A NOTE FROM THE TEAM

The group of students sitting in dual credit classrooms across Washington is on track to become a far a more inclusive and representative cohort, thanks to the legislative efforts of Stand for Children Washington and our partners in 2019.

We continue to be driven by our mission to ensure that every child in our state graduates with a high quality and relevant education and unwavering in our commitment to racial justice and equitable education policy. Our advocacy strategy to secure funding for policies grounded in research and real-world implementation has resulted in significant progress for students. In 2019 it meant the culmination of a six-year effort to implement a statewide Academic Acceleration policy that reduces systemic barriers to advanced classes for historically underrepresented students, making Washington the first in the nation to pass such a law.

Our partnership with six other aligned education organizations to form the High School Success Coalition in 2019 also paved the way to secure funding for a pilot group of districts to implement a data-based, team-oriented student support model known as the Ninth Grade Success Approach, which has been proven to increase graduation rates.

We plan to continue this progress in the 2020 legislative session by elevating the stories of students of color, students experiencing poverty, and students with disabilities who have been consistently overlooked and underserved in Washington classrooms. Our organizers on the ground are assembling teams of dedicated and passionate education advocates who will be speaking out and standing up for students in Olympia and in their home districts. I look forward to sharing our wins for students with you again this time next year. Until then, I hope you’ll take a moment to read more about our 2019 achievements in the following pages.

Thank you for standing with us and standing up for students.

Sincerely,

Libuse Binder & the Stand for Children Washington team

MEET THE TEAM

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In Washington, our public education system is doing a decent job of serving students whose first language is English without disabilities who have sufficient family income and stable housing. But for students whose families are working hard but are not wealthy, who may or may not have disabilities, who speak a language other than English at home or who may not have a home at all, we have a long way to go.

As a community we have failed to support students of color who are historically underserved, especially students who are American Indian and Alaska Native, Latinx, and Black. In Seattle, Black students in middle school test three and a half grade levels behind white students.¹ This gap continues through high school and is evidenced in our graduation rates.²

Graduating from high school is about more than getting a job. It is the major milestone towards becoming a member of our community. Although it can seem unjust and unfair, the reality is that graduating from high school is a prerequisite for ensuring basic quality of life in our current economy.

Our team at Stand for Children Washington considers systemic, inequitable outcomes to be unacceptable. That’s why our mission is focused on ensuring all students receive a high quality, relevant education, especially recognizing those whose boundless potential is overlooked and under-tapped because of their skin color, zip code, first language, or disability.

¹ https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/data/seattle-schools-have-biggest-white-black-achievement-gap-in-state/
² https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/
ACADEMIC ACCELERATION: REDUCING HISTORIC BARRIERS TO ADVANCED CLASSES FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR

For the past 6 years, Stand for Children Washington has played a key role in the statewide implementation of an approach to reduce barriers to dual credit and advanced placement classes for underrepresented students.

Known as Academic Acceleration, students are automatically enrolled in the advanced math, English, and science classes that they’re qualified for. Not only does this diminish enrollment disparities for historically underserved students of color and/or who are experiencing poverty, it reduces financial barriers for those pursuing post-secondary opportunities.

The automatic opt-in enrollment of Academic Acceleration is particularly critical because inequitable enrollment procedures and gatekeeping currently cause many students to miss out on the opportunity to take advanced coursework and earn college credit. Automatic enrollment changes the system that has excluded too many students for far too long.

In May of 2019, Stand for Children led a coalition of partners in the passage of HB1599, an historic bill that requires all school districts in the state to establish an Academic Acceleration policy. Washington is the first state in the country to pass this type of policy statewide.

Federal Way Public Schools pioneered the policy in 2011 and saw a 70% increase in enrollment, and for the first time the district’s diverse student populations was reflected within their advanced classes.¹

¹ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/advanced-students-federal-way_n_869487
Tacoma Public Schools - the state's fourth largest district - followed Federal Way's lead in 2014-15 and has similarly seen dramatic increases in enrollment across a diversity of students. Enrollment in advanced classes has doubled from 27.5% to 71.1% for all students since 2013 and tripled for students of color from 19.5% to 60%.

“We’ve seen huge results in Tacoma with more kids taking these classes and these exams. And that corresponds with more kids graduating. And as those numbers go up, we have to remember that each one of those numbers is a kid.”

- Josh Garcia, Deputy Superintendent of Tacoma Public Schools and one of the original architects of the policy in Federal Way

Celina is the daughter of immigrants who was reluctant to take AP classes but was automatically enrolled thanks to Tacoma’s Academic Acceleration policy. She graduated with plans to attend the University of Washington - Tacoma and major in BioMed.

“I’ve been in AP classes all four years. I’m in them because I like challenging myself. In AP, I’m exposed to college-level learning. My teachers have high expectations.”

Celina | Senior at Lincoln High School | Tacoma, WA

**SCALING A WASHINGTON SOLUTION NATIONWIDE**

In August 2019, our successful advocacy was recognized by the Policy Innovators in Education Network as a “Game Changer of the Year.” Buoyed by the interest from education advocacy organizations around the country in how we did it, we put together an Academic Acceleration Resource Guide available online at [bit.ly/standresourceguide](http://bit.ly/standresourceguide).
THE NINTH GRADE SUCCESS APPROACH: SUPPORTING STUDENTS EARLY

The research is clear: students who are on-track to graduate after 9th grade by passing all of their classes freshman year are four times more likely to graduate than their off-track peers.¹ Rooted in this research, the Ninth Grade Success Approach is a strategy for educators to identify those students who are at risk of being off-track as soon as possible.

In 2019, Stand Washington successfully advocated for a $250,000 pilot program to implement the Ninth Grade Success Approach in five Washington school districts.

What’s more, in an effort to expand and support this program implementation statewide, we launched the Center for High School Success (CHSS) this past August. The Center uses relevant, real time data to help educators identify students who need support and provides teachers with the research, best-practices, and tools to help those students to get back on track.

We have hired two full time continuous improvement coaches and are currently working with 10 school districts across the state, with plans to expand our network in 2020-21.

2019-2020 PARTNER DISTRICTS

¹ https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/preventable-failure-improvements-long-term-outcomes-when-high-schools-focused-ninth
The parents and families we partner with played a key role in championing Academic Acceleration and the Ninth Grade Success Initiatives at the state level. In 2019, Stand Washington continued to partner with families and caregivers to support their children’s academic journey, become strong education advocates, and hold lawmakers accountable.

Earlier this year, we also launched the Stand Fellows program with three dedicated volunteers in Spokane. Through an intensive year-long engagement/commitment, Stand Fellows partner with other community members to harness the power of their collective voices and effect change within state and local systems.

“Students have to experience success as a freshman in order for them to be passionate and have a vision for their future to graduate.”

- Jinger Haberer, Superintendent, Ellensburg School District, CHSS participant

“Stand helps to create that bridge that we have needed for decades in the public school system.”

- Kevin Dwight, Science Teacher, Ellensburg High School, CHSS participant

“The Center for High School Success brings a new model for leveraging data and classroom experience to align our investments with each school’s resources to help every student graduate high school.”

- Washington State Representative Eric Pettigrew

ELEVATING THE VOICES OF WASHINGTON FAMILIES
In 2020, we’re heading back to Olympia to stand up for policy and programs that will benefit Washington students. For our team at Stand for Children Washington, we are looking forward to the opportunity to work closely with parents, families, educators, lawmakers, and advocates in support of a more equitable education system.

If you can see yourself fighting for a system that is stronger and better for every kid, please consider a donation that supports our work at stand.org/washington.

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