

2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY:

CAREER CONNECTED LEARNING

Make sure all students have access to supports & opportunities as they explore their career options and determine the academic pathway that helps them achieve their goals.

Opportunity: Career connected provides the guidance and opportunities for elementary through high school aged students as they explore career options and the academic pathways to pursue their career interests inside and outside of the classroom. To better serve students our schools can be better supported to utilize and support the High School & Beyond Plan, Career & Technical Education (CTE), dual credit, student learning plans, transition planning for special education students, counseling and other elements of a robust career connected learning system.

Context: School counseling includes academic, guidance, career, and mental health services. School counseling has been shown to help reduce discipline rates to improve academic outcomes.¹ Our current funding model gives discretion to districts in spending state funds to meet local needs.²

In 2016-2017, the prototypical school funding model provided funding for districts to hire 2,137 counselors to serve 1,080,000 students for a statewide student to counselor ratio of 505:1 students.³

Currently the state provides enough funds to districts via the prototypical school funding model to hire counselors at:

Elementary: 811 students per counselor

Middle: 355 students per counselor

High: 236 students per counselor

Career and Technical Education (CTE) provides 21st century academic and technical skills to students as they pursue their career interests. CTE funding has historically been funded by Washington state, but funds were not required to be spent on CTE programing. In 2017, the legislature made a series of changes to CTE to increase funding and ensure CTE funds would be spent on CTE programs.

Research: Lower student-to-counselor ratios lead to lower discipline rates, increased attendance, and improved academic achievement.⁴ The [American School Counselor Association recommends](#) a ratio of 250 students per counselor has become the goal of many states and

districts across the country. But research does not suggest that student benefits decrease at lower ratios.⁵ Postsecondary enrollment thrives due to robust school counseling, particularly for students of color, low-income students, and first generation students as counselors offer academic and non-academic supports and guide students through the college and financial aid application process.⁶

CTE/Dual credit: CTE and dual credit opportunities, while under researched in Washington, are important components in a robust guiding and advising system – but must be implemented using research-based best practices.^{7,8,9}

¹ California Department of Education, Research on School Counseling Effectiveness, Dec. 2017

² Washington State House Bill 2776, 2010.

³ Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, School District Personnel Summary Profiles, Table 21, 2016-17

⁴ Carey, J.C., & Martin, I. (2015). A review of the major school counseling policy studies in the United States: 2000-2014. Amherst, MA: Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation.

⁵ The College Board National Office for School Counselor Advocacy, School Counselors: Literature & Landscape, Nov. 2011.

⁶ Pathways to College Network, Removing Roadblocks to Rigor, Institute for Higher Education Policy, April 2009.

⁷ Washington State Report Card, OSPI CTE and Dual Credit Reports.

⁸ Giani, Matthew, et al. "Exploring Variation in the Impact of Dual-Credit Coursework on Postsecondary Outcomes: A Quasi-Experimental Analysis of Texas Students." The High School Journal, The University of North Carolina Press, 29 May 2014.

⁹ An, Brian. "The Impact of Dual Enrollment on College Degree Attainment." Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 1 Mar. 2013,



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Solution

Legislative priority

- Assessing the issues in access to programs that provide career connected learning opportunities, including dual credit, Career and Technical Education, and work-based learning.
- Improving student access to advising and mentoring through investment and guidance on the implementation of the High School and Beyond Plan, student learning plan, and transition planning for special education students.

System change: We can construct a comprehensive system to support and K-12 enable students to pursue their career and college goals. To do so, we need a deeper understanding of what research-based best practice will meet the diverse needs of the 295 school districts across our state.

The work we do to support counseling and CTE programs must also purposefully contend with how historically under served students have been systematically steered to a restricted subset of career opportunities, and discouraged from other pathways. Moving forward we must ensure that our approach to career connected learning closes the opportunity gaps for historically marginalized communities.