Youth Goal and Objectives

Youth Goal: Ensure all youth receive the education, training, and support they need for success in postsecondary education and/or work.

Objective 1

A *K-12 Guidance and Counseling System* provides students and their parents with a curriculum to individually plan their pathways and prepare for future education and/or work after high school.

No later than 2018:

- All middle and high schools in the state have in place all five elements of the *K-12 Guidance and Counseling System* that includes community, business and labor collaboration.

Objective 2

All students leave high school prepared for success in further education and/or work.

No later than 2018:

- All high school students across Washington have the option to complete a career and technical education sequence that matches their career interests, articulates with postsecondary education and results in industry certification where applicable.

Objective 3

All students graduate from high school.

No later than 2018:

- Every local community in the state will have an effective school/community partnership that provides a comprehensive dropout prevention, intervention and re-engagement system for ALL youth, including those who have dropped out or who are at risk of dropping out.

Objective 4

Reduce unemployment rates among older youth, and improve their career prospects.

No later than 2018:

- There is a comprehensive state strategy to help unemployed older youth reconnect with work and/or further education opportunities.

Youth Objective 1: A K-12 Guidance and Counseling System provides students and their parents with a curriculum to individually plan their pathways and prepare for future education and/or work after high school.

No later than 2018:

- All middle and high schools in the state have implemented all five elements of the *K-12 Guidance and Counseling System* that includes community, business and labor collaboration.

The Need to Guide Youth

All K-12 students need information and guidance to help them make decisions about their learning and understand how these decisions have a direct impact on their ability to move forward with their education after high school or enter a particular career. If students do not understand the relevance of what they learn, they may be at risk of dropping out.[81] But even for students who earn a high school diploma, a lack of direction can push them into low-wage, low-skill jobs. Their risk for dropping out of college, becoming unemployed, and, in worst cases, engaging in criminal activity goes up. At the same time, what experts refer to as a "10-year drift," means these young people too often take an unnecessarily long and hard road to postsecondary education and, in many cases, must take remedial college classes to get back on track.

What are Our Options for Guiding Youth?

The State Board of Education has been exploring how to change high school graduation requirements to provide a stronger connection to career guidance. The board took a significant step in that direction when it implemented the 13th Year Plan, requiring all high school students to create an academic plan that starts in high school and reaches beyond. In the Federal Way School District, for example, students begin planning in eighth grade, exploring different careers and current interests, and building the foundation for a college and job portfolio. The district also asks students and parents to discuss and choose one of three general graduation plans to help guide their class choices. The 13th Year Plan requirement could be strengthened statewide by connecting it to other career and guidance activities, including work-based learning, conferences with parents, and mentorships.

Best Practice Guidance Model

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has been advocating that school districts institute a comprehensive *K-12 Guidance and Counseling System*. The best practice model, *Navigation 101*, launched in the Franklin-Pierce School District in the Tacoma area, combines five major elements of personalizing, planning, demonstrating, empowering and evaluating that lead to better student outcomes and success in further education and/or work. *Navigation 101*:

- Teaches students the skills they need to chart their own courses through middle school, high school, postsecondary education and adulthood.

- Provides students with an ongoing personal relationship with an adult that lasts throughout their middle and high school experiences.

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81   John M. Bridgeland, John J. Dilulio, Jr., Karen Burke Morison, *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts*, Civic Enterprises in association with Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, March 2006.

- Provides a meaningful way to keep parents involved in the decisions their teens are making.
- Requires commitment from the school and faculty to make changes such as adjusting schedules and classes to meet students' goals.

In 2006-2007, OSPI allocated $6,440,000 appropriated by the Legislature to increase the use of *Navigation 101* in school districts across the state. The *Navigation 101* curriculum is being implemented at 221 schools across 103 school districts, including:

@ 100 high schools

@ 15 seventh-through-12th grade programs

@ 18 Alternative Learning Experiences, which can include certain online learning and parent partnership programs

@ 77 middle schools

@ 11 elementary schools

Schools that implement *Navigation 101* have improved their students' on-time graduation rates by about two percentage points, according to a preliminary evaluation. Other indicators of success show more students taking challenging math and science courses and more parents participating in student-led conferences.[82]

Steps To Get Us There

1. Expand implementation of the best practice guidance system, *Navigation 101* across the K-12 system including establishing goals for expansion each year. This would ultimately result in full funding of *Navigation 101* as a basic program of education. Leads: OSPI with partners. Requires the support of the Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.

2. Integrate the Individual Education Plan with the 13th Year Plan required for graduation. Leads: OSPI with partners.

3. Work with the State Board of Education to create policy links to comprehensive career guidance. Leads: OSPI, Workforce Board, with other partners.

4. Support the College Bound Scholarship Program that provides an incentive for low-income students to complete high school. Leads: OSPI, with other partners. Requires the support of the Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.

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82   Conversation with Kyra Kester, Social and Economic Science Research Center, Washington State University, March 2008.

Youth Objective 2: All students leave high school prepared for success in further education and/or work.

No later than 2018:

- All high school students across Washington have the option to complete a career and technical education sequence that matches their career interests, articulates with postsecondary education and results in industry certification where applicable.

Relevant Learning Through Career and Technical Education

Career and technical education (CTE) connects students in a hands-on way to what they are learning, whether it's witnessing the complex chemistry behind the internal combustion engine in an auto repair class or writing a detailed quarterly report in a business class. At its best, CTE is both rigorous and relevant, blending academics with job skills that reflect the work world, and a student's place in it. For many students, CTE is a solid stepping stone for additional education after high school. Dual credit programs, such as Tech Prep, allow students to gain both high school and college-level credits at the same time. For other students, CTE provides specific skills, knowledge and training that make a high school diploma a more valuable credential that can lead to better paying jobs.

CTE Enrollments Decline Despite Lasting Educational and Financial Benefits

Although some worry that career and technical education could take students off the college track, this hasn't proved true. In fact, not only have students become more engaged in careers through CTE, they've become engaged in education overall. Washington State University's graduate follow-up study shows that students who complete CTE sequences continue on to postsecondary education at about the same rate as do other students.[83] The Workforce Board's evaluations of CTE programs find that students who complete a CTE sequence have better employment and higher earnings than students with similar demographic characteristics who do not complete a CTE sequence.[84] Despite these successes, student enrollment in CTE has been flat since 2000—the first time there has not been an increase since the data has been tracked.[85] Moreover, 57 school districts in Washington offer no career and technical education courses. Rural and remote districts offer limited choices, if any.

Which Students Benefit Most From Career and Technical Education?

Every student benefits. CTE provides opportunities for students to apply their learning in relevant, real world situations and helps them see the connections to their own futures. Through internships and other cooperative work experiences, they get a head start on a career. Student career organizations in every subject area also help students acquire the employment and leadership skills that will enable them to succeed in the workplace. And Tech Prep programs link high school and community college curricula to help students make a smooth transition to postsecondary education and careers.

83   See the Graduate Follow Up Study at http://www.sesrc.wsu.edu/gfs/GFS_Reports/gfs_reports_page.asp
84   Workforce Board, Workforce Training Results, 2008.
85   Office of Financial Management, Washington State, 2007 Data Book, "Enrollment Trends in Workforce Education Programs" http://www.ofm.wa.gov/databook/education/et26.asp

Strengthening Career and Technical Education

Since many more students could benefit from CTE, we should develop policies that strengthen it. We need to enhance capacity for students to take CTE through developing and expanding programs at middle schools, high schools, and Skills Centers.

We need to strengthen transitions to postsecondary learning for CTE students by ensuring more students receive academic credit through CTE coursework and by developing stronger articulation and transfer of credits. OSPI and the Workforce Board have developed a toolkit for school districts that serves as a guide for granting academic credit for CTE coursework. OSPI is offering workshops to assist school districts in this process.

In 2007, the Workforce Board convened a stakeholder work group to develop a five-year plan to implement the reauthorized Carl Perkins Act, a federal program that helps pay for and promote career and technical education in high schools and community colleges. The five-year plan focuses on strengthening career and technical education at the secondary and postsecondary levels with a key emphasis on developing stronger articulation and transfer, so that students have a more seamless transition between high school and college.

In 2008, the Legislature passed comprehensive legislation to strengthen CTE (SB 6337). The bill established state accountability for local CTE programs, including the requirement to meet specific targets for program improvement. The bill also provided funds for the expansion of CTE programs in high demand fields and the development of model CTE programs of study that will provide a clear pathway to postsecondary educational opportunities. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1 2008 state legislation (2SSB6377, consistent with the federal Carl Perkins Act) defines programs of study as those that:

a. Incorporate secondary and postsecondary education elements.

b. Include coherent and rigorous academic content aligned with state learning standards and relevant career and technical content in a coordinated, non-duplicative progression of courses that are aligned with postsecondary education in a related field.

c. Include opportunities for students to earn dual high school and college credit.

d. Lead to an industry-recognized credential or certificate at the postsecondary level, or an associate or baccalaureate degree.

Serving Immigrant Students

As Washington state's population becomes more diverse, and more immigrants are projected to settle here, we need to develop better ways of assisting students who have a wide range of academic skill levels and varying degrees of English language proficiency. Integrating English language learning with career and technical education programs is one way of accelerating English acquisition, job skills and academic skills all at once.

Steps To Get Us There

1. Increase the number of students who complete a CTE sequence and/or course requirements for admission to a four-year college or university or enrollment in college-level classes at a community or technical college by:

   a. Identifying targets for increases. Leads: OSPI working with Workforce Board, with other partners.

   b. Conducting an ongoing campaign to increase awareness of teachers, counselors, students, parents, and the general public of the opportunities of rigorous CTE programs, using multiple strategies. Leads: Workforce Board working with OSPI, with other partners.

   c. Establishing criteria for setting academic course equivalencies. Leads: OSPI working with the Workforce Board, with other partners.

   d. Increasing the number of CTE courses that provide credit for math or science. Leads: OSPI working with school districts, with other partners. Requires the support of Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.

   e. Providing new opportunities for students in rural areas to complete a CTE sequence. Leads: OSPI working with Skills Centers, school districts, with other partners.

   f. Expanding CTE offerings offered via distance learning options. Leads: OSPI working with school districts, with other partners.

   g. Identifying high employer demand programs and expanding these offerings in secondary CTE sequences. Leads: OSPI working with Workforce Board, with other partners. Requires the support of Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.

   h. Expanding Grades 7-12 CTE sequences for students. Leads: OSPI working with school districts, with other partners. Requires the support of Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.

   i. Developing model statewide CTE articulation agreements that provide a program of sequenced courses and ensure all students have access to dual enrollment options. Leads: OSPI working with school districts, SBCTC, Workforce Board, with other partners.

   j. Working with the State Board of Education to ensure high school graduation requirements contain a viable option for students to pursue a CTE sequence. Leads: OSPI working with Workforce Board, with other partners.

Teaching the Teachers: A Governor's Best Practice

In 2007, Greater Spokane Incorporated gathered 75 teachers and counselors from all Spokane County school districts to discuss the role of business in education. Educators identified a lack of knowledge about careers and training programs in the region, noting this as a critical barrier for advising students on career and postsecondary paths. This prompted the creation of the Teach the Teachers program. Teach the Teacher workshops provide an opportunity for educators to learn more thoroughly about the careers available in targeted, high-demand industries and how their curriculum directly correlates to these jobs. These workshops provide practical experience that can be applied to 7th through 12th grade course work. In addition, workshop participants receive a variety of resources to share with their students. Another significant benefit is greater participation by businesses in the public school system.

2. Expand pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities for youth. Leads: OSPI working with Department of Labor and Industries – Apprenticeship and Training Council, with other partners. Requires the support of Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.

3. Provide opportunities for all youth to connect to the workplace, including mentorships, job shadows, internships and a variety of other strategies including:

    a. Building upon the mentorship component of the In-Demand Scholars program. Leads: OSPI, Association of Washington Business, labor organizations, Workforce Development Councils, Workforce Board, with other partners. Requires the support of Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.

4. Develop and implement best practice models to help basic skills deficient immigrant youth succeed in high school, including:

    a. Developing I-BEST programs for use in middle schools and high schools (basic skills and English language programs that are integrated with occupational skills training). Leads: OSPI working with Skills Centers, SBCTC, with other partners.

5. Help all students achieve the rigorous, high standards required for further education and/or work. Leads: OSPI with other partners.

Youth Objective 3: All students graduate from high school.

No later than 2018:

- Every community in the state will have an effective school/community partnership that provides a comprehensive dropout prevention, intervention and re-engagement system for ALL youth, including those who have dropped out or who are at risk of dropping out.

High Dropout Rates

A high school diploma or its equivalent is a vital step to successfully entering postsecondary education and training, and, often a prerequisite for many types of entry-level work. Even so, only 70 percent of Washington students graduated on time (within four years of starting grade 9) in 2005-2006.[86] Even when considering students that graduate after the expected year of graduation, the graduation rate for all students rose to only 75 percent. Graduation rates for students with disabilities and from most racial and ethnic minorities are lower than for the general population. (See Figure 2).

Figure 2 On-Time Graduation Rates for Class of 2005-2006[87]

All Students	70.4%
American Indian or Alaska Native (Non-Hispanic)	48.0
Asian Pacific Islander	76.5
Black / African-American	53.6
White	74.1
Hispanic (may be of any race)	57.5
Special education	54.3
Limited English	55.5
Low income	58.0
Female	73.9
Male	67.1

Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, www.k12.wa.us?DataAdmin/default.aspx (2001-2002 though 2004-2005) and reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us (2005-2006)

86   Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, www.k12.wa.us?DataAdmin/default.aspx reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us (2005-2006)

87   Class of 2006 are the most recent on-time graduation rates available from Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction at the time of printing this report.

Damaging Effects of Dropping Out

Dropping out of high school seriously diminishes a person's earning and employment potential. According to a seminal national report on dropping out, *The Silent Epidemic,*[88] high school dropouts:

- Earn $9,200 less per year than high school graduates, and about $1 million less over a lifetime than college graduates on average.

- Are often unable to support themselves.

- Are three times more likely than college graduates to be unemployed.

- Are twice as likely as high school graduates to slip into poverty from one year to the next.

Initiatives Focus on Partnerships, Prevention, and Reengagement

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction implemented the *Building Bridges* Prevention and Retrieval Program supported by a $5 million Legislative appropriation in 2007. In 2007, the Workforce Board recommended and the Governor directed an additional $550,000 of state's discretionary dollars received from the federal Workforce Investment Act (10 Percent Fund) to support dropout prevention and retrieval.

The strength of this initiative lies in the partnerships between the various entities that serve young people including schools, community-based organizations, Workforce Development Councils, and social service organizations. These efforts need to be expanded to serve more youth: those at risk as well as those who have already dropped out.

We would like to see more students graduate even if it takes additional time. For those students who are not likely to graduate with a high school diploma, we must re-engage them in education and training so they have the skills they need to be "college and work ready." Through the *Building Bridges* program we can build a system in communities throughout the state that provides support for students at risk of dropping out and those who have dropped out.

88   John M. Bridgeland, John J. Dilulio, Jr., Karen Burke Morison, The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts, Civic Enterprises in association with Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, March 2006.

Steps To Get Us There

1. Expand the *Building Bridges* Grant Program to build more school/community partnerships that support youth at risk of dropping out and re-engage youth who have dropped out of school. Leads: OSPI, Workforce Board, with other partners. Requires the support of the Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.

2. Collaborate with education and social service partners to develop state-level performance measures and targets for reducing the dropout rate, increasing the on-time graduation rate and increasing successful re-entry and achievement for students who have dropped out. Leads: OSPI with other partners.

3. Establish a process for identification, development and replication of best practices statewide. Leads: OSPI, Workforce Board, with other partners.

4. Explore changes in educational policy and school funding that will provide incentives to serve at-risk youth. Leads: OSPI, Workforce Board, with other partners. Requires the support of Governor and Legislature.

5. Identify and make recommendations to reduce the fiscal, legal and regulatory barriers that prevent coordination of program resources across agencies and community-based organizations to support the development of sustainable dropout prevention, intervention and retrieval partnerships. Leads: OSPI, Workforce Board, WDCs, SBCTC, with other partners. Requires the support of Governor and Legislature.

6. Create stronger program links between Job Corps and Skills Centers to ensure more Job Corps students receive a high school diploma. Leads: OSPI, with other partners.

7. Identify support services for at-risk youth and their parents, and implement action steps. Leads: OSPI, ESD, WDCs, with other partners. Requires the support of Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.

Building Bridges Spurs a Whole Community to Support High School Graduation

Mayra Rivera thought about dropping out of high school. The 17-year-old has faced "a lot of obstacles" in getting her education, including having a baby four months ago. But she stuck with school and now wants to help other teens make the same choice. That's why Rivera and some classmates at New Horizons High School in Pasco have created posters, TV and radio spots and T-shirts aimed at curbing dropout rates and reaching students with the message that their destination should be graduation. The students became involved after the Pasco School District received a $270,000 state grant earlier this year to improve on-time graduation rates and work on dropout prevention with Columbia Basin College, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Benton and Franklin Counties and other community partners. The goals of the grant include lowering dropout rates among students who are particularly at-risk – such as freshmen and those in special education, juvenile justice and foster care – and bringing dropouts back to school.

Tri-City Herald, May 28, 2008

Youth Objective 4: Reduce unemployment rates among older youth, and improve their career prospects.

No later than 2018:

- There is a comprehensive state system to help unemployed older youth reconnect with work and/ or further education opportunities.

Washington Youth Experience High Unemployment Rates

Youth in Washington have significantly higher unemployment rates than the general population.[89] Youth from low-income families and from racial and ethnic minorities are the most likely to be unemployed. This is a cause of great concern because of the long-term impacts on these individuals' lives:

- Experiencing unemployment early in life is more likely to lead to long-term withdrawal from the labor force.[90]

- Getting a job is harder without an established employment history.

- Unemployed youth have fewer opportunities for on-the-job training.

- Evidence shows that not working during secondary school is associated with lower high school graduation rates and with lower employment rates and earning levels after secondary school.[91]

In Washington state, the unemployment rate for 20-24 year olds was 10.6 percent in 2006— significantly higher than the 6.4 percent unemployment rate of the general population.[92] In this regard, Washington is like most other states and other developed nations.[93]

One might think that due to economic need, youth from lower income families would be more likely to work than youth from middle or upper income families. But the opposite is true, and is compounded by racial disparities. For example, nationwide "only 19 percent of low income black teens worked during 2007 versus nearly one half of their more affluent white counterparts living in families with incomes above $60,000."[94]

Why are so Many Youth Unemployed?

The high rates of job turnover naturally associated with new market entrants could be one factor contributing to high unemployment rates. But the majority of youth job "separations" are involuntary, and natural turnover does not explain why youth unemployment tends to be concentrated among certain groups.[95] Another factor could be the lack of desirable job opportunities for youth.[96] The

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89   There is no standard definition of "youth" in research on youth unemployment. Generally the term is used to refer to young people approximately 18 to 24 years of age.

90   Organization for Economic, Co-operation and Development, OECD.Labour Statistics, August 2008. See www.oecd.org

91   Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin, and Tobar, "The Educational Attainment of the Nation's Young Black Men and their Recent Labor Market Experiences," February 2007.

92   American Community Survey, 2006, //factfinder.census.gov The unemployment rate may understate the problem since it includes only those actively seeking work, please refer to Clark and Summers, "The Dynamics of Youth Unemployment," National Bureau of Economic Research, 1982 and the work of Andrew Sum, Director of the Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University.

93   From the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development that includes developed nations.

94   Sum, Khatiwada, and Mclaughlin, "The Collapse of the National Teen Job Market and the Case for An Immediate Summer and Year Round Youth Jobs Creation Program," March 2008.

95   Federal Reserve Board of San Francisco Economic Letter, 2005-15; July 15, 2005, Age and Education Effects on the Unemployment Rate and OECD Employment Outlook, 1983, Chapter 6.

96   Clark and Summers, "The Dynamics of Youth Unemployment," National Bureau of Economic Research, 1982

lack of a well-developed system for transitioning youth from school to work contributes to the high unemployment rate for youth.

How We can Reduce Youth Unemployment

Public education and labor policies can reduce unemployment rates among youth. The 1990 report of the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, *America's Choice: high skills or low wages!*, helped create public awareness of the youth unemployment issue and spurred the development of a number of school-to-work initiatives. Since then, policy initiatives have included:

- **Youth apprenticeship** pilots have begun in Washington through the creation of pre-apprenticeship programs in secondary schools. In Washington, the average age of an apprentice is approximately 30. To change this we should look to Germany and other nations with strong apprenticeship systems and relatively low youth unemployment.

- **Career academies** are secondary schools programs that link academic and vocational education to an occupational cluster, such as Aviation High School in Des Moines. Career academies have been found to be associated with higher employment and earnings after secondary school.[97]

- **Summer employment programs** of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) used to provide 600,000 to 700,000 jobs for primarily economically disadvantaged teens during the summer months. JTPA, which preceded the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), and earlier federal employment and training acts included a program that provided summer job opportunities to low-income youth. The program was discontinued under WIA in 1998.

- **Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth program** is based on a holistic youth development theory that emphasizes treating all aspects of the barriers to employment faced by disadvantaged youth. The Workforce Board's net impact evaluation of the state program, conducted by the Upjohn Institute, found that WIA youth participants had 10 percentage point higher employment and $1,200 more in annual earnings three years after participating in the program than youth from similar backgrounds who did not participate in WIA.[98] National funding for the WIA youth program, however, has decreased from $1 billion in 2000 to $940 million in 2007 in nominal dollars.

- **Career and Technical Education** is the oldest and largest youth program dating back to the early part of the 20th Century and was formerly known as vocational education. The Workforce Board's net impact evaluation, conducted by the Upjohn Institute, found that completers of career and technical education have a 5 percentage point higher employment rate and $1,600 more in annual earnings three years after graduation than students from similar backgrounds who did not complete career and technical education. Before 2000, the number of students in secondary CTE in Washington rose steadily, in keeping with student population growth. However, after 2000, student enrollment in CTE has remained flat, and in 2006 student enrollment declined. Therefore, since 2000 the number of students enrolling in CTE has been declining on a per capita basis.[99]

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97   Kemple, "Career Academies: Impacts on Labor Market Outcomes and Educational Attainment" Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 2004.

98   "Workforce Training Results: 2006."

99   Washington State Office of Financial Management, 2007 Data Book, "Enrollment Trends in Workforce Education Programs" http://www.ofm.wa.gov/databook/education/et26.asp

Steps To Get Us There

1. Create summer youth employment programs. Leads: WDCs, Workforce Board, OSPI, with other partners.

2. Connect unemployed youth to expert "navigators" who can guide them to postsecondary resources and work experience opportunities. Leads: WDCs, OSPI, SBCTC, with other partners.

3. Seek a WIA I-B Youth waiver or WIA Adult 18-24 waiver for the maximum age eligibility and supplement these resources with state funds. Leads: ESD, Workforce Board, WDCs, with other partners.

4. Develop I-BEST opportunities specifically for older youth. Leads: OSPI working with Skills Centers, SBCTC, Workforce Board and other partners. Requires the support of Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.

5. Ensure the Grant programs includes a strong component for re-engaging youth 21 years of age and under to reconnect with education to obtain a high school diploma. Leads: OSPI, Workforce Board, with other partners. Requires the support of Governor and Legislature and General Fund – state appropriations.

6. Connect disadvantaged youth to AmeriCorps and Service Corps opportunities. Leads: ESD, OSPI, WDCs, with other partners.