Washington STEM CEO Remarks: Future Direction of Washington STEM
Lynne K. Varner, *Chief Executive Officer*, Washington STEM

November 2, 2023
STEM Education Innovation Meeting – Redmond, Washington

CEO Lynne Varner provided the STEM Alliance some comments regarding the current work at Washington STEM and the new pathways ahead.

Where Washington STEM is Right Now

Washington STEM is and always will be dedicated to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). STEM is the air we breath, the water we swim in; not only are the best paying jobs in our state reliant on STEM literacy and STEM skills, and not only do our state's employers rely on STEM talent for innovation, but we also live in a world where STEM is a part of everything we do.

Washington STEM works at the systems level, with your support and partnership, to understand and support solutions in community all across the state. Examples of that work that you'll see today include our regional Child Care and Early Learning goal setting and data use, our High School to Postsecondary Collective, and our career connected learning technical assistance via Career Connect Washington and our Career Pathways Ready System.

Washington STEM, with support from you all, turn this learning and direct support into policy change–both supporting our agency partners in making procedural changes, and with our legislature to advocate for and make direct changes to our state's policies.

Where Washington STEM is Headed

Washington STEM will be launching the creation of our next strategic plan in 2024 to guide us in 2025 and beyond. During that time we will be seeking your support and input. We don't know exactly what our strategic plan will look like but we do know:

1) We are doubling down on partnerships–both new and existing partnerships; this is a great example for folks in this room.

2) We are doubling down on our DEI work; we've already been doing that internally, but you'll see that externally and with our partnerships.

3) We are doubling down on our data work; data is king, it's the way we know if we're having impact; growing our team, adding capacity to an already amazing team.

4) We know that STEM literacy begins early–coders, gamers–we see these at 3-4 years old; Washington STEM will be deepening our efforts and capacity to address early math literacy over the coming years.

5) Bright minds go from early learning into the K12 system eager to keep learning and exploring and it's our obligation to make sure they have school systems that are ready to help them soar. With support from College Spark as well as a new partnership with the Gates Foundation, we will be supporting partners across the state to figure out how to support students during K12 so that they can achieve their postsecondary aspirations.

6) We are prepared to lead and convene the conversations and efforts around career connected learning, to help take CCW to the next level, and to ensure that the Washington Jobs Initiative thousands more jobs; you'll hear a bit more from Jayme on this piece in particular later this morning when we discuss legislative priorities; we have the chops in data, policy, and programmatic expertise and we are proud to take on this responsibility.

WASHINGTON STEM – FORMATION & STEM ALLIANCE BEGINNINGS

Contextual history of STEM Education Innovation Alliance and Washington STEM's Key Role in its Formation

Jenee Myers Twitchell, *Chief Impact Officer*, Washington STEM

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Back before we were all members of this STEM Alliance and before the STEM Alliance was even formed, Washington STEM was cooked up as a new nonprofit organization that would shed light on what STEM even was. This was back when you'd say STEM and people would think of "Stem cells." That was over 12 years ago, and our state's economy then was already driven by STEM jobs and STEM literacy - and we needed to catch up to it.

In fact, Washington STEM was formed about 10 years after the acronym STEM was actually coined by the National Science Foundation in 2001. A fun fact is that STEM was originally pitched as SMET. For some reason, that didn't take off. And to that end, even though the term STEM had been coined, it really hadn't permeated to the general public after a full decade. One of Washington STEM's earliest goals was to help draw attention and an understanding among the public and all across education of STEM. We wanted to address these questions: what it is, what it includes, how to "do" STEM like integrated curriculum across science, technology, engineering, and math, etc.

Along with this goal, Washington STEM aimed to increase the breadth and depth of STEM education across the state–to increase exposure–with the ultimate intended outcome of increasing the number of students prepared for STEM degree programs and STEM jobs in our state. There was a modest interest around diversity, especially with regard to gender, though there were no specific goals tied to racial justice at the time.

Washington STEM was small and tenacious and with generous support, and we set to work to infuse STEM programming into every corner of the state and to ensure that families, lay folks, knew what STEM was. In a way, this was a bit naive, and we had to course correct along the way because every family and culture actually "does STEM." Indigenous leaders and elders and their ancestors who have stewarded this land since time immemorial have "done STEM" the longest among us and have intimate knowledge of our climate, our earth, and the deep science of the land. We are still correcting for the white normative view of STEM and working to honor and engage the leadership of BIPOC and Indigenous experts in this work.

But in 2012 and 2013, just after Washington STEM was off and running, we along with many of you or your predecessors believed that in order to increase access to and understanding of STEM and its importance to our economy and to the livelihoods of our state's residents, we needed to do a few things: we needed to measure our progress toward some shared STEM goals, and we needed to work to change our state's systems to dismantle the barriers to STEM education. In 2012/2013–this was well before Washington STEM had a data team or a robust policy team–so the mechanism for measurement and advocacy was to get the legislature to make it so!

We all, or our predecessors, worked together to identify which agencies made the most sense to engage in this and through partnership with Governor Inslee who has been the biggest champion of STEM education–and climate science, and smart policies for jobs and the economy to boot–as well as in partnership with key legislators formed the STEM Alliance. This happened as part of a suite of Revised Codes of Washington (RCWs) that named STEM as a priority for the State, named the STEM Education Innovation Alliance, and supported the actions of the work, which were to advise the public, the legislature, and in particular the Governor's office, using an established framework, on how we were doing as a state on "increasing learning opportunities and aligning strategic plans and activities in order to prepare students for STEM-related jobs and careers, with the longer-term goal of improving educational, workforce, and economic outcomes in STEM."

And thus was born the annual STEM Report Card and associated dashboards as well as the annual work we all contribute to in advising the Governor's Office and others of the STEM programming and efforts in our state as well as what to change or do or work on next.

Fast forward to more recent years of this work–the most important (I'll say selfishly) of which was that all of that led to one of our former CEOs realizing that we needed to more deeply harness and support the data and measurement as well as the advocacy efforts. Because that's what led to my job! Washington STEM realized that we were supporting all of this great work in regions, but we weren't doing it in a data-informed way, and we weren't doing as much as we good to take all of the learnings from that great work in regions and collectively advocating for the systems change or barrier removals.

We also realized that our initial mission–to get folks to know what STEM was and that it was important–that had been mission accomplished. The last public poll we conducted had over 92% of the public stating that they understand STEM and its importance. That was all well and good—the STEM activities and the public knowledge–but we weren't seeing huge shifts in who

was accessing STEM jobs–who was benefiting from our strong STEM economy. The justice we were seeking and needing had not been addressed. So we've gone through a massive shift in our theory of action over this past few years. And we've come out of it realizing that we have some superpowers to contribute to this work–focusing on and centering racial justice (that's part of what I was talking about that needed correcting for earlier), supporting regional efforts by ensuring sharing across partners for efficiencies and best practices, Data work!--this is really the power of USING data, making sure the data is relevant, to result in change (REALLY this means we are critical friends and partners with our state agencies to provide feedback on what indicators really matter, how they are used by educators and leaders, putting the data to work to inform, evaluate, and course correct), and then summarizing all of the learnings and the data use into advocacy and policy change.

Hand in hand with the STEM Alliance and you all as its members, we have come so far from 10-12 years ago (and really far from 20 or so years ago and the beginning with SMET). We have come a long way and have accomplished a lot. We are recognized for so much as a state…the accolades that we get at national convenings and conferences, is amazing– Career Connect Washington, Data, Pathways, financial aid, etc.

I believe we are on the precipice of taking all of this work to the next level–centering equity, using data for change, really digging into our systemic barriers and augmenting pieces of our education system that have not served and that were not built to serve our Black, Brown, and Indigenous students and families. That's why you'll see at today's summit sessions, we are all about implementation and digging into the hard work of sensemaking and sharing about all of the work going on–we are out of the stage of STEM exposure and solely STEM programming (that's still important)--but we are in the stage of alignment, making it make sense for local folks, helping them weave it all together and us getting the policy and systems barriers out of the way.

Washington STEM is so thankful to the Governor's office for this work, this partnership, for putting faith in us and the rest of the STEM Alliance members to come this far. We can't wait to see what we will all do next together. We will be working closely with John Aultman and James Dorsey to figure out what that looks like, and we are excited to hear from you all over the next year what it should look like as well.

WASHINGTON STEM

Their journey, our responsibility

Economic security, STEM literacy, civic engagement, joy

Enrollment
Persistence
Completion

Pathways to Work
- Multiple, well-lit pathways aligned with labor market

Financial Aid
High School and Beyond Plan
Dual Credit

Career Pathways

STEM Identity and Learning

High School to Postsecondary Prep and Transition
- Access to courses and pathways
- Student supports center student aspirations

K-12 STEM

Ready for Kindergarten

P-12 STEM Learning
- STEM learning in every grade
- Strong STEM Teaching workforce

Early Learning
- STEM-confident families
- Access to high quality early learning experiences

Early Learning

Career Pathways Ready System (CPRS)

WASHINGTON STEM

	Financial Aid Knowledge & Completion	Pathways Exist (Built and Aligned) aka Existence of Multiple, Well-lit Pathways for Students	Students Actively Engage in Pathways
	TU Goal: XX % of students access, complete, etc. by XX/XX/XX	TU Goal: X number of pathways in XYZ industries, etc.	TU Goal: X students (by demographic) engaged in XYZ type of pathways
Adult Knowledge and Bias Adjustment	1. Know your Data 2. Identify a Champion 3. Access and use the FAFSA portal (process for tracking WASFA) 4. Track individual student completion	1. Schools and districts use a range of quantitative and qualitative evidence to examine and improve postsecondary awareness and preparation. 2. Middle schools and high schools use a common HSBP platform that generates actionable data for supporting students' postsecondary aspirations. 3. Key career sectors have articulated pathways for students including career exploration for early grades (e.g., STEM Like Me), career preparation for middle grades, and advanced career launch programs for high school students	1. Each high school provides dedicated time (e.g., advisory period) for students at each grade level to work on college and career readiness curriculum and their HSBP. 2. High schools collect and use data annually about how students are engaged in pathways based on their aspirations and interests. Programs are designed based on that data. 3. Schools and school districts provide support to teachers and staff about careers, pathways, and workforce skills so they can present these topics to students in their classrooms (e.g., STEM Teacher Cafes).
Families and Communities are Engaged	1. Families of students in 6th-8th grade are provided with information and support for enrolling in the College Bound Scholarship. 2. Families of students in 8th through 11th grades that are eligible for the College Bound Scholarship are annually provided with information regarding financial aid, including but not limited to college affordability, cost, financial aid resources, and how to complete financial aid applications (e.g. FAFSA and WASFA). 3. Families are directly engaged in HSBP through communication and events to connect students' postsecondary plans with financial aid resources and supports.	1. From 8th through 12th grade, families are informed about articulated career pathway opportunities and the components of those pathways (dual credit courses, financial aid support, CE/CP/CL, and related activities), through events (provided in languages other than English) aligned to HSBP frameworks and strategies. 2. Families of students in 8th through 12th grade receive communications about articulated career pathway opportunities and the components of those pathways (e.g., dual credit courses, financial aid support, CE/CP/CL), provided in languages other than English and in alignment with HSBP frameworks and strategies.	1. From 8th through 12th grade, families are encouraged and supported by schools and districts to engage with their students in HSBP exercises and updates, through dedicated opportunities to co-design pathways exploration experiences. 2. Families receive information related to key post-high school data points (e.g., enrollment, outcomes, financial aid completion, aspirations) and are invited by schools to engage in designing solutions for students. 3. Families receive opportunities to engage with students in career exploration in elementary school.
There is capacity (+ capability) and support to do the work (aka Development of regional leadership capacity) Consider RESOURCES and PEOPLE as related but distinct	1. Knowledge of financial aid best practices and supports is known for internal school staff and community-based organizations. 2. For each school, needs and requests for support from community-based organizations around College Bound Scholarships, HSBP, and financial aid campaigns have been determined. 3. Each school implements targeted strategies to reach student groups furthest from defined universal goals.	1. Career connected learning programs are aligned with regional job demand, span the explore-prep-launch continuum, and make use of available funding opportunities (e.g., CCW program builder grants). 2. Community-based organizations and local education organizations are engaged in partnerships focused on increasing students' exposure to regional higher educational institutions, apprenticeship programs, and other postsecondary experiences. 3. Making explicit connection to align pathways efforts and wrap around supports for priority populations to scale work.	1. Local community-based organizations and other out-of-school organizations are identified and engage students in alignment with schools' and/or districts' pathways, HSBP frameworks, and financial best practices, and can report on their strategies. 2. WA STEM, STEM Networks, and schools in the region provide and use resources like college and career advisory curriculum, H2P scale and expansion efforts, and integrated tools like CCW Directory.

**Who is engaged in each square: students, families, K12 staff, workforce, CBOs, labor, higher Ed, business*

Powerful Communities and a Responsive Early Learning System

The Early Learning System is all of the interconnected people and organizations that enable families to care for their children and communities to care for their families. It includes the early learning workforce, advocates, policy makers, funders, pediatricians, social workers, therapists, and staff at Tribal, regional, and state agencies, and many more.

Our system in Washington state has not been responsive enough.

Local communities know what works, and what challenges stand in their way. The early learning system must be committed to co-design, strong collaboration, and shared accountability among ALL partners. To intentionally eliminate longstanding inequities and improve outcomes for communities furthest from opportunity, system improvements must be centered on the lived experience of children, families and those who care for them.

What Will Success Look Like?

To achieve Powerful Communities and a Responsive Early Learning System, we will need exceptional coordination among all communities and local and state partners to reach tangible goals that are backed by strong strategies.

GOALS:

A Responsive to Communities of Color

B Funding for Equitable Outcomes

C Pandemic Recovery

D Continuous Improvement

E Community Voice and Partnerships

F System Infrastructure

STRATEGIES:

01 Implement a coordinated, **comprehensive data collection system** that is co-created with state and community partners, including work with Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities, that is available and accessible for planning and tracking progress. Supports Goals Ⓐ & Ⓕ

02 Develop **holistic definitions** of "school readiness" and "life readiness" and a definition/agreement of what is included in the "early learning system." Supports Goal Ⓕ

03 Develop **outcome metrics and a coordinated accountability structure** that will be used for the monitoring and evaluation of the Coordination Plan. Supports Goal Ⓕ

04 Create formal opportunities (that include families and leaders of color) to **co-design, co-develop and evaluate approaches to reduce racial disparities in early learning**. Communities of color co-design and co-develop programs that meet the needs in their communities. Supports Goal Ⓓ

05 **Maximize the use of pandemic recovery resources.** Provide supports in communities to meet critical needs of families, providers, and early learning programs. Supports Goal Ⓒ

06 **Increase budget resources** (local, state and federal) for early learning using an equitable allocation model. Increase the use of braided state and federal funds for early learning programs. Identify the need for rate increases across child care services and programs (including but not limited to subsidy rates). Supports Goal Ⓒ

07 **Fund and support parent voice** at all levels of decision making. Expand leadership pathways that include use of mentors and financial stipends for Black, Indigenous Parents of Color and communities who have historically been and are currently underserved. Supports Goals Ⓐ & Ⓔ

08 Provide resources to support **regional planning and coordinating structures** across the state to ensure that every region has an equitable voice in making the early learning system responsive to families and providers in local communities, especially the most underserved communities. Supports Goal Ⓔ

09 Explore and refine the **implementation of quality initiatives**, evaluating how quality is measured, how compensation is tied to quality, how quality is experienced by children, families and providers. Assess the impacts of quality definitions and implementation of quality initiatives on Black, Indigenous and Communities of Color and underserved communities. Supports Goals Ⓐ Ⓓ & Ⓔ

10 Engage parents and the workforce to develop or **update state regulations** that are guided by equity and anti-racism frameworks. Supports Goals Ⓐ & Ⓕ

11 **Eliminate the "digital divide"** for children and families, making access to technology for Black, Indigenous and People of Color, and communities who have historically been and are currently underserved, more equitable. Supports Goals Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓓ & Ⓕ

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Strong, Stable, Nurturing, Safe, and Supported Families

Strong, resilient families provide children the love and care that sustains their growth and development, building foundations for bright futures. Families raising young children need to meet their basic needs, make connections with other families, and have access to the information, services and supports they need. When families seek help, they often can't find the support they need. Many communities lack resources to address family needs, while national, state and local policies often perpetuate inequities.

It's critical that we establish system-wide supports for families when they're navigating challenging times. It must also become easier for all families to access the right support, in the right place, at the right time — while making sure those supports are culturally responsive to the unique needs of each family.

To support all families, we must address two longstanding threats to their well-being: toxic stress and poverty.

The Early Learning Coordination Plan describes multiple goals and strategies to overcome those threats. Through a responsive statewide network, we can help families address issues before they reach the crisis stage, reducing stress and creating long-term stability and resilience.

What Will Success Look Like?

The ELCP outlines key goals and strategies to ensure all families in Washington are strong, stable, nurturing, safe, and supported. It will require coordination and coordination among statewide, regional, and community partners.

GOALS:

Ⓐ **Parental Resilience**

Ⓑ **Access to Social Connections**

Ⓒ **Access to Resources**

Young children who are in stable housing and whose parents have access to financial support are more likely to be healthy, to meet developmental milestones, and to be ready for kindergarten and successful in school.

STRATEGIES:

01   **Meet basic needs** of families, aligning with – and building on – the strategies identified by the Poverty Reduction Work Group (https://dismantlepovertyinwa.com/). Supports Goal (A)

02   Support and **expand paid time off** for parents to provide flexibility for parents to support their family and children's health across their ages and stages. Supports Goal (A)

03   Increase opportunities for parents and families to get support and **build trusting personal connections** through expanding and promoting peer-to-peer support groups, in-person (or virtual) groups and informal/online/social media groups, and hiring community leaders to serve as family liaisons at the school or district levels to help navigate transitions and school protocols, mindful of the needs for particular communities (e.g., rural communities and communities where fewer resources exist, supports in different languages, responsiveness to different cultural norms). Supports Goal (B)

04   Expand culturally sensitive **universal prenatal screening** for a broad spectrum of possible supports (safety, housing, economic, child development, mental health, etc.) with referrals and follow-up to meet family needs. Supports Goal (C)

05   Expand **statewide information resources** to help parents and families connect with the services and supports they need, coordinate their care, and provide referral feedback opportunities, from prenatal to school entry. Supports Goal (C)

06   Expand community-based family supports that provide culturally sensitive **navigation assistance** to help parents and families access needed services and supports, including outreach to communities who have been historically and are currently underserved. Supports Goal (C)

07   Expand culturally responsive **supports for parents** – including home-based and community-based family education, two-generation approaches to build capacity and skills (supporting both adults and children in a household), expanding kindergarten teacher visits to the homes of children before beginning school to build relationships with family members and children, and respite care for parents of children with disabilities. Supports Goal (A)

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What Will Success Look Like?

Positive Early Learning Experiences

While the foundations of Washington's early learning system are strong, much work is needed to create a high-quality early care and education system that meets every families' strengths, needs, and hopes.

Creating positive early learning experiences means being responsive to everything about a child's development. This includes heritage, culture, language, ability, needs, and parent preferences, as well as life experiences — including exposure to trauma. And those experiences must be positive not only for children, but also for their families.

All children and their adult caregivers must feel heard, respected, and given opportunities to pursue their dreams.

To accomplish this, we must address four central challenges: affordability of care, access to the type and amount of care needed, support for care providers, and creation of a more equitable early care and education system.

Achieving positive early learning experiences for all children and their families will require extensive partnerships at the state, regional and local levels to coordinate the types of care and support provided. Through genuine collaboration towards our shared vision, we can expand care options in every region of Washington state that are affordable, accessible, trauma-informed and healing-centered, and culturally responsive.

GOALS:

(A) **Affordability and Availability of Services**

(B) **Support and Services for Children with Special and Complex Needs**

(C) **Access to Community Activities Outside of Child Care that Support a Child's Development**

(D) **Seamless Transitions**

STRATEGIES:

01 Make universal **social emotional training and resources** readily and easily accessible for early learning professionals, parents, caregivers, families and community partners with a focus on anti-racism, flexible healing-centered practices, cultural and language relevancy, to meet the needs of diverse communities, for children prenatal through 3rd grade. Supports Goals (A) & (B)

02 **Enhance affordability of early learning services** for low-income families and families who struggle to afford child care. Change the state's income eligibility (including child care, ECEAP, home visiting and all other early learning programs) from Federal Poverty Level to Area Median Income, and eliminate the benefit cliff for services by adding multiple tiers of subsidy and co-payment. Supports Goal (A)

03 Identify and replicate **promising programs**, including community designed programs, that are successfully reaching, engaging and supporting the learning and development of Black, Indigenous, Children of Color and their families, including those who are English language learners, and communities who have historically been and are currently underserved. Supports Goals (A) (B) & (C)

04 **Expand high-quality preschool options** to create an integrated approach to serving 3- and 4-year-olds that ensures increased access and more sustainable, inclusive programming across program types. Programs and services engage families and provide responsive support for underserved communities and children. Supports Goals (A) & (B)

05 **Expand access to home-based services** for expectant parents and families with new babies and young children to support the physical, social and emotional health of children, focusing on families at greatest risk, including home visiting, early intervention, newborn visits, etc. Supports Goals (A) (B) (C) & (D)

06 **Ensure cultural practices, norms and home languages** are fully integrated in early learning programs, services, supports and practices for children birth through 3rd grade. Examples include incorporating oral storytelling traditions from Native American communities, curricula development, opportunities to learn in home languages, use of promotoras, use of culturally responsive system navigators and facilitated play and learn groups. Supports Goal (A)

07 Create coordinated approaches for **supporting children, parents and families through transitions** from prenatal through 3rd grade, based on children's well-being, learning and development, creating strong relationships with new providers and teachers. Supports will help to eliminate inequitable outcomes for Black, Indigenous and People of Color. Supports Goal (D)

08 Invest in culturally responsive **community activities** that enable parents and care givers access to resources that support children's development and social interactions and strengthen families (e.g., cultural activities, parks, play and learn groups, libraries, etc.). Supports Goal (C)

09 **Create inclusive settings and services** from birth through 3rd grade in partnership with families that enable children with special and complex needs to learn and grow with children their age. Supports Goal (B)

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A Strong and Supported Early Learning Workforce

Early learning providers nurture curiosity, joy, and confidence in the children they serve. Yet, so often, providers themselves lack the support necessary for their own well-being.

Their work can be highly stressful while their compensation is often low. The burdens of continuing education requirements, compassion fatigue, and secondary trauma from supporting families and children that have experienced traumatic events all factor into the stress that providers endure.

The end result is a workforce in jeopardy. We are seeing unprecedented staff turnover rates and severely understaffed early learning settings, which has a direct negative impact on the children and families in our state.

If we want high-quality learning services, we need to care for our providers.

While the early learning system has received positive recent enhancements, we still need a much broader, deeper effort. Our focus must be on addressing the longstanding inequities to rebuild and reimagine how the early learning workforce is supported.

What Will Success Look Like?

With a bold and transformational commitment to improving compensation, increasing diversity, and enhancing training and support, we can realize our vision for a strong and supported early learning workforce. In turn, the workforce will have a major impact on every other goal in our ELCP — improving the future of Washington state families and strengthening our communities.

GOALS:

(A) **Diverse Workforce**

(B) **Training and Supports for Workforce**

(C) **Enhance Compensation**

STRATEGIES:

01
Expand access to a centralized, culturally responsive, anti-bias, anti-racist **foundational training portal** for all providers. The trainings should be designed based on research and experience providing high quality child care, and an understanding about the ways in which systems and institutions have perpetuated inequities for Black, Indigenous and People of Color. Supports Goals Ⓑ

02
Provide **healing-centered training and anti-bias and anti-racist education**, including the effect of historical trauma on Black, Indigenous and People of Color, to Early Learning workforce across early learning settings, including kindergarten through 3rd grade educators. Supports Goal Ⓑ

03
Radically **transform pathways into the profession** and to career advancement to diversify the workforce, with a focus on Black, Indigenous and People of Color, including gender diversity. The pathways will value experience and demonstrated ability, along with credit-based education and training. Supports Goals Ⓐ

04
Increase the number of **diverse early learning** leaders from Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities. Approaches can include mentorship opportunities, access to community-based coaches, etc.
Supports Goals Ⓐ & Ⓑ

05
Enhance compensation to ensure that all professionals in the early learning workforce are earning equitable wages (including benefits).
Supports Goals Ⓒ

06
Enhance retention of a strong workforce, including professional development opportunities to learn from one another based on community needs.
Supports Goal Ⓒ

07
Expand **access to shared services** (i.e., health and mental health consultations, healing-centered approaches and support for financial and administrative capacity building) in languages and methods that work for all, so that every provider can be successful, including in rural communities. Supports Goal Ⓑ

08
Provide **child care health consultation** to early learning professionals that matches culturally and linguistically with families and communities. Supports Goal Ⓑ

09
Build public awareness that results in advocacy for budget and policy actions that address the need to increase compensation to enhance the stability of the early learning workforce. Supports Goal Ⓒ

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Healthy Children and Families

Early childhood is the time to build strong foundations for lifelong health. For children and families to realize future success, we need to provide the supports needed to raise healthy children and families now.

Thanks to steady investments Washington state has made in high-quality health programs and services, many families have already experienced improved health outcomes, both for children and adults. But the benefits of good health aren't experienced equally. Glaring and longstanding disparities in child and family health outcomes still exist.

Improving health outcomes for children and families must focus on the "whole person" — going beyond physical health to include the behavioral, emotional, and social well-being of children and families.

To develop whole, healthy people, we need to focus on whole-person care.

We will need to foster collaboration among all who work with children and families to achieve healthy outcomes across physical, mental, and oral health. It will necessitate a greater emphasis on trauma-informed, culturally responsive care, and will require eliminating longstanding disparities based on race, poverty, and geography.

What Will Success Look Like?

Access to a medical home and regular well-child care is only part of the equation. By implementing the full suite of goals and strategies included in the ELCP, we will help support children's, families' and providers' optimal health and development now and for years to come.

GOALS:

(A) **Access to Comprehensive Health Supports**

(B) **Continuity of Services**

> "Even with good intentions, we create systems that are actually most available to the ones with the least amount of struggle. That is an across the system problem, and we are a part of that system, and a part of that problem."
> — PHYSICIAN

STRATEGIES:

01 Develop capacity in people and organizations, including building system-wide awareness, to deliver programs and services based on an understanding of how **historical and generational trauma** caused by historic oppression of Black, Indigenous and People of Color impacts health for these communities. Supports Goals Ⓐ

02 Build system-wide awareness of the **unique fears/barriers facing immigrants** (i.e., legal status, access to social and health services, etc.) that negatively impact their access to health services, and develop system responsiveness to these needs. Supports Goal Ⓐ

03 Ensure a system that provides "**whole-person and whole-family care**" (i.e., care that is centered on an individual while considering the needs and circumstances of the family) by eliminating fragmentation and integrating services for medical, dental, mental health and substance use disorders. Improve access to those services (addressing issues regarding transportation, lack of services in rural communities, language barriers, etc.) and enable families to seek those services in one location (i.e., health care hubs). Supports Goals Ⓑ

04 Identify gaps in **continuity of services and eligibility**, the causes of these gaps, and develop creative and flexible system redesigns. Supports Goal Ⓑ

05 Enhance **healthy babies support and prenatal care** to eliminate disparities in infant and maternal mortality rates. Dedicate targeted resources for wellness and prevention of abuse and neglect. Supports Goals Ⓐ & Ⓑ

06 **Eliminate disparities in expulsions** for Black, Indigenous and Children of Color in early learning settings (including kindergarten through 3rd grade) with mental health and behavioral supports and resources. Supports Goal Ⓐ

07 Increase funding for and capacity to provide **additional mental health supports** for infants, children, families, schools and community providers. Supports Goal Ⓑ
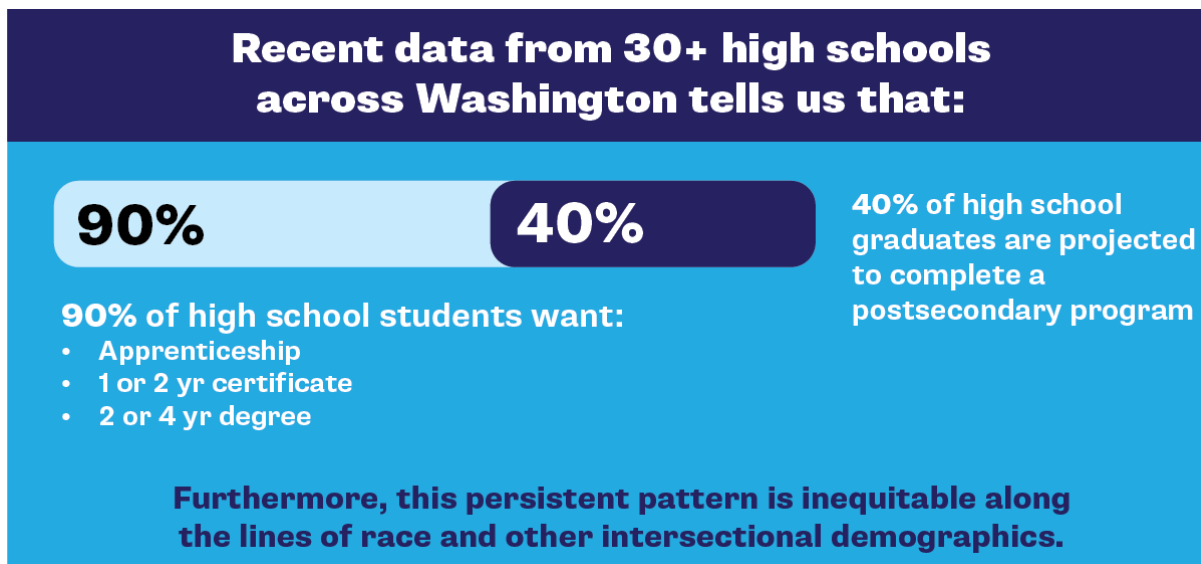
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WASHINGTON STEM HIGH SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY COLLABORATIVE

Join the Washington STEM High School to Postsecondary Collaborative to work with other high schools and districts and regional leaders to reimagine, design, and implement a postsecondary preparation system that is inclusive of all student aspirations, lights up possible pathways, and fosters a sense of belonging.

Recent data from 30+ high schools across Washington tells us that:

90% **40%**

90% of high school students want:
- Apprenticeship
- 1 or 2 yr certificate
- 2 or 4 yr degree

40% of high school graduates are projected to complete a postsecondary program

Furthermore, this persistent pattern is inequitable along the lines of race and other intersectional demographics.

OVERVIEW

Beginning in August 2023, Washington STEM, Scholar Fund, and regional leaders will provide an 18-month guided process that supports regional/district leaders and school teams to enact evidence-based changes that increase direct postsecondary enrollment for students of color and other intersectional demographics. The Collaborative builds on the work of the College and Career Leadership Institute, Eisenhower High School, the Washington Pathways Project, and the 25 schools currently involved in the H2P Collaborative.

Benefits to School Communities

- Free access to National Student Clearinghouse data (annual $595 license covered).
- Free access to a drag-and-drop platform that simplifies complex high school and postsecondary data with customized visual reporting, reducing a days-long process to minutes ($10K value)
- Technical support to administer 15-minute annual student and staff surveys, available in English and Spanish, along with a school-specific Tableau dashboard of results
- Coaching and protocols for centering students and families in co-design, through student and family listening sessions.
- Support to align this work with existing mandates and priorities, e.g. Washington School Improvement and High School and Beyond Planning.
- Coaching on the value and "how-to" of addressing adult mindset and systems change to disrupt racial and other intersectional inequities in postsecondary preparation.

School Community Outcomes and Commitments

OUTCOMES

School teams will receive coaching and technical support from regional leads and Washington STEM; opportunities to learn with and from other school teams; and open access to all resources and materials related to the H2P Collaborative:

- **Surface, Confirm, and Challenge Hunches.** Understand patterns across high school course-taking, financial aid completion, and postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion.

- **Uncover Root Causes and Addressing Adult Bias.** Understand how staff and students learn about, talk about, and experience postsecondary preparation and support at school.

- **Co-Develop Solutions.** Increase trust and understanding of students' and families' experiences and expertise, working together to identify impactful school-level changes.

- **Change School Culture.** Equip school staff, including teachers, with updated, accurate, unbiased postsecondary preparation information and best practices for supporting students within the context of their role.

- **Tie it All Together.** Aligning this work with existing mandates and initiatives, including but not limited to High School and Beyond Planning, Comprehensive School Counseling Plans, Comprehensive Program Review, School Improvement, Course and Program Enrollment Review, Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, and student belonging.

SCHOOL TEAMS

(Note: schools already addressing equitable postsecondary preparation will likely require less additional capacity to take on this work)

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
Project Lead (CCR Director/Specialist, Counselor, Assistant Principal)	Manage overall project • Participate in and contribute to regional workshops • Access and compile student data • Communicate with staff • Liaise with appropriate school and district staff for data access and analysis • Estimated 30-50 hours per school year
Data Lead (e.g. registrar)	Has access to student-level course-taking data • Manages NSC license, submitting and receiving data files • Basic Excel skills • Estimated 5-10 hours per school year
Principal/ Administrator	Approve the overall project • Dedicates time in 2-3 staff meetings to engage all staff in data analysis, addressing bias, professional learning and co-designing solutions • Communicate with staff •Allocate time for student and staff surveys • Estimated 10-15 hours per school year
Superintendent	Remove barriers for data access • Offer general support for project
District Director of College and Career or other District liaison	Facilitate connections to central office to access data (e.g., connect with student information system data manager) • Bridge communication gaps between high school and central office

CONSOLIDATED TIMELINE

TIMEFRAME	SCHOOL/DISTRICT ACTIVITY *(with coaching and technical assistance from Regional Lead)*
August - December 2023	- Establish school-level project teams - Identify initial school-level student outcome goals and set up root cause analysis (based on ERDC, OSPI, and WSAC dashboards) - Administer H2P student and staff surveys (~ 15 min each, Aug 15-Oct 15, need 70-80% completion) - Set up NSC license, submit Graduates File, receive Student Tracker files - Set up free account in Foyost, upload two student-level data files (from local administrative data and National Student Clearinghouse) - Design, train staff, and implement student and family listening sessions
January - March 2024	- Design, train staff, and implement student and family listening sessions - Review available data (from Foyost and student/staff surveys) with school teams and staff - Address financial aid completion gaps - Revisit and update student outcome goals and root cause analysis based on available data
March - June 2024	- Address financial aid completion gaps - Implement student and family listening sessions - Revisit and update student outcome goals and root cause analysis based on available data - Identify and implement school-level changes - Reflect on 2023-2024 school year, plan for changes in 2024-2025

2024-2025: Exact dates TBD, but likely to follow the same schedule as 2023-2024 through May 2025 with increased focus on implementing and assessing changes in school systems and practices.

For more information, please contact [insert regional lead here] or Tana Peterman at tana@washingtonstem.org