



FY 2024-2025

 **STAND** | WASHINGTON  
for children

# ANNUAL REPORT





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# LETTER FROM OUR TEAM

Dear Friends and Partners,

This year has been one of growth, progress, and deepened commitment. Together, we have worked across classrooms, courtrooms, and communities to open doors of opportunity for Washington's students and families. Whether advancing equity in ninth grade success, expanding access to dual credit, or pushing for justice reform, our shared efforts reflect a simple but powerful belief: *when young people are supported and believed in, they thrive.*

We are proud of the measurable outcomes we've achieved alongside our partners. More than 18,000 students are now on-track to graduate through the Ninth Grade Success Initiative. In ESD 189, more students are leveraging Career and Technical Education courses for college success. Our justice reform advocacy led to statewide policy changes that strengthened diversion from juvenile court, keeping more young people in classrooms instead of courtrooms.

These wins are not just numbers on a page; they represent students who are finding their path, families who feel seen and heard, and communities that are building stronger futures. We know the work is far from finished, but we move forward with hope and determination, grounded in the belief that systemic change is possible when we act together.

As you read this report, we invite you to celebrate these milestones with us and to join in the work that lies ahead. Thank you for standing with us, for your partnership, your trust, and your commitment to creating a more just and equitable Washington.



With gratitude,

MacKenzie Knell,  
Liz Trautman,  
Carolina Fuentes,  
& Myle Tang

(clockwise from lower left)

This year marked a period of measurable growth and meaningful progress across Washington. Stand for Children Washington's work spanned classrooms, courtrooms, and communities, expanding educational opportunity and improving community well-being. By centering ninth grade success, equitable access to advanced coursework, and youth justice reform, we reached tens of thousands of young people and families and kept their voices at the center of every solution.



### NINTH GRADE SUCCESS INITIATIVE

Our Center for High School Success supported 68 high schools across Washington, serving 18,763 ninth graders. Over the past four years, schools in our network have increased the rate of students passing all their ninth grade classes by 13 percentage points, significantly boosting students' likelihood of graduating from high school.



### COLLEGE CREDIT FOR COLLEGE WORK

Career and Technical Education (CTE) dual credit courses are the most widely enrolled dual credit courses, but few students earn and apply credits when they get to college. Stand supported a pilot in NW Washington aiming to change that, bringing together 35 school districts with four local colleges to improve collaboration, reduce barriers, and ensure that students earn transferable college credit for college work.



### YOUTH JUSTICE REFORM

Stand advanced youth diversion in Washington by partnering with the Minority & Justice Commission on a statewide report, supporting the Partnership Council on Juvenile Justice to gather 65 stakeholders in Yakima, and leading advocacy for HB 1391, which strengthened diversion data collection and passed with near-unanimous bipartisan support. We also convened a statewide communications cohort, aligning nonprofit partners around data-driven messaging to foster a more solutions-focused public dialogue.



# A YEAR OF IMPACT (CONTINUED)



*"Stand for Children" does exactly that.  
As we work together, you have shown how  
you truly believe in and live that mission.*

~ White Swan Principal Jennifer Tenney



*"I've been lucky to partner with Stand WA on many system reform efforts,  
and every time—they show up with integrity and intention.  
They are thoughtful partners and always do as they say."*

~ Roxana Gomez, Director of Policy and Systemic Advocacy  
Legal Counsel for Youth and Children



# COLLEGE CREDIT FOR COLLEGE WORK

In 2024, we partnered with The Education Trust to publish a report on changes in dual credit participation before and after the pandemic. The findings showed that growth has been driven largely by Career and Technical Education (CTE) dual credit, especially in schools serving a greater share of Black and Latino students. Yet too many young people still face barriers when transferring or applying credits earned through CTE courses toward a postsecondary degree.

According to ERDC, 76% of the class of 2023 took at least one CTE dual credit course, but only 24% earned college credit, and as few as 3% successfully applied that credit in higher education. This gap reflects a powerful missed opportunity for our state, where 75% of jobs will require a postsecondary credential by 2032. While students consistently aspire to attend college, perceived financial barriers and educator bias often stand in their way, particularly for Black, Latino, and Native American students. Strengthening the relevance and utility of CTE dual credit courses will help thousands more realize their postsecondary goals.

Through the High School Success Coalition, we convened stakeholders in two virtual gatherings, creating space for district and state leaders to discuss opportunities to strengthen Washington’s CTE dual credit framework. We also facilitated conversations through the Gates Foundation’s Limitless network, surfacing challenges and opportunities across both K–12 and postsecondary systems. A common theme emerged: CTE dual credit is a promising tool, but it requires stronger regional coordination and more robust statewide infrastructure.

This engagement helped shape HB 1273, legislation designed to advance many of these recommendations. While budget constraints limited its scope, the bill supports a regional pilot to align K–12 and postsecondary partners in creating clearer, more useful CTE dual credit pathways. It also requires a joint legislative report from the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction by August 2027.



*I feel like the Center for High School Success’s relationship with Stand for Children is a true partnership. We meet monthly to ensure each half of the partnership knows what is happening on each side and we work together to support and promote each other’s work. I am especially thankful for Stand’s efforts to help legislators understand the impact of our work so that we may continue to partner with schools in order to help all students achieve.*

~ Anne Haverkamp, CHSS Coach



# NINTH GRADE SUCCESS INITIATIVE

Ninth grade sets the trajectory for every student’s high school journey. Students who are on-track at the end of their freshman year are three times more likely to graduate, making ninth grade the strongest predictor of long-term success. Yet across Washington, more than 40,000 students enter ninth grade already at risk of falling behind, disproportionately Black, Indigenous, low-income, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities.

The Ninth Grade Success Initiative (NGS) provides an equity-centered model that helps schools intervene early and build lasting systems of support. Through coaching, data analysis, and dedicated Ninth Grade Success Teams, schools address attendance, academic performance, grading

equity, and student relationships. This approach not only prevents failure but also fosters collaboration, consistency, and hope across school cultures.

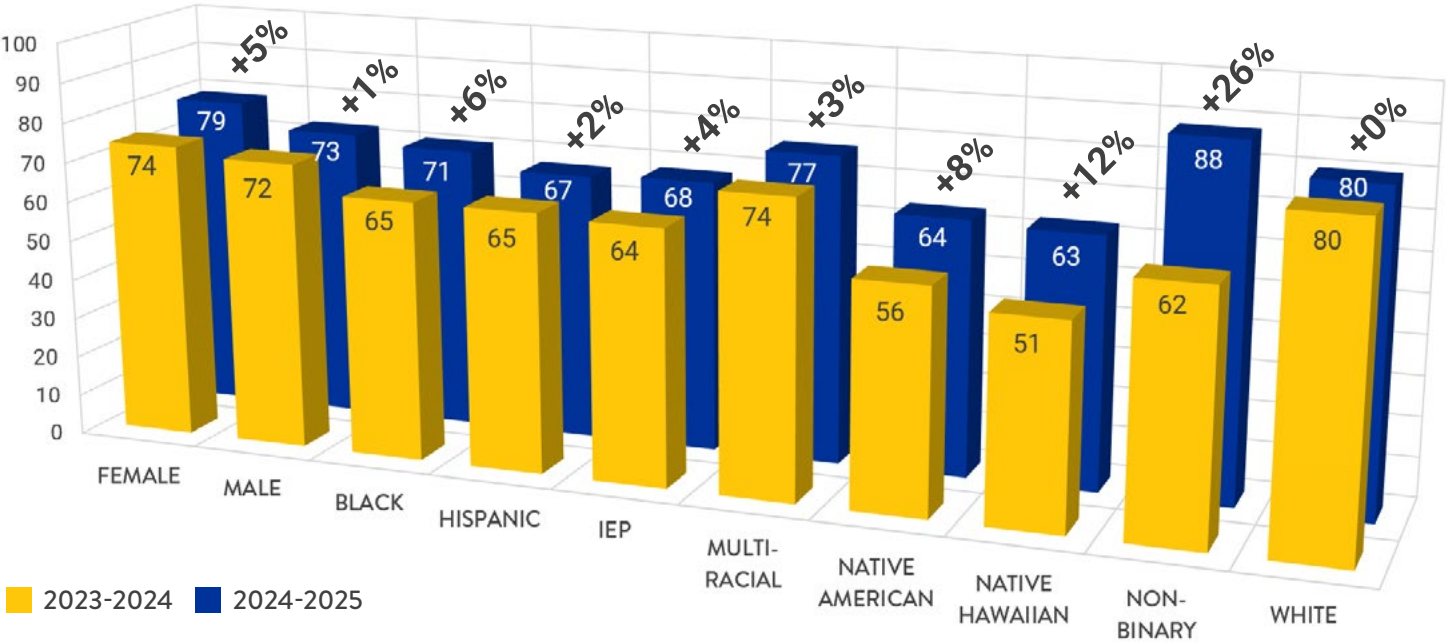
*“In my 31 years of education, [the 9th Grade Success Initiative] is the most impactful professional development or programming we have ever offered our students. It is making the biggest impact in our school... We absolutely need this.”*

~ Shannon Marshall, Principal, Stadium HS, Tacoma, WA

Schools implementing NGS report significant increases in ninth grade course-passing rates, with early cohorts showing dramatic gains in graduation outcomes. The initiative is also reducing opportunity gaps for students of color, multilingual learners, and those experiencing poverty. With sustained state funding, NGS is expanding statewide, ensuring more districts

can replicate successful practices and deliver long-term results. From Tacoma to Yakima, Spokane to Bellingham, schools across Washington are proving what’s possible when ninth graders receive the right support at the right time.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ON-TRACK



*“The Ninth Grade Success program has proven to be one of the most effective interventions for keeping students on-track during the critical transition to high school.”*

~ Dr. Jose Rivera, Assistant Superintendent, Grandview School District

# NINE GRADE SUCCESS IN THE NEWS

## The Reflector

The Newspaper With Integrity Since 1909

**Commentary: Ninth Grade Success leads to student success, saves state money** Charles Anthony & Danny Orrantia

*Photo: Charles Anthony | Posted March 24, 2025*



## The Seattle Times

**Here's why we need to invest in WA ninth graders' success**

Feb. 26, 2025 at 2:51 pm Updated Feb. 26, 2025 at 3:51 pm

By Henterson Carlisle





# CLOSING GAPS, OPENING DOORS

## WHITE SWAN'S JOURNEY TO 85%

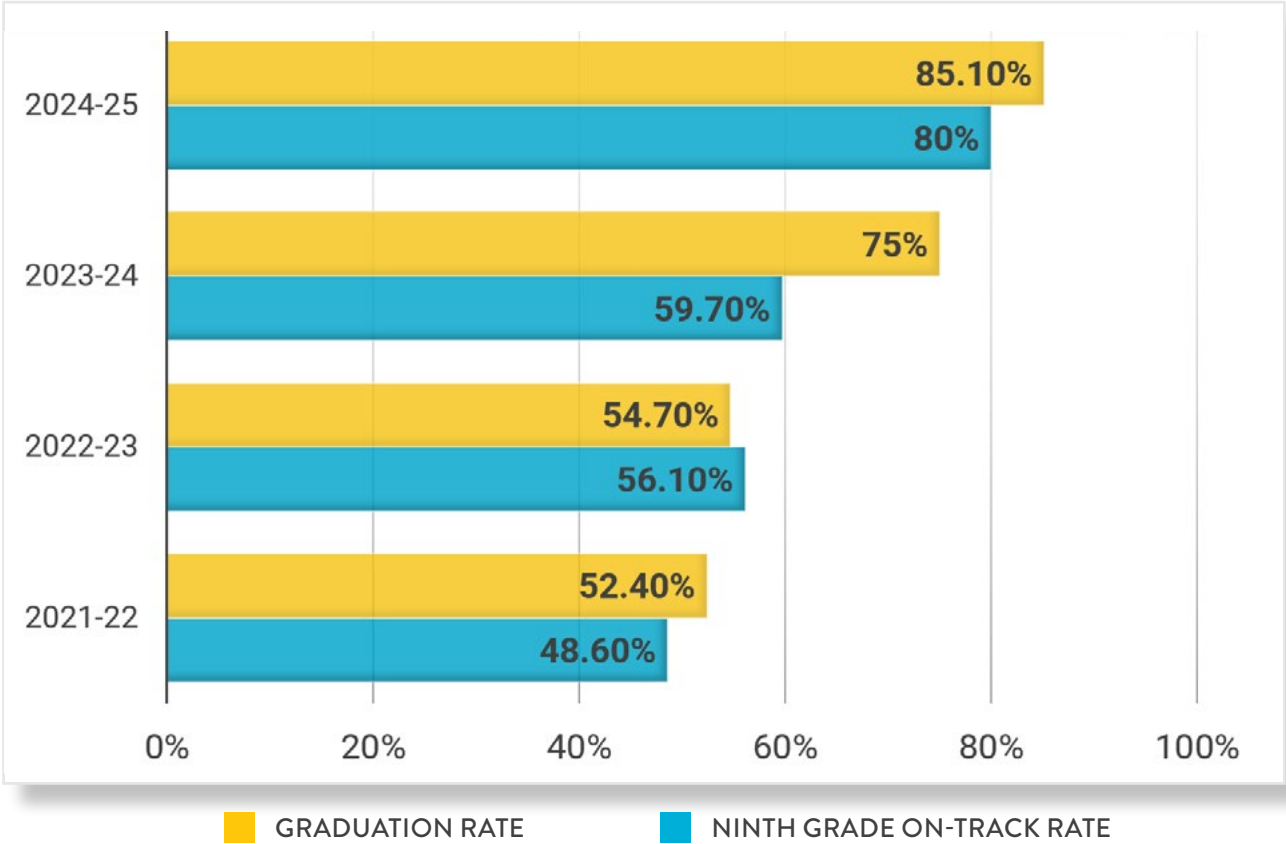
At White Swan High School, graduation once felt out of reach. In 2019, only 52% of students graduated on time, with wide achievement gaps across student groups. This past June, however, 85.1% of the Class of 2025 earned diplomas, an extraordinary turnaround for the first cohort to experience the Ninth Grade Success Initiative from the start of high school. Even more remarkable, gaps between Native students, multilingual learners, and students experiencing homelessness and their peers have nearly disappeared.

Principal Tenney attributes this success to leadership, strong systems, and what she calls “the science of



hope.” With support from NGS, White Swan introduced applied math pathways that count as both graduation and CTE credits, expanded social-emotional curriculum rooted in Yakama Nation virtues, and built Ninth Grade Success Teams to provide timely interventions. These shifts created not just a clearer path to graduation but also a stronger sense among students that they are capable of reaching it.

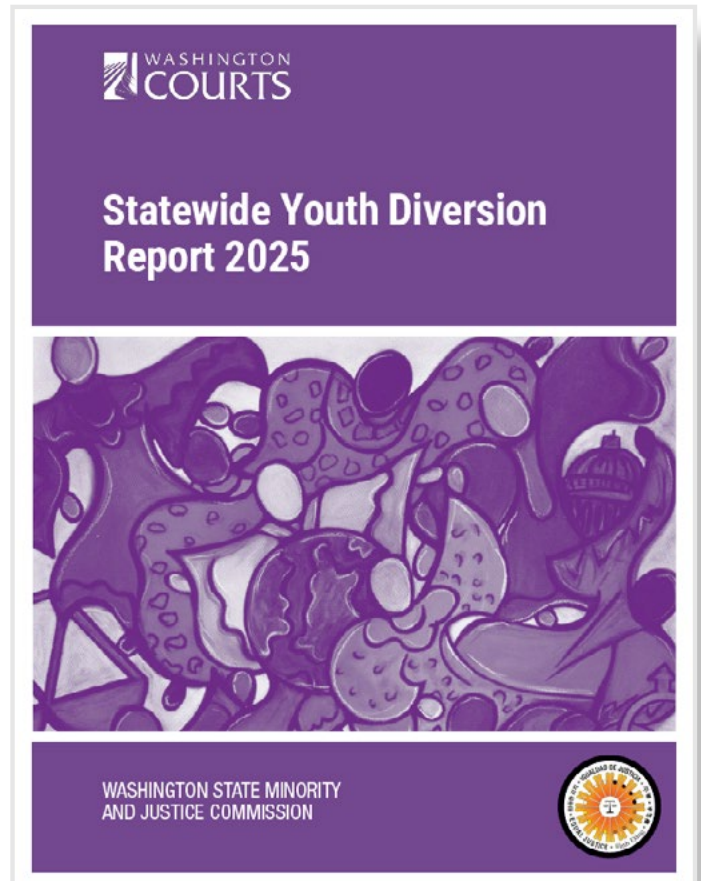
Since 2020, schools participating in NGS statewide have seen freshman on-track rates rise by an average of 13 percentage points, proof that with the right tools and relationships, transformation is possible.



# YOUTH JUSTICE & DIVERSION

Diverting youth from juvenile court is a research-backed strategy to reduce recidivism and improve student outcomes. Stand collaborated with the Minority & Justice Commission to [release the first statewide diversion report in Washington](#), and supported the Partnership Council on Juvenile Justice to convene more than 65 stakeholders in Yakima to imagine a better diversion system. We also led the advocacy to pass HB 1391 to strengthen data collection and reporting on diversion, passing with near-unanimous bipartisan support.

Alongside advocacy, we played a convening role in the statewide juvenile justice communications cohort, working to align nonprofit partners around clear, data-driven messaging. In a politically charged and fiscally constrained environment, this communications leadership helped lower the temperature of debate while promoting practical, cost-effective solutions that make a difference for families. From highlighting the [intersection between education and youth justice](#) in local op-eds to coordinating strategies across juvenile justice organizations, we amplified impact and positioned ourselves as a trusted source for policymakers and community stakeholders alike.





# WHAT'S NEXT & GRATITUDE

This year's progress is a testament to what is possible when we act together. The measurable gains in ninth grade success, the expansion of dual credit access, and improved diversion from juvenile court reflect more than just wins on paper. They represent momentum, built through shared vision and unwavering commitment.

As we look ahead, that momentum continues. In the coming year, we will work to secure sustainable funding for the Ninth Grade Success Initiative, create tools for school districts to better communicate about dual credit opportunities to students and families, continue to address inequities in our justice system, and work towards distraction-free schools where

students can focus on learning, not devices. These priorities are grounded in the belief that students deserve to be met with opportunity, not obstacles, and that the systems surrounding them must be designed with equity, clarity, and care.

We are grateful to the students, families, educators, partners, and supporters who make this work not only possible but powerful. Your trust and collaboration fuel every success, every policy change, and every story of transformation. With you, we are building a future where every young person in Washington has the support to graduate with confidence and the opportunity to thrive.

