

New Data Show Ninth Grade Success Initiative Results in Gains for Washington Students

At WA schools participating in the Initiative, there's been an increase of 6.69 percentage points in the number of students who pass all their 9th grade classes

OLYMPIA, WA, USA, June 9, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When ninth grade students pass all their classes, they are four times more likely to graduate from high school within 4 years. Through a federal- and state-funded project, Washington state has been working to increase success rates for ninth grade students, and new data show that these efforts have had an impact.

The Ninth Grade Success Initiative, a partnership between the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and Stand for Children's Center for High School Success (CHSS), has worked with more than 50 schools across Washington state since 2019.

New data from a forthcoming study show that the schools participating in this initiative from 2019–2022 have seen an increase of 6.69 percentage points in the number of ninth students who passed all their classes, as compared to neighboring schools in the same county.

"Research tells us that ninth grade success is a stronger predictor of graduating on-time than almost any other factor," said State Superintendent Chris Reykdal. "As our educators work diligently to support each of our learners to graduation, an intentional focus on this critical year for student success just makes sense."

Through the project, CHSS coaches school districts to use data on student discipline, grades, and attendance to guide their process of creating systems that support the transition into ninth grade, building Ninth Grade Success Teams, and determining interventions that are catered to individual student needs. Each school district implements unique strategies to best support their students.

"I have worked with hundreds of educators at 53 schools across the state, and together we've seen targeted, school-based approaches change the trajectory for ninth grade students," said Henterson Carlisle, Washington Director of CHSS. "This means thousands more students engaged in school in each subsequent year, a win for our students, our schools, and our communities."

Two OSPI staff members--Kefi Andersen, System Improvement Program Supervisor Lead; and

Matthew Frizzell, Executive Director for Continuous Improvement, Data, and Implementation--collaborated with University of Washington researchers David Knight and Julia Duncheon on an initial [study on the effects of the Ninth Grade Success Initiative](#). Along with qualitative data showing increased rates of ninth grade students passing all their classes, the study, published last month, found that the project strengthened relationships between students and staff and motivated broader changes in teachers' and schools' practices.

"The path to graduation begins at ninth grade and the most impactful strategy to increase graduation rates across Washington is by focusing on this critical transition point with research-based best practices," said Liz Trautman, Governor Affairs Director for the Washington chapter of Stand for Children. "Starting high school with the tools to succeed directly supports our state's vision of students graduating ready to tackle their post-secondary dreams."

The Ninth Grade Success Initiative is funded by state funds and nearly \$5 million of OSPI's federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. While federal ESSER funding is set to expire in September 2024, OSPI will continue to advocate for permanent legislative funding to sustain and expand the initiative.

For More Information

- [Pandemic Relief Funds Support Success of Washington's Ninth Graders](#) (OSPI Blog, December 2022)
- Ninth Grade Success Team in Vancouver [Works to Close Opportunity Gaps for Students](#) (OSPI Blog, January 2023)

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