

Eliminating Barriers for Under-Represented and Students of Color through Board Policy

PRESENTER:

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LEARNER OUTCOMES

- 1. Recognize the Board's policy role in, and ability to, eliminate academic and system barriers for students.**
- 2. Gain an appreciation for the diversity of challenges students are encountering in order to develop effective policy responses.**
- 3. Receive examples of supports and innovative strategies for consideration during Board policy discussions and study sessions.**



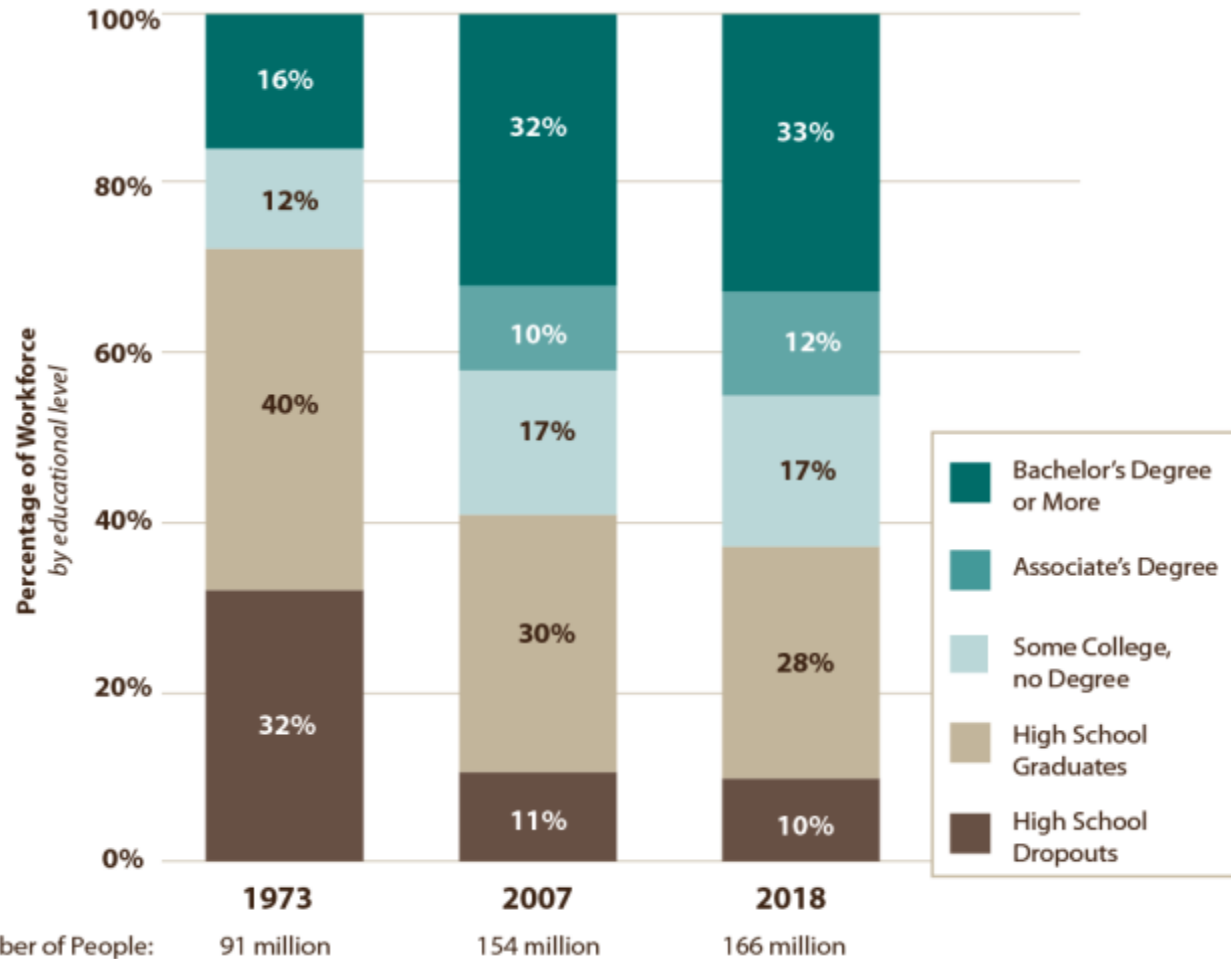
AGENDA

- 1. Provide background and context about changes that are driving policy.**
- 2. Present a few of the academic, system, financial, family and cultural barriers impacting students.**
- 3. Discuss strategies to consider as a part of policy development and resource allocation.**

AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHICS:

- Board Member; Superintendent; Administrator; Parent; Student; CBO/Non-Profit
- Representing a small (under 2000), medium (2001 – 9,999), or large (10,000+) district
- Urban; rural; suburban; K-8 district; K-12 district
- Newly elected; 1st term; 5-10 years; over 10 years

BY 2018, ABOUT TWO-THIRDS OF ALL EMPLOYMENT WILL REQUIRE SOME COLLEGE EDUCATION OR MORE



Source: *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018*. Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, August 2012

CATEGORIES OF BARRIERS

1. Academic

-> With a significant sub-section of ELL issues

2. Financial

3. Institutional and System Across Pre-K - 20

4. Family and Cultural

ACADEMIC BARRIERS (SELECTED FINDINGS)

- **Guidance counselors lack information** about: the breadth of career options available to students; career guidance pathways that align with secondary and postsecondary access and success; how to develop secondary and postsecondary partnerships (community-based – collective impact, and statewide); and how to support students and families with financial aid information.
- **Guidance counselors have insufficient time** to assist students and families with career planning.
 - > National avg. ratio = 1:500; AK = 1:435
 - Recommended ratio = 1:250

ACADEMIC BARRIERS FOR ELL STUDENTS (SELECTED FINDINGS)

- Inadequate placement testing that does not take into account existing background knowledge.
- Difficulty differentiating what is important and what is supplementary information in textbooks – when reading in another language all material is given equal weight.
- Lack of connection to student's backgrounds in the examples used in textbooks and on test questions.

FINANCIAL BARRIERS (SELECTED FINDINGS)

- Financial literacy. Limited counseling regarding the cost of pursuing a degree and how it will pay for itself.
- Confusing financial aid process and the importance of meeting deadlines for paperwork.
- Perception by families that financial aid is a contribution to the family's needs so it is used for rent/food instead of school expenses.
- Fees during the summer before postsecondary that they can't pay for and don't know they can defer.

INSTITUTIONAL & SYSTEM BARRIERS **(SELECTED FINDINGS)**

- **Culturally relevant experiences and imagery** are not incorporated into class simulations and are missing or limited in textbooks.
- **An expectation that students must adapt to the education system,** rather than the system adapting to the changing demographics of student populations.
- A lack of understanding that **job availability,** and no alignment between **housing, transportation, health, and human services policies** affects student achievement.

FAMILY AND CULTURAL BARRIERS (SELECTED FINDINGS)

- First generation college students have a **fear of failure** and worry that the expense of postsecondary education will be a drain on their families. They do not want to let their family/community down and are concerned about their ability to be successful.
- Concern about the **perceptions within their communities** that they are not conforming to community norms, or gender roles (i.e. women attending college instead of, or in addition to, getting married; men studying for a non-traditional career).

ACADEMIC SUPPORTS **(SELECTED FINDINGS)**

- **College in the high school** and the ability to earn dual-credit in content areas and CTE (Career & Technical Education).
- Opportunities for **hands-on experiences, and project-based learning to help with career choices.**
- **Mentoring**: Access to a faculty/staff member, a community member, or a student further along to provide support, accountability, encouragement and social capital.

ACADEMIC SUPPORTS FOR ELL STUDENTS **(SELECTED FINDINGS)**

- **Use of technology to facilitate language acquisition** and the ability to go over the material outside of class (i.e. recorded lessons or instruction with examples)
- **Use of technology to facilitate class participation** so students can ask questions without being embarrassed or being in a position of violating cultural norms related to questioning authority figures.

FINANCIAL SUPPORTS **(SELECTED FINDINGS)**

- **Assistance in completing FAFSA** and related financial forms.
- **Financial literacy class** to understand financial aid responsibilities.
- **Adequate financial aid** so students are not having to consider how many hours they will need to work while simultaneously attending school (impacts post-secondary decisions and length of time in school).

INSTITUTIONAL & SYSTEM SUPPORTS **(SELECTED FINDINGS)**

- **Access to PSAT and SAT/ACT testing at the student's own high school** (fees can be reduced or eliminated based on free and reduced lunch designation)
 - > Step 2: Follow-up on practice tests to explain items that were answered incorrectly.
- **Assistance with college application process** – including assistance during the summer between graduation and starting classes in the fall to prevent “summer melt.”
- **Access to Seal of Bi-Literacy testing** (<http://www.k12.wa.us/WorldLanguages/SealofBiliteracy.aspx>)

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- Hold Board study sessions to understand existing barriers in your schools from the perspective of parents and students.
- Look at the issue of barriers through an equity lens.
- Develop a clear understanding of what “local control” means for your ability to address your students’ needs.

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- Focus on middle school as the “sweet spot” for engaging students and removing barriers.
 - > Transition Goals (both entering and exiting MS)
 - > Graduation Specialist
 - > Counselor, parent, student meeting in 8th grade to discuss career/education goals and register for high school classes at that point (develop a HS and Beyond Plan).
 - > “IEP’s” for each student that include parent/guardian participation and input.

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- Review your **attendance/discipline data for disproportionality** and how system or cultural barriers may be contributing to your data.
- Look at barriers to **authentic family engagement**.
-> ESSA, Title I - 1% requirement for family engagement activities.
- **Leverage the focus on STEM/STEAM careers** by legislators, the business community, and the non-profit sector to elevate barrier issues, and support efforts to address them at a system level.

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- Think beyond your own district.

- > Collaborative efforts (i.e. city/county initiatives)
- > Collective Impact (i.e. Road Map Project)
- > Regional focus on a shared or specific barrier
- > Embrace the language of “**our kids**”, not “**those kids**” in areas of high mobility
- > Work across sectors (i.e. transportation, housing, workforce development, health, and human services)

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER FOR RESOURCE ALLOCATION

- Have a designated, **culturally agile “point person(s)” or a Family Liaison** who is a bridge between staff, students, and family.
- **Think in terms of a P-12 continuum** (Need “X” at grade “Y” for outcome “Z” – graduation and post-secondary preparation)
- Develop **opportunities to experience a variety of careers** for K-12 students.

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER FOR RESOURCE ALLOCATION

- Create/support a **designated College/Career guidance counselor** to provide individualized attention and guidance on post-secondary options.
- **Improve access to wrap-around services:** academic, family, social/emotional support.

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER FOR RESOURCE ALLOCATION

- **Survey** students, staff and community stakeholders to find out what they perceive as barriers.
 - > Conduct focus groups where people in your community gather -> **Go To Them!**
- Provide **teacher and counselor summer and weekend (paid) internships** to expose PreK-12 personnel to post-secondary access, admissions, and transition programs.
- Sponsor **post-secondary scholarship and financial aid workshops for families** in numerous languages and at various locations.

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER FOR RESOURCE ALLOCATION

- Create a **clear degree pathway** from PreK-12 through the higher education systems for both **students AND parents** to understand.
- Provide **professional development training** for all staff to increase their cultural agility.
- Provide **professional development training to high school and middle school counselors** on the nationally recommended college/career standards (adopted in 2012).

Success



what people think
it looks like

Success



what it really
looks like

SUCCESS STORY: TAVAESINA



“I no longer sleep on the floor now which is going to take a lot of getting used to once I settle in this new bed of mine at the UW. 😊

Thank God for His blessings and for my family and friends for pushing me through it all. I love you mom & dad!! It's only been an hour and I'm home sick. But what can I say? I'm officially a HUSKY 💜”



CALL TO ACTION

What barrier will you commit to address when you return to your community?

RESOURCES:

- Predictors of Postsecondary Success, American Institute for Research: www.ccrscenter.org/sties/default/files/ccrs%20Center_predictors
- Trauma-Informed PD for staff: <http://www.sounddiscipline.org/>
- Barriers & Supports for Under-Represented and Minority Students: http://www.wcnursing.org/uploads/file/Final_Draft_Diversity_Report%203_13_2014.pdf
- Summer Melt Handbook: <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/sdp/resources/summer-melt/index.pnhp>
- Education Trust, Counselor Standards Report: http://www.edtrust.org/sites/edtrust.org/files/publications/files/Poised_To_Lead.pdf
- The Road Map Initiative: <http://www.roadmapproject.org/>