2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

PRIORITIZE RACIAL EQUITY

Stand for Children’s goal in 2021 is to advocate for policies that target support to Black and Brown students who have been historically marginalized by our education system. We believe that an equitable education system can only exist when we are actively dismantling systemic racism.

USE PROVEN SOLUTIONS

We must implement policies that are already working in schools and communities to help more students graduate on time, ready for college and career, including:

- targeted mental health and academic support
- equitable access to coursework and technology
- reforms to the criminal and youth justice systems

In 2021 we are advocating for the Washington legislature to directly support historically marginalized students through policies that:

1. Protect investments that center students furthest from justice.
2. Expand student access to counseling services.
3. Enact meaningful criminal justice reform.
4. Establish equitable access to digital learning.

Kylee and Zyaira from Spokane at the State Capitol, Jan. 2020
We must protect investments that are already working and have a direct and immediate impact on student success, including funding that will:

• improve **racial equity within dual credit course enrollment** and cover the costs for students who need financial support
• continue successful **Ninth Grade Success** Team strategies that support on-time graduation

**DUAL CREDIT EQUITY**

“The gaps in equitable access to dual credit courses are persistent in Washington state, and our **schools are working to close them**. The Academic Acceleration policy that Stand for Children worked to pass in 2019 is a critical tool to eliminate barriers for students, and the 'Building Equitable, Sustainable Dual Credit' grant program will help districts implement that new policy well.”

- Katherine Mahoney, Assistant Director for Policy, OSPI Office of System and School Improvement, August 2020

Low-income students are participating in dual credit (non CTE) at almost **half the rate** of their non low-income peers. - OSPI 2019.

**NINTH GRADE SUCCESS TEAMS**

In partnership with OSPI and in support of 2019 pilot funding from the legislature, experienced Washington educators from the nonprofit Center for High School Success at Stand for Children provided hundreds of hours of coaching at no charge to 35 Ninth Grade Success teams across Washington. In a survey about the 2019-20 Ninth Grade On-Track pilot program passed by the 2019 legislature, **96% of educators said they would continue the pilot if given the opportunity**.

“**The Ninth Grade Success Team work is invaluable and has set the stage for how we do business with data at our high school.”**

- Educator response from the OSPI survey, Fall 2020

Students are **4x more likely** to **graduate** if they’re **on track** by the end of 9th grade.

Picture at left: Ninth Grade Success Team Leads Tricia and Andre at the Center for High School Success 2-day Collaborative, August 2019
Through SB 5030, protect counselors’ time with students by using state and nationally recognized frameworks to:

- **create a statutory definition** of comprehensive school counseling services that includes support for academic achievement, mental health needs, and college and career planning
- **require that counselors spend at least eighty percent (80%)** of their work time providing direct services to students

**TARGETED MENTAL HEALTH AND ACADEMIC SUPPORTS**

Most school counselors have caseloads almost **double** the size of the recommended 250 students, and in this time of crisis, highly-trained staff are urgently needed in schools.

**ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS**

Students and families of color, students who are the first in their family to attend college, and students learning English are **more likely** to rely on their school counselor for support and guidance for their next steps after high school and **less likely** to have access to one.

**DIRECT IMPACT WITH BIPARTISAN SUPPORT**

The Senate passed this legislation as SB 6480 in 2020 with a bipartisan 43-3 vote, but did not receive a hearing in the House. It has been supported by:

* Data from WSCA’s first-of-its-kind statewide survey of 329 school counselors, March 2019

CAN YOU ATTEND TO THE MENTAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS FOR YOUR STUDENTS?

- [ ] NO
- [X] YES

83.9%

Picture at left: WA School Counselor Association President Jenny Morgan testifying in support of protecting counselor time, Feb. 2020
Washington can support families by removing barrier that inhibit full participation in the workforce and society:

- reform of policies surrounding fees and drivers license suspensions for low-level offenses
- reforms that reduce errors in sentencing and expunge records for certain convictions
- reform the police officer decertification program to ensure appropriate accountability of officers and civilian oversight

Too often, bureaucratic roadblocks and inhumane policies within the criminal justice system hinder the abilities of parents and young people to meet basic needs, let alone their educational goals.

Legal debt obligations severely reduce family members' ability to support loved ones, including:

- reduction in family income
- limited access to housing or credit
- hindrance to educational opportunities


“Driver’s licenses are necessary for employment, healthcare, and other critical needs and they should not be suspended merely due to unpaid court fines and fees or failure to appear in a case involving only fines and fees.”

- Justice Action Network

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the stark digital divide that disproportionately affects students of color, as well as students in rural areas, experiencing poverty or foster care. Reliable internet access is fundamental to full participation in 21st century society.

We are supporting efforts to ensure every student has:

- broadband access
- an internet-capable device for learning
- technical support

Picture at left: Kiki and Kai pose for a photo from their computers while attending remote school in Spokane, May 2020
TAKE ACTION NOW

To ensure students recover and thrive beyond the disruption of COVID-19 we must:

- ensure every student has access to targeted mental health and academic support
- create equitable access to coursework and technology
- establish reforms to the criminal and youth justice systems

SIGN UP
Schedule a meeting with your legislators

SHARE
Record a video telling your story

WRITE
Send your opinion to the local newspaper

LEARN
Attend an advocacy event with a Stand Organizer

Reach out and learn more about how to advocate.
Text, email, or call: Darcelina Soloria | 509-701-4581 | dsoloria@stand.org