

FY 2024

ANNUAL REPORT

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A NOTE FROM THE TEAM



Washington Affiliate Team Ciarra Crowe, Kia Franklin, Liz Trautman, and Carolina Fuentes at Summer Solstice Soiree Fundraiser June 2024



Dear Stand Community,

It has been a year of challenges, achievements, change, and valuable lessons learned in our work to advance education equity and racial justice in Washington State, and this 2023-2024 Annual Report reflects just some of the insights we carry with us into the year ahead.

2023 and 2024 were marked by a great deal of uncertainty and change. School districts across the state faced daunting budget deficits, and continue to do so, with the statewide budget outlook providing no added optimism. There have been marked shifts for the worse in the tone and tenor of public dialogue about young people and juvenile policy, making our ongoing efforts for a more just and equitable legal system an uphill, but necessary, battle.

All of these conditions, against a backdrop of an election year and global unrest, have made every achievement of the past year even more worthy of celebration. In 2024 we reached a critical milestone in our multi-year efforts to secure sustainable state funding for the Center for High School Success' Ninth Grade Success Initiative, successfully advocating for a \$3 million allocation that ensures that 60 ninth grade success teams across the state will operate in the 2024-2025 school year. We also passed a bill eliminating \$43 million in obsolete juvenile court debt, bringing us one step closer to a debt-free youth justice system that provides meaningful second chances for young people. And we provided cutting edge research, best practices resources, and peer learning spaces to educators across the state who are committed to affording all students equitable access to the challenging courses they deserve.

It has been an impactful year! What has kept us going, and what keeps us going, is our community. As we work with powerful student-, educator- and parent-advocates who generously lend their voice to our efforts, organizational partners who offer their research and policy expertise, and passionate policymakers who embrace constituent voices, we are reminded that there is an abundance of opportunity for transformative change.

We look ahead to the coming program year with focus, enthusiasm, and a continued commitment to uplifting and honoring the voices of our community, particularly young people, educators, and families.

Thank you for your partnership!

Kia, Carolina, Liz, and Ciarra
The Stand for Children WA Team

OUR IMPACT

PARTNER WITH STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO LISTEN & ADVOCATE

Youth, young adults, educators, parents, and other community members who are deeply invested in building affirming and effective educational and youth-serving systems are essential partners who enrich our work in innumerable ways. We believe that by blending community insights with robust data and effective advocacy we can drive meaningful change and hold systems accountable. Every year we work to deepen and strengthen our commitment to this approach. This year the power of the voices and visions of young people could be seen and felt throughout our policy design and advocacy processes. Here are just a few highlights:



OCT 2023

Our Annual Community Town Hall featured leaders from the Parent Ambassadors program, the Center for High School Success, NAACP Youth, and the Legislative Youth Advisory Council. These phenomenal speakers—particularly the two high school students who spoke—set the tone for a bold and community-informed program year, and helped us build a shared commitment to making a difference for the entire Stand community.



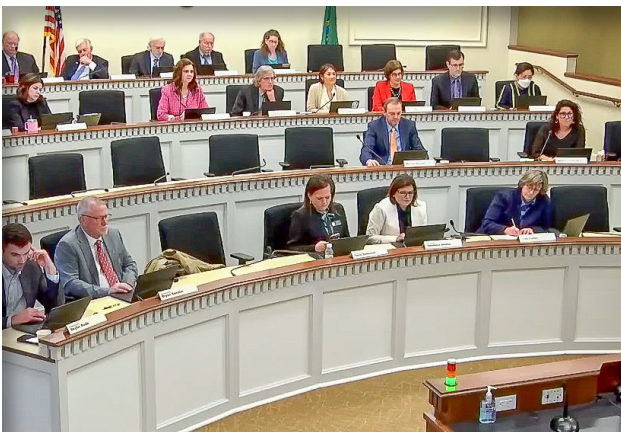
DEC 2023

We hosted youth advocacy trainings and worked with a youth justice policy consultant, a young adult with personal lived experience of the juvenile legal system, to organize and connect directly with participants in these trainings.



JAN 2024

From January through March 2024, we organized legislative hearing testimony not just on Stand's signature bills, but on the broader set of policy proposals that Stand and our organizational and community partners were working on (See our [advocacy section](#) for more!).



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House Appropriations

January 17, 2024, 4:00 pm - House Hearing Rm A and Virtual

Student advocate testifying virtually in January 2024 in front of House Appropriations Committee



"The work I did for Stand for Children gave me hope for the future, as I saw first-hand meaningful progress over the years and the resulting positive impacts in our communities. It demonstrated our society's actionable commitment to equity and justice while helping everyone pursue a better future as contributing members of society."

~ Jordan Park, Stand for Children WA Student Fellow



MAY 2024

We featured college students, educators, and policy experts in our second Academic Acceleration educator convening, focused on the critical importance of robust community engagement strategies in providing equitable access to challenging courses.



MAY 2024

We worked with the EdTrust, WA STEM, and Tacoma Career and Technical Education Director Adam Kulaas, to host a community discussion about CTE Dual Credit and the outcomes from that discussion are informing our 2025 policy proposal.



JUNE 2024

We gathered with community members to celebrate the impact of our work and envision our advocacy priorities for 2024-25. This laid a strong foundation for the development of our 2025 strategy.



AUG 2024

We worked with partners to host media trainings for over 80 young people, engaging in deeply meaningful discussions with participants about restorative justice, educational equity, and civic engagement, inspiring many participants to write Op-Eds and otherwise amplify their voices in the year to come.



Stand's Liz Trautman talking about Stand, education, and youth justice goals



WA Team attending the Graduate Tacoma Conference



WA Team with Senator T'wina Nobles

THE NINTH GRADE SUCCESS INITIATIVE

Stand for Children Washington has emphasized and advocated for the Ninth Grade Success Initiative since 2019, when the state legislature funded the program’s five-school pilot. A partnership between the Center for High School Success (CHSS) and the state’s Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the Ninth Grade Success Initiative helps schools implement proven systems and strategies to reduce disparities and boost state 9th Grade On-Track rates (the rates at which students are on-track for on-time graduation as of the end of their ninth grade year). Because of the importance of ninth grade, this work is one of the most significant and impactful ways we can increase graduation rates and close opportunity gaps.



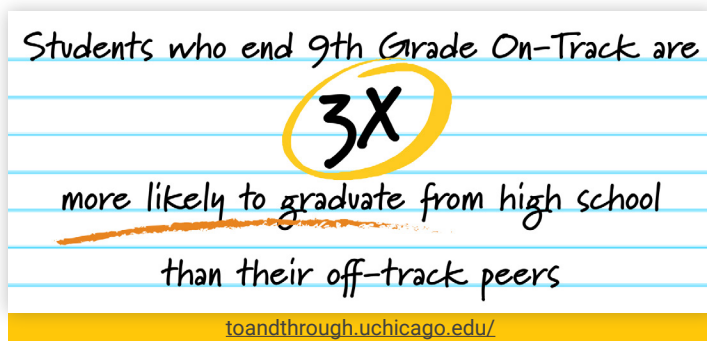
Ninth Grade Success team members planning together.

and OSPI had been sustaining the program with federal pandemic funding that was set to expire in September 2024.

Stand for Children WA and the Center for High School Success mobilized and amplified the voices of educators, students, school and district administrators, and CHSS coaches. These advocates spoke with lawmakers about the research basis of this approach, the tremendous gains seen in schools as a result of the initiative, and the critical need to keep the program in operation statewide.

As a result of this collective effort, **lawmakers included \$3 million in the 2025 state supplemental budget for this powerful work.** Achieving this legislative win after three years of hard-fought advocacy was both a triumph and a testament to our community’s resilience and persistence. Each prior setback came with hard lessons, sharper insights, and strategies refined through experience. This success in 2024 didn’t just happen; it was built on the relentless dedication that emerged from every previous effort.

Looking ahead, Stand WA will continue to advocate for targeted investments in the supports students need to stay engaged and on-track for on-time graduation. Stable, sustainable state funding for this initiative is critical to driving academic performance, increasing high school graduation rates and facilitating post-secondary success for students statewide.



Schools in Washington that participate in the CHSS Ninth Grade Success Initiative have a 79.3% on-track rate—higher than the state average, and nearly 7% higher than comparison schools, based on a formal research study by external evaluators. OSPI spotlighted new data and reflections on the program, as well as featured a Vancouver team’s success on their blog (see [here](#) and [here](#)).

CHSS has expanded since the 2019 pilot, now offering coaching and evidence-based strategies to educators in 61 schools across 40 districts statewide.

But in 2024, this important work was at risk of discontinuation. The program had not received a state budget allocation since the 2019 pilot funding,

"My practice has become more transformative. Working with this team has allowed a space for me to share ideas that I have been trying in the classroom and to receive feedback, but also it is a place where I can hear what others are doing and try to implement some of their success in my classroom."

~ Ryan Killian, World History Teacher

<https://www.meridian.wednet.edu/news/2023/11/02/9th-grade-success-team-proves-its-name/>

"When they leave ninth grade successful, they're probably going to see success throughout high school."

~ Jeanne Willard, Everett Public Schools

<https://www.heraldnet.com/news/funding-at-risk-for-program-that-keeps-everett-ninth-graders-on-track/>

"The goal is to make the student feel seen and not fall through the cracks, and to make sure they know we are supporting them and that we care."

~ Nicole Medcalf, Math Teacher

<https://www.cascadiadaily.com/2024/mar/05/lynden-high-school-sees-double-digit-jump-in-freshmen-passing-classes/>

"The collaboration between Stand for Children and the Center for High School Success is an accelerant in the work to improve high school education in our state. Stand for Children works to ensure that our lawmakers understand 9th Grade Success and this allows the work to continue and grow, which directly increases the number of students ready to access post-secondary opportunities. We need lawmakers who understand the complexities of our education system, especially at the high school level, and Stand for Children is making sure that happens. They are paving the way for the Center for High School Success to do what we do best, which is create conditions for 9th graders (and their teachers) to thrive!"

~ Melissa Rysemus, Ninth Grade Success Coach

ACADEMIC ACCELERATION



A group of students from Spokane meet with former Representative Bob McCaslin.

For over a decade Stand for Children WA has been a proud champion of increasing equitable access to dual credit, which sets students on a path for success beyond high school. A core lever in advancing equitable access to dual credit courses is the academic acceleration policy, which is designed to mitigate the impacts of human bias and gatekeeping by empowering students with more direct and automatic access to rigorous coursework. After working from 2011 to 2013 to highlight, scale, and incentivize some of the earliest district-level academic acceleration policies, Stand then led a successful and groundbreaking effort to establish the country's first-ever statewide automatic enrollment policy in 2019.

We know a policy is only as good as its implementation. Since 2019 Stand has offered a series of educator convenings, released and co-released research reports, offered direct district-level consultations, and provided other resources to

support the robust and meaningful implementation of this policy. Most recently Stand supported a key study from the American Institutes for Research (AIR), uncovering vital insights into the challenges and benefits of academic acceleration. We also co-released a report with the Education Trust highlighting the equity implications for students in districts lacking such policies, and mapping out specific policy recommendations for expanding access to advanced courses. And we created a [Journey Map](#) that outlines six key drivers and best practices for sustainable success at any implementation stage.



Our efforts culminated in the release of our final Academic Acceleration Implementation Report, [Fulfilling the Promise](#).

In the process of preparing this report, Stand conducted outreach to all school districts statewide to ensure decision-makers knew about and had adequate guidance for the law. These

efforts gave us cause to celebrate: now almost 95% of all public school students in Washington state—over one million students—attend schools in districts with an academic acceleration policy in place!

These conversations, as well as consultations with advocacy partners and state agencies, also led us to understand the ongoing need for more targeted state-level oversight around adopting these policies and support to districts in implementing them. Many non-adopting districts are rural, with smaller student populations

and limited advanced course offerings. And because many of these districts also have higher proportions of Hispanic/Latino and Native American students than other Washington districts, key equity concerns remain.

While we reached a pivotal milestone with the vast majority of students going to school in districts with a policy in place, our road ahead must include mobilizing new resources and pressing for oversight and support at the state level to make equitable academic acceleration a reality for every Washington student.

Progress toward equitable academic acceleration in Washington:

TOTAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS WITH HIGH SCHOOLS:
250

DISTRICTS WITH ACADEMIC ACCELERATION POLICY:
219 (87.6%)

DISTRICTS ON TRACK FOR ADOPTION (2024-2025):
10 (4%)

NON-ADOPTING DISTRICTS:
21 (8.4%)

Many non-adopting districts are rural, with smaller student populations, limited advanced course offerings, and a higher percentage of Hispanic/Latino and Native American students.

Key Challenges:

LACK OF STATE-LEVEL OVERSIGHT ON IMPLEMENTATION

LIMITED SUPPORT FOR RURAL DISTRICTS



“I am so grateful to have been a guest speaker of Stand’s Driving Equitable Enrollment Series! Thank you for including my voice and continuing to better the future for students.”

~ Isela Bonilla, VP of Legislative Affairs for Washington Students Association

WHAT WE ADVOCATED FOR



Stand Washington team members at State Capitol Building in Olympia, Washington February 2024

"The collaboration between Stand WA and CHSS has transformed our approach to advocacy, making it more succinct, intentional, and effective. This partnership has proven to be a game changer, demonstrating that together we are not only better but also stronger in our efforts. By working hand in hand, we have created meaningful change and amplified our voices for a greater impact."

~ Henterson Carlisle, CHSS NW Regional Director



HIGH SCHOOL SUCCESS COALITION

Stand continued serving as convener of the High School Success Coalition, comprised of the leading education advocacy organizations in Washington State. Together, we advocate for proven policies that are grounded in racial equity and support every student in Washington to achieve a rigorous high school diploma that prepares them for post-secondary opportunities and to pursue their dreams.

EDUCATION POLICY WINS

- ▶ **Stand championed and successfully secured \$3M for the Ninth Grade Success Initiative in the final state supplemental budget.**
- ▶ SB 5904 aligns and extends state financial aid timelines, reducing barriers and confusion for students so they can focus on their educational success.
- ▶ HB 2214 automatically qualifies students receiving food stamps for the Washington College Grant, ensuring they know early in high school that financial help is available for college.
- ▶ HB 2025 expands state work study for college access programs, a win-win for college students seeking meaningful work experience and community organizations who wish to expand capacity to promote college access.

Legislative work completed by Stand for Children, Inc., our 501(c)(4) partner organization, is not supported by our 501(c)(3) funder the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. However, some of these achievements pave the way for our implementation work at the school-, district-, agency-, and state levels. Because effective implementation is key to ensuring that students furthest from opportunity are truly beneficiaries of these policies, Stand for Children Leadership Center is committed to supporting robust, equitable implementation of the important legislative shifts that align with our mission. "



Stand also co-convenes The Debt Free Youth Justice WA Coalition, which includes more than 20 organizational members and several directly impacted young people and community members. DFYJWA continued advocacy to eliminate punitive and ineffective juvenile court costs. This year, we helped pass the first ever fully automatic elimination of previously imposed court debt—wiping out more than \$43 million of “bad debt” (uncollectible debt) for more than 100,000 Washingtonians.

JUVENILE JUSTICE POLICY WINS

- ▶ **SB 5974**—Stand championed this bill which eliminates \$43 million in obsolete juvenile court debt.
- ▶ **HB 2217**—Ensures more juvenile offenses are prosecuted in juvenile court, where young people have access to rehabilitative services and supports to prevent future justice system involvement.

“The Stand team has led Washington’s Debt-Free Youth Justice coalition to incredible legislative wins every session for the last three years. Tens of thousands of young people every year won’t have to pay racist, regressive legal system fees and fines, and courts will waive more than \$43 million in outstanding debt, thanks to Stand’s leadership. The coalition has become a powerful space for advocacy and youth empowerment, including a recent training series that brought more than 50 young people together from around the state to develop strategies for communicating about their experiences with the juvenile legal system. DFYJ is so grateful for the leadership and dedication of every member of the Stand team!”

~ Gus Patel-Tupper, Supervising Attorney, Berkeley Law Policy Advocacy Clinic, DFYJ WA Member

DEI: OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION



Stand for Children WA celebrates diversity, equity, and inclusion as pillars of excellence that are crucial to

our organizational health and efficacy. We also recognize that inequitable systems, institutional racism, settler Colonialism, discriminatory practices, and implicit bias produce disparities for the students and communities we serve. That is why we are committed to completing at least 6 hours of DEI

training per year to deepen our perspectives on institutional oppression, push ourselves to think about intersectionality, and support each other individually and as a team, on our journeys toward becoming antiracist.

In our policy work, we push for state systems to disaggregate data on outcomes and opportunities by race and ethnicity, and advocate for policies that eliminate equity gaps based on race and other identities.



WHAT'S NEXT

In the coming year, we have ambitious plans to support the educational and life success of students across our state. As schools and districts face declining funding, it is more important than ever for our state legislature to invest in proven approach, such as the Ninth Grade Success Initiative and opportunities to earn college credit while in high school. Meanwhile, we know that the most cost-effective way to address juvenile misbehavior is

through community diversion programs, rather than lengthy, expensive, and harmful court processes. In fact, young people offered diversion services instead of court are less likely to commit future crimes and they report better wellbeing outcomes. When young people stay in the community, they can remain connected to (and accountable to) school, family, and friends while repairing the harm they caused.





Stand for Children is a unique catalyst for educational equity and racial justice to create a brighter future for us all.