



COUNCIL CONVERSATIONS

WASHINGTON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

MAY 2017 EDITION

FOSTER YOUTH PLAN FOR COLLEGE AT MAKE IT HAPPEN!

Registration is now open for the 2017 [Make It Happen!](#) event, hosted by the College Success Foundation. *Make It Happen!* is a free, three-day, two-night college campus experience for youth in and alumni of the Washington State foster care system.

Make it Happen! includes workshops on applying to college, getting financial aid, and accessing support programs for alumni of foster care. Counselors, staff, volunteers, and speakers—many of whom were in foster care themselves—support attendees in setting goals and planning for higher education.

Make It Happen! 2017 will take place June 27-29 at the University of Puget Sound. Registration closes May 19. Visit the [College Success Foudation's website](#) for more information.

GEOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES, VARYING NEEDS SHOULD INFORM COUNCIL WORK

By Jessica Murillo-Rosales, Student Member of the Washington Student Achievement Council

It's been eight months since Governor Inslee appointed me to the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC). In that time, I have spoken at events such as the Pave the Way conference and GEAR UP professional development meeting, attended meetings of the Washington Student Association (WSA) and State Board of Education, and served as a member of the diversity committee of WSA's Student of Color summit. In each of these roles, I have had the opportunity to tell a bit of my life story and emphasize the issues faced by first-generation and low-income college students—barriers not only to enrolling in postsecondary education, but also to continuing along the path to earning a degree.

WSAC is working hard to increase funding for the State Need Grant, expand access to dual-credit programs, and provide information and resources for nontraditional and returning adult students. To be effective, the Council must hear and be responsive to a variety of viewpoints. For instance, resources in K-12 schools differ in locations across the state. Higher education issues are also different among four-year, two-year, and technical institutions, and between Western and Eastern Washington. We must continue to visit and meet in these locations, since not everyone has equal access to Olympia.

Since the start of my term, I have seen the actions the Council is taking to ensure that they are thinking of student success. There have been many discussions around policies and opportunities for improvement, and I am confident that progress is possible. I will continue to do my part to bring attention to student life and student perspectives.

2017-18 REGISTRATION OPEN FOR SCHOOLS TO JOIN 12TH YEAR CAMPAIGN

Applying to college can be complicated, especially for students who also need financial aid. High schools can help their students navigate application processes by signing up to be a 12th Year Campaign site.

The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) administers the 12th Year Campaign, which aims to boost college and financial aid application rates in Washington. Through the campaign, WSAC provides free resources and support to counselors, high school seniors, and parents to assist with application processes. The campaign combines two initiatives: the American College Application Campaign and College Goal Washington.

Schools that participate in the College Application Campaign hold in-school activities focused on college preparation, application processes, and career exploration. Schools that host College Goal Washington events help students and families complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), a form that is required to apply for federal financial aid. College Goal Washington sites also provide assistance with the WASFA (Washington Application for State Financial Aid).

As of May 2017, 12th Year Campaign sites had helped 13,375 seniors successfully complete this year's FAFSA. High schools that hosted events this year had an eight percent higher FAFSA completion rate than high schools that did not participate.

WSAC is currently accepting site registrations for the 2017-18 campaign. For more information about the 12th Year Campaign, or to sign up as a site, visit [Ready, Set, Grad](#).

NEWS FROM OLYMPIA: SOME WINS FOR EDUCATION; NO BUDGET YET

The regular 2017 Legislative Session ended on Sunday, April 23. Governor Inslee immediately called a Special Session, as the House and Senate have not yet agreed on a budget.

The House budget proposal includes additional funding for the State Need Grant (SNG), a WSAC legislative priority. The funding would serve approximately 6,000 additional students who are currently eligible but unserved. The Senate budget proposal includes funding to maintain current SNG service levels.

WSAC supported a number of bills that passed during the 2017 session:

- [SHB 1129](#) expands educational opportunities for incarcerated adults.
- [SSB 5022](#) and [SSB 5100](#) provide information to students about education loans and financial literacy seminars.
- [E2SHB 1375](#) provides students at community and technical colleges with the costs of required course materials.
- [E2SHB 1561](#) expands the use of open educational resources.
- [2SSSB 5107](#) creates a local pathway for local governments, school districts, and nonprofit organizations to provide more high-quality early-learning opportunities by reducing barriers and increasing efficiency.
- [SSB 5241](#) relates to the educational success of youth in foster care.
- [SSB 5778](#) modifies the definition of resident student to comply with federal requirements established in the Veterans Choice Act.

Please visit the [WSAC legislative web page](#) for our latest bill tracker, presentations to legislative committees, and a budget comparison.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS TO FOCUS ON EQUITY, EXCELLENCE

By Bill Keim, Executive Director of the Washington Association of School Administrators

The [Washington Association of School Administrators](#) (WASA) was chartered as a not-for-profit corporation in June 1972. In the 2016-17 school year, the association reached a record high of 1,146 active members. Membership is open to all educational administrators in central office, building management, and educational agency positions.

One of WASA's strengths is the grassroots nature of the organization, which flows from eleven WASA regions. Each of those regions has its own leadership team with representation on the state WASA Board of Directors. These regional organizations function in conjunction with each of the state's nine Educational Service Districts. The broad-based structure of the association helps keep WASA's leadership apprised of emerging issues and concerns of our members much more quickly than would be the case without that foundation.

Each year the WASA Board and representatives from the regional organizations come together for the WASA Leaders Workshop to review the past year's progress and set the focus for the coming year. At this year's meeting on April 18, the group identified the following goals:

Goal I—LEADERSHIP

Cultivate transformative, equity-driven leaders to ensure each student in every school and community is college, career, and life-ready.

Goal II—TRUST

Develop and sustain trust to further the cause of equity and excellence in public education.

Goal III—ADVOCACY

Champion the fundamental role of public education in an inclusive democracy.

While the results of the workshop won't be finalized until our June Board meeting, we are excited about the heightened emphasis on increasing equity and closing the opportunity gap. WASA will develop action plans during the summer to help its members pursue the goals in the coming year. For more information about WASA, or to learn about membership, please visit the [WASA website](#).

SAVE THE DATE FOR PAVE THE WAY 2017

Save the date! This year's Pave the Way conference will take place October 19 at Central Washington University in Ellensburg. The annual Pave the Way conference focuses on strategies to advance equity, increase college readiness, and broaden access to higher education in Washington State. Pave the Way aims to ensure students receive the support they need to succeed, regardless of income, race, geography, or other potential barriers. The conference brings together educators, policymakers, and community partners from across the education system, from preschool through college. It features interactive group sessions and offers workshops focused on policy and practice in college and career readiness, culturally responsive teaching and learning, student transitions, collective impact, and more.