ensuring Equitable Access to Excellent Educators Initiative, explain the guidance and requirements of the Equity Plan and share the feedback options for the group to select to participate in.

The focus group protocol was developed to lead stakeholders through a review of the Equity Data Profiles, identify root causes of the unique equity gaps within Washington and collaborate on strategies targeted to the root causes. The focus group protocol was designed with simple step-by-step instructions, templates for feedback, and a summary document in order to allow any group to facilitate the focus group on their own or to request facilitation by OSPI.

The Washington Educator Working Conditions Survey (see Appendix B) was modeled after North Carolina's Teacher Working Conditions Survey (NCTWC) which was developed with the American Institutes of Research. The purpose of the survey was to gather input on working conditions in schools from teachers, educational staff associates, paraeducators, principals/assistant principals, district administrators, and parents/guardians/community members. The survey was divided into five categories of questions, including: parent and community involvement, leadership, professional learning, classroom support, and safety.

The Equity Plan Leadership reviewed the stakeholder feedback from the focus groups and the Washington Educator Working Conditions survey in order to determine congruence between identified root causes and consensus on proposed strategies to close equity gaps.

In order to create broad, representative and ongoing stakeholder engagement, the Equity Plan Leadership Team plans to share the final Equity Plan with the stakeholders and to engage in ongoing stakeholder coalition meetings during the implementation of the plan. Additionally, the Washington Educator Working Conditions Survey has been identified as a strategy that will be employed annually to inform policy decisions and implementation of the plan.

Required Groups of Consultation	Stakeholder Organization	Stakeholder Meeting	Focus Group	Survey
Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	Alternative Routes to Certification Work Group The role of the work group is to discuss the future direction of the alternate routes to certification and provide guidance for future design strategies for alternate route programs.			
Administrators and LEAs	Association of Educational Service Districts (AESD) and School District Representatives (LEAs) AESD Represents Washington's Nine Educational Service Districts. ESDs were formed when individual County Superintendent of School offices were consolidated and reorganized to reduce duplication, equalize educational opportunities, and provide a more effective reporting and accountability system to the state legislature.			
Principals	Association of Washington State Principals (AWSP) AWSP is governed by a 27-member Board of Directors that includes the AWSP president, president-elect and past president; the component board presidents and officers; AWSP executive staff; and liaisons from other K–12 education agencies and associations. The board president rotates among elementary, middle and high school component boards. Board meetings are held quarterly around the state.			

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Organization representing English Language Learners	Bilingual Educational Advisory Committee (BEAC) With the involvement of parents, educators, and community, BEAC is committed to addressing the unique needs of students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds and to help them achieve the high content and performance standards expected of all students in Washington State. The program helps English Language Learners (ELLs) to become proficient in English and to meet state learning standards. Created in 1979, the program serves about eight percent (8%) of the state's student population.			
Teacher Preparation Entity	Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (CSTP) CSTP supports student achievement through a focus on teaching excellence. We don't believe good teaching happens by accident, but that high-quality teaching occurs when there is a strong system and a strong profession that supports teachers. CSTP is a unique, innovative and independent Washington state nonprofit organization that helps build a strong, supported and effective teaching force for Washington's students. Since 2003, we have and continue to promote state and local policies and practices to help thriving, professional educators positively impact student learning.			

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Community Based Organization and Civil Rights Organization	Commission on African American Affairs The most important challenge facing the Black community today is the education of our children. Too many of our children drop out or are pushed out of school before earning a high school diploma. Black youth who stay in school have average test scores below those for White and Asian students. Black students who go on to two-year and four-year colleges and universities are less likely to graduate than those in other ethnic groups.			
Community Based Organization and Civil Rights Organization	Commission on Asian and Pacific American Affairs (APA) The mission of this commission is to improve the well-being of Asian Pacific Americans by ensuring their access to participation in the fields of government, business, education, and other areas. (Chapter 43.117 RCW). Over the past 40 years, the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs has engaged in advocacy, community education, and outreach, as well as interagency and community collaborations to improve the well-being of the APA communities.			
Community Based Organization and Civil Rights Organization	Commission on Hispanic Affairs The Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs (CHA) was created by a Governor's Executive Order and established in statute in 1971. As mandated by the state legislature, the Commission's functions are to improve public policy development and the delivery of government services to the Hispanic community.			

Required Groups of Consultation	Stakeholder Organization	Stakeholder Meeting	Focus Group	Survey
SEA, House and Senate Education Committee, Commissions, and Office of the Governor Education Ombuds	Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC) The committee is charged by RCW 28A.300.136 to synthesize the findings and recommendations from the five 2008 Achievement Gap Studies into an implementation plan and recommend policies and strategies to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Professional Educator Standards Board and the State Board of Education. The statute requires OSPI to identify school districts that have the most significant achievement gaps among subgroups of students and for large numbers of those students, and districts that should receive priority for assistance in advancing cultural competency skills in their workforce.			
Tribal Nations of Washington State	Office of Indian Education The Office of Native Education advocates for the academic success of all students. We create and promote strategies that integrate the teaching of Native American history, culture, language, and government. Educators in Washington's schools look to our staff for leadership and technical assistance.			
Teacher Preparation Entity	Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) The purpose of PESB is to establish policies and requirements for the preparation and certification of education professionals. The PESB also serves as an advisory body to the Superintendent of Public Instruction on issues related to educator recruitment, hiring, mentoring and support, professional growth, retention, evaluation, and revocation and suspension of licensure.			

Required Groups of Consultation	Stakeholder Organization	Stakeholder Meeting	Focus Group	Survey
LEAs (other staff and teacher representatives)	Public School Employees Union (PSE) Public School Employees of Washington (PSE) is a labor union dedicated exclusively to representing classified educational support professionals in Washington State's public education system. Our 26,000 members play a vital role in the operation of preschool, K–12 and universities throughout the state.			
State Board	State Board of Education (SBE) The mission of the State Board of Education is to lead the development of state policy for K–12 education, provide effective oversight of public schools, and advocate for student success.			
Governor's Office, SEA, WEA, AWSP, WSSDA, WA PTA, and LEAs	Teacher and Principal Evaluation Program Steering Committee (TPEP) The Teacher/Principal Evaluation Pilot was born out of Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 6696 during the 2010 legislative session. The evaluation provisions in the bill were part of a larger reform effort made during Washington's Race to the Top application. The bill created our pilot projection and moved the state from a two-tiered system of unsatisfactory to a four-tiered evaluation system. In addition to moving to a four-tiered system, the legislation created eight new criteria for teachers and principals to be evaluated upon, with common themes tying the criteria for teachers and principals together.			

Required Groups of Consultation	Stakeholder Organization	Stakeholder Meeting	Focus Group	Survey
Teacher Preparation	The Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (WACTE) The purpose of the Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education is to provide leadership on issues related to professional education, with primary focus on teacher education. This purpose is pursued through activities which: a) promote effective public policy regarding professional education, b) enhance and improve professional education programs at member institutions, and c) enhance the professional effectiveness of members.			
LEAs (Administrators)	Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) WASA's membership includes more than 1,600 members and is open to all educational administrators in central office, building management, and educational agency positions. The Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) is an organization for professional administrators that is committed to leadership.			
Non-profit, Teacher Organization, and Teacher Representatives	Washington Education Association (WEA) The mission of the Washington Education Association is to advance the professional interests of its members in order to make public education the best it can be for students, staff, and communities.			
Non-profit	Teachers United The mission of Teachers United is to develop great educators to become leaders for excellence in the profession and equity for students.			

Required Groups of Consultation	Stakeholder Organization	Stakeholder Meeting	Focus Group	Survey
Organization Representing Students with Disabilities.	Washington Partnerships for Action - Voices for Empowerment (PAVE) PAVE, a parent organization, works to advance our mission by providing support, advocacy, training and informational resources to empower individuals with disabilities and their families. The impact we seek is to improve the quality of life and advocacy skills of families and individuals with disabilities. By serving parents/caregivers, families/relatives, individuals with disabilities and/or special needs and professionals in Washington State through a range of programs and services and internationally through STOMP, the Specialized Training of Military Parents.			
Parents	Washington State Parent Teacher Association (WA PTA) Founded in 1905, the Washington Congress of Parents and Teachers, better known as the Washington State PTA, is the largest volunteer organization in the state, with more than 138,000 members in more than 900 local units across the state. The WA PTA's vision is that every child's potential become a reality.			
Administration	Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA) WSSDA is a trusted, respected advocate for public education and student achievement. Serving as a unified voice for local school leaders, we foster effective relationships with the Legislature, the governor's office, the superintendent of public instruction, members of Congress, federal agencies and myriad educational organizations. WSSDA's legislative reports and analyses are widely read and used throughout the education community.			

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Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) Established as a cabinet-level state agency on July 1, 2012, the Washington Student Achievement Council provides strategic planning, oversight, and advocacy to support increased student success and higher levels of educational attainment in Washington.			
Washington State Pupil Services Personnel	Educational Staff Associate In Washington state this group is referred to as Educational Staff Associates (ESAs). This group includes: school counselors, school psychologists, social workers, school nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech and language pathologists and audiologists.			

Summary of Stakeholder Focus Group Feedback

While the option to engage in a stakeholder focus group was provided to all identified stakeholders, only a few stakeholders engaged in this option. A summary of the stakeholder focus group feedback is provided below, with both root causes identified and proposed strategies to close equity gaps.

Organization	Root Causes Identified	Proposed Strategies
Bilingual Education Advisory Committee (BEAC)	Disparity in tax base to fully fund instructional needs.	Current program is based on the “Robin Hood” strategy for school funding. Equalization of school funding needs to be state-wide.
	In equitable funding at state level. This funding fails to provide relative support for our neediest students.	Fully funded education statewide. The McCleary legislation must be implemented!
	Pay differential. Highest minority schools have lowest paid teachers.	Increase stipends for teachers that teach in minority schools. Also increase stipends for highly qualified teachers in high poverty areas.
	Teachers not highly qualified in small towns and rural areas.	State should have more oversight to recruit qualified teachers! Check before hiring teachers to make sure they have all the necessary endorsements to teach successfully.
	Geography and rural areas wear more than one hat.	Incentive funding for teachers committing to teach in rural areas for at least five years. Legislate penalties for districts that have high percentage of multi-funded positions or staff assigned to more than two sites. Professional development for teachers to update their pedagogies for teaching in challenging demographic areas.

Organization	Root Causes Identified	Proposed Strategies
Bilingual Education Advisory Committee (BEAC) (Continued)	Inadequate instrumental support for counseling and truancy.	Provide funding for counseling services and family support programs to increase student participation.
	High teacher absentee rates.	Wrap around services including preventative health care for teachers.
State Board of Education (SBE)	School leadership is a big factor in how a school is effective.	Good leadership makes for a good climate in a school. Provide professional development to administration on what an effective administrator is.
	Rural areas are more likely to have non-highly qualified and out-of-field teachers.	Create alternative pathways to certification.
Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA)	Men of color not represented in the teaching profession.	The following would help increase men of color in the teaching profession: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarships. • Outreach Initiatives. • Federal loan forgiveness. • Instructional practices that considers all backgrounds.
	Gaps in highly qualified teacher assignments.	The following would allow more teachers to become highly qualified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Title II funds to help teachers gain the needed endorsement to teach in the assigned areas. • Creative scheduling to allow for job imbedded training.

Organization	Root Causes Identified	Proposed Strategies
Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) (Continued)	Lack of dual language teaching candidates.	The following would increase dual language teaching candidates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentives to teachers to become dual language certified. • Offer professional development on minimal ability to understand different languages.
Teachers United	Teachers leave the profession because they burn out from the pressures and stress of teaching in high-needs schools.	Create teacher leadership roles and expand mentor training for teachers.
	Teachers feel frustrated in their inability and the expectation to get students with significant years of learning deficits up to grade-level expectations in one year.	Change school improvement metrics to reward growth instead of punishing for expected low-achievement.
Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (WACTE)	Pay scale not reflective for ELL and Special Education teachers.	Pay more and change evaluation models (differentiate salaries).
	Candidates do not have skills to teach in poverty and low performing schools.	Create better teacher mentoring programs with incentives for both the mentor and mentee.
	Rural area makes it hard to get good teachers for certain low performing schools.	Recruiting teachers from within the communities and using alternate routes for certification.

Organization	Root Causes Identified	Proposed Strategies
Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (WACTE) (Continued)	Teachers are stretched too thin in smaller schools.	Create additional funding for paraeducators.

Summary of Washington Educator Working Conditions Survey Data

The Equity Plan Leadership Team identified that working conditions were one of the key root causes to equity gaps within Washington. However, there was no source of statewide data on working conditions so the team developed the Washington Educator Working Conditions Survey. The survey was replicated from the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions (NCTWC) survey, with additional surveys developed for both school district administrators and parents/guardians and community members. The survey was distributed to teachers, principals/assistant principals, paraeducators, educational staff associates, school district administrators and parents/guardians and community members with the assistance of the stakeholder organizations identified in the previous table. The Equity Plan Leadership Team engaged in an initial analysis of the survey data and plan to continue to analyze the data to inform the implementation of the plan and to distribute the survey annually. Additional survey data is included in the appendix.

The survey questions were organized in five areas:

1. Parent and community involvement.
2. Leadership.
3. Professional learning.
4. Classroom support.
5. Safety.

Nearly 77 percent of the respondents were teachers, constituting the majority of the responses. Only 2.2 percent of the respondents were principals, which concerned the Equity Plan Leadership team, as well as the relatively low levels of paraeducator and educational staff associate responses. Of 295 school districts within Washington, respondents from 263 districts participated in the survey.

Teachers and principals were both asked to respond to the question “which of the following best describes your immediate professional plans”. Below is a comparison of the teacher and principal responses:

Immediate Professional Plans:

Principals	
Continue as a principal at my current school	77.3%
Continue as a principal in this district but leave this school	4.7%
Continue as a principal in this state but leave this district	5.5%
Leave the principalship for another administrative position or teaching position	6.3%
Leave the principalship for personal reasons (e.g. health, family, etc.)	1.6%
Retire from principalship	3.1%
Leave the principalship for another reason	1.6%
Teachers	
Continue teaching at my current school	75.5%
Continue teaching in this district but leave this school	5.0%
Continue teaching in this state but leave this district	6.2%
Continue working in education but pursue an administrative position	2.5%
Continue working in education but pursue a non-administrative position	2.8%
Leave education entirely	8.0%

The Equity Plan Leadership Team was pleased that majority of respondents indicated that they intended on staying within the profession. However, the team plans to further disaggregate the respondent data on those who intend to leave the profession, by demographics, geographic location and school district. Additionally, the team was concerned that for teachers the option of retirement from the profession was not offered as a question and may have affected the quality of the data. The team plans to review and revise the survey questions to ensure the responses options are accurate.

All respondents were asked which teaching conditions were the most important in promoting student learning. As indicated in the table below, the conditions were ranked differently by different respondents (1 – most important, 9 – least important).

An additional question was also asked of all respondents; to identify which teaching conditions they believe most affects a teacher's willingness to continue teaching in a school.

The Equity Plan Leadership Team reviewed these tables and noticed that many of the strategy areas they had identified as being crucial were also identified by the survey respondents. The team plans to do a more detailed analysis of the working conditions data in each category of the survey (Parent and Community Involvement, Leadership, Professional Learning, Classroom Support, and Safety).