WASHINGTON STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL
EDUCATION · OPPORTUNITY · RESULTS

917 Lakeridge Way SW
Olympia, WA 98504
360-753-7800
wsac.wa.gov

Title			
Challenge area:	☒Student Readiness ☐Affordability ☐Institutional Capacity & Student Success ☐Capturing the Potential of Technology ☐Stable and Accountable Funding	**Staff lead:**	Weiya Liang Vicki Merkel
		Position	Director, GEAR UP Associate Director, SFA
		Email:	weiyal@wsac.wa.gov vickim@wsac.wa.gov
		Phone:	360.753.7884 360.753.7853
Synopsis:	Policy options for Outreach and Support are consequent to the other challenge areas of student readiness, affordability, technology, and developing stable funding. To improve student achievement, Washington must develop a culture that expects and assists the pursuit of postsecondary credentials and helps students through critical academic transition points. The following policy options were developed by the Workgroup for Council consideration: • Ensure all Washingtonians have quality and coordinated information and support to pursue all types of postsecondary credentials. • Target information and support to adults regarding continuing their education, especially those with some postsecondary credits earned. • Increase and support academic advising and mentoring for all students, both secondary and postsecondary. • Support students as they go through critical academic transition points (elementary to middle school, middle school to high school, high school to postsecondary, two- to four-year transfer, and returning adults), using both online resources and personal connections.		
Guiding questions:	What strategies are needed to ensure all students (K-12, postsecondary, and returning adults) have accurate reliable academic counseling and postsecondary advising and resources to persist and attain a postsecondary certificate or degree? Are there existing strategies that are scalable and sustainable? Are there new strategies that should be created?		
Possible council action:	☒Information Only ☐Approve/Adopt ☐Other: _____		
Documents	☒Brief/Report ☐PowerPoint ☐Third-party materials ☐Other		

and attachments:	

Ten-Year Roadmap Policy Options

Challenge Area
Student Readiness: Outreach and Support

Planning Activity

Determine the policy measures and actions needed to address information outreach and student support to advance student readiness for enrollment and success in postsecondary education.

Council Lead Members

Ray Lawton
Scott Brittain
Paul Francis

Council Staff

Weiya Liang (Co-Lead), Director of Washington State GEAR UP
Vicki Merkel (Co-Lead), Associate Director for Student Financial Aid
Marcie Sample, Assistant Director of Washington State GEAR UP
James West, Associate Director for Academic Affairs and Policy

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Executive Summary

The Washington Student Achievement Council has identified student readiness for postsecondary opportunity and success as one of five critical challenge areas to be addressed in the Roadmap. To improve student achievement, Washington must develop a culture that expects and assists the pursuit of postsecondary credentials and helps students through critical academic transition points.

This policy options report is based on the discussions at the Council meeting in July 2013, and it reflects a variety of input from a wide range of stakeholders participating in the Roadmap development workgroup as well as the public.

The workgroup identified the following recommendations for the Council's consideration as it weighs policy options in the broad context of student achievement:

- Ensure all Washingtonians have quality and coordinated information and support to pursue all types of postsecondary credentials.
- Target information and support to adults regarding continuing their education, especially those with some postsecondary credits earned.
- Increase and support academic advising and mentoring for all students, both secondary and postsecondary.
- Support students as they go through critical academic transition points (elementary to middle school, middle school to high school, high school to postsecondary, two- to four-year transfer, and returning adults), using both online resources and personal connections.

This report provides the Council with policy options to consider and prioritize for inclusion in the Roadmap. The Council will discuss this policy options report at its September 2013 meeting.

Context of the Ten-Year Roadmap

Increasing educational attainment is vital to the well-being of Washington residents and to the health of our state's economy. To this end, the Washington Student Achievement Council is working to propose goals and strategies for increasing educational attainment through a ten-year Roadmap and a two-year Strategic Action Plan.

Five Challenge Areas

The Council's Strategic Action Plan, adopted in November 2012, identifies five critical challenge areas to be addressed in the Roadmap. The five challenge areas are:

1. **Student Readiness** (with four planning activities: Early Learning, Outreach and Support, Alignment, Remedial Postsecondary Education).

2. **Affordability.**

3. **Institutional Capacity and Student Success** (with two planning activities: Meeting Increased Demand, Assessment of Student Skills and Knowledge).

4. **Capturing the Potential of Technology.**

5. **Stable and Accountable Funding.**

Workgroups comprised of lead Washington Student Achievement Council Members, Council staff, and external workgroup members were formed to research, discuss, and develop issue briefings and policy recommendations for each of these five critical challenge areas.

The Challenge Areas are complex and interrelated. While the Roadmap will recommend actions for each of the Challenge Areas, these recommendations will be integrated into a cohesive plan.

Challenge Area: Student Readiness – Outreach and Support

This is the second report to the Council in the challenge area of Student Readiness – Outreach and Support. The first report[1] provided an overview of the operational descriptions of outreach and support and examined the best practices as potential options. Both reports serve as resources to Council members in the development of the ten-year Roadmap to raise educational attainment in Washington.

Introduction

Academic preparation, social adaptability, and financial means can be challenges for students who want to pursue postsecondary education options, especially for students from historically underrepresented, first-generation, and low-income families. Providing effective outreach and support programs and services, in both academic and non-academic areas, will remove barriers and ensure students get personalized advice and support in a timely manner.

The Council reviewed an outreach and support issue brief at its July meeting that captured these challenges and described best practices, both nationally and in Washington. The issue brief also offered a description of the terms *outreach* and *support* in the context of the Roadmap readiness work.

This report is based on the analysis, feedback, and understanding of the issue brief, and offers potential policy options for the Council to review and consider during development of the ten-year Roadmap to raise educational attainment in Washington.

Policy Options

The following policy options capture three broad themes that emerged from the issue briefing, workgroup input, and discussions at the July 2013 Council meeting:

1. Outreach and support are most effective when they create a culture that supports multiple postsecondary credential options for young students and adults.

2. Outreach and support should concentrate on critical academic transition points in the education pipeline.

3. Outreach and support resources must be available both through online and social media platforms and through in-person interaction and connections.

The following policy options have been developed to reflect the results of the workgroup discussions, the review of the literature and best practices, and the analysis of existing data and research. These policy recommendations align with issues identified in the student readiness challenge area and are intended to increase Washington's college enrollment, persistence, and completion rates.

1. **Ensure all Washingtonians have quality and coordinated information and support to pursue all types of postsecondary credentials.**

   Washington must support a culture that expects and assists the pursuit of postsecondary credentials. In order to meet the state's economic development needs, community- and school-based partnerships must be leveraged to support students pursuing postsecondary education options. Providing ample academic, social, and financial aid information will ensure people are better prepared for, and more successful in, postsecondary education.

Examples of Strategies:

- Marketing all postsecondary awareness and access programs under an identifiable umbrella name to consolidate resources for school staff, community partners, and the public.
- Supporting critical early college awareness and support activities such as tutoring, mentoring, academic preparation, parental education, and financial education for all K-12 students, regardless of income.
- Administering statewide campaign efforts to help students complete applications to college, submit the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), and apply for scholarships.
- Engaging K-12, postsecondary, and nonprofit partners to create and sustain this culture change.

A large amount of information on college access, preparation, and success is available, especially online; however, it can be difficult to assess which of these many resources are accurate and trustworthy. People who are least familiar with postsecondary options—including historically underrepresented, first-generation, and low-income students and their families—struggle the most to access timely, relevant, and accurate information.

Examples of Strategies:

- Increasing system-wide coordination to offer accurate and comprehensive information for postsecondary options and career preparation.
- Working with partners to ensure that existing online and social media platforms are readily identifiable to intended target populations and easily navigated by the public, educators, and partners.
- Coordinating online resources such as those provided by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board and Washington community and technical colleges, and working with partner organizations and educational entities.
- Creating multiple venues to provide early postsecondary information, options, and exposure to younger students, starting no later than fifth grade.

Outcomes:

- Increase use of existing postsecondary information systems to raise postsecondary participation rates.
- More elementary students and families will have age-appropriate postsecondary information.
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2. **Target information and support to adults regarding continuing their education, especially those with some postsecondary credits earned.**

   The state has over 440,000 adults with some postsecondary education but without a degree or certificate of completion. These adults need individualized services such as one-on-one advising, transcript review, and financial aid and application information.

Examples of Strategies:

- Contacting these adults through tailored marketing campaigns.
- Creating system-wide outreach programs to encourage degree completion.
- Coordinating online resources such as those provided by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board and Washington community and technical colleges.
- Identifying innovative, replicable resources and programs that offer individual advising aimed at efficient degree completion.

Outcome:

- Increase the certificate and degree attainment for over 440,000 adults who have earned some credits and no credential.

3. **Increase and support academic advising and mentoring for all students, both secondary and postsecondary.**

   Schools must mitigate the problem of staff shortage in order to effectively provide high quality academic counseling and postsecondary advising to all K-12 students. Through the use of mentors, K-12 and postsecondary schools can extend and enhance the work of advising and counseling staff to ensure that student and family needs are met. Advisors and other key staff must have access to ongoing professional development to stay current on trends, available resources, and information on college admissions requirements, financial aid processes, and the expectations of postsecondary institutions.

   Examples of Strategies

   - Coordinating with other experts to provide quality, consistent, and accurate information through in-person and online training in key advising areas.
   - Providing an inventory of proven mentoring and advising programs and technical assistance to implement the program that is the "best fit" for a particular school, taking into consideration the students' needs and specific criteria such as geography and community resources. Examples of mentors for both secondary and postsecondary students include:
     - Current college students who mentor and advise target students or groups, such as correctional facility residents or underrepresented students.
     - Staff who provide advising during scheduled class periods.
     - Community volunteers assigned to work one-on-one or with small groups of students.
     - Federal AmeriCorps volunteer mentors who commit to a term of service to serve in a specific school.
     - Adult mentors whose experience reflects that of the student (single-parent, dislocated worker, low-income, first generation, etc.)

   Outcomes:
   - Extend and enhance the capacity of K-12 counseling and advising staff.
   - Increase postsecondary retention rates through expanded mentoring and advising programs.

4. **Support students as they go through critical academic transition points (elementary to middle school, middle school to high school, high school to postsecondary, two- to four-year transfer, and returning adults).**

   Transition points are the weakest links in our education system and the time that students are at the highest risk of dropping out. Focusing on those transition points through school- and community-based programs that provide information and direct services to students ensures that they have the necessary skills, resources, and support to successfully transition.

   Examples of Strategies:
   - Convening partners to identify and replicate successful strategies currently used to facilitate key transitions such as middle to high school, high school to postsecondary, two- to four-year transfer, and returning adults. Examples of programs that assist students through transitions include:
     - Providing campus visits for middle school students to encourage them to recognize the possibility that they can continue their education beyond secondary school.
     - Summer bridge programs introducing incoming first-year postsecondary students to the campus and student services.
     - Professional transfer advisors and coordinators from community and technical colleges and baccalaureate institutions supporting community college transfer students through quarterly transfer fairs on campuses.
     - Campuses designating a support staff person to assist underrepresented students on campus, such as former foster youth and first generation students.

   Outcomes:
   - Improve high school graduation rates, especially for underrepresented populations.
   - Increase postsecondary participation rates, especially for underrepresented populations.
   - Increase the number transfer students who attain a baccalaureate degree.
   - Increase certificate and degree attainment for returning adults.

Next Steps

Following the Council's discussion of the above policy options at its September 2013 meeting, Council staff will prepare a framework for Roadmap recommendations for this planning area. The framework for Roadmap recommendations will include specific strategic actions, addressing the following factors for each:

1. Expected outcome of the action.
2. Action time period.
3. Outcome time period.
4. Metrics for measuring outcomes.
5. Legislative action needed.
6. Fiscal impact.

Staff will develop the framework in close consultation with Council members and the Outreach and Support workgroup. The Council will use this framework to help shape the ten-year Roadmap.

Author Contact Information

Weiya Liang
Director of Washington State GEAR UP
Washington Student Achievement Council
weiyal@wsac.wa.gov
360.753.7884

Vicki Merkel
Associate Director, Student Financial Assistance
Washington Student Achievement Council
vickim@wsac.wa.gov
360.753.7853

Acknowledgements

Sources

[1] Posted on the Washington Student Achievement Council website: http://www.wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Council-Outreach_Support-IssueBriefing.pdf