



WSPTA's vision is that every child's potential become a reality, but we acknowledge that students of color, with socioeconomic disadvantages, or with disabilities have faced systemic inequities, institutionalized racism, and disparate educational opportunities¹. Left unaddressed, this opportunity gap has led to unacceptable gaps in outcomes for these students.

Background

- In Washington state, the persistent, systemic opportunity gap has manifested as growing outcome gaps in state² and national assessments³, and disproportionalities in the rates of 9th grade course failure⁴, enrollment in rigorous high school courses^{5,6}, high school graduation⁷, college enrollment⁸, and college course remediation⁹.
- Closing these opportunity gaps and lowering barriers to achievement would result in substantial economic gains, generating benefits that are three times their costs¹⁰:
 - ◊ The share of working-age men of color who have a bachelor's degree would double;
 - ◊ Men of color would earn as much as \$170 billion more annually;
 - ◊ Average weekly earnings among U.S. workers overall would increase by 3.6 percent;
 - ◊ Total gross domestic product (GDP) would increase by 1.8 percent.
- The Washington state legislature acknowledged the Educational Opportunity Gap during the 2008 redefinition of basic education, and authorized a workgroup, the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC) to collect data and make recommendations for closing the opportunity gap¹¹. These recommendations were passed into law (4SHB 1541) in 2016¹².

Proposed Solutions

Provide teacher training and student supports that include effective solutions to close the educational opportunity gap by:

- Completing the implementation of the recommendations of the EOGOAC¹, and
- Implementing the provisions of 4SHB 1541 to close the educational opportunity gap:
 - ◊ Reduce the length of time students of color are excluded from school due to suspension and expulsion and provide students support for reengagement plans;
 - ◊ Enhance the cultural competence of current and future educators and classified staff;
 - ◊ Endorse all educators in English language learner and second language acquisition;
 - ◊ Account for the transitional bilingual instruction program instructional services provided to English language learner students*;
 - ◊ Analyze the opportunity gap deeper disaggregation of student demographic data*;
 - ◊ Invest in the recruitment, hiring, and retention of educators of color;
 - ◊ Incorporate integrated student services and family engagement*; and
 - ◊ Strengthen student transitions at each stage of the education development pathway: Early learning to elementary, elementary to secondary, secondary to college and career.

**designates implementation subject to funding*

Several of WSPTA's other 2018 Legislative Priorities, including Social Emotional Learning, Ample Fund Basic Education, Addressing the Teacher Shortage, Engaging Families in Student Success, and Restorative Justice and School Safety are foundational to closing educational opportunity gaps in Washington state.

For More Information

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Citations

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4. 9th Grade Failure Rate Data. <http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/PerformanceIndicators/9thGrade.aspx>
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8. College Enrollment Trend Data. <http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/PerformanceIndicators/PostsecondaryEnrollment.aspx>
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11. Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee. <http://www.k12.wa.us/Workgroups/EOGOAC.aspx>
12. 4SHB 1541 (2016). <http://lawfilesexternal.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2015-16/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1541-S4.SL.pdf>

**For more information on the WSPTA advocacy program, please visit our website (www.wastatepta.org)*