

2017 Legislative Priorities Related to Open Doors Dropout Reengagement - DRAFT

In 2010, the legislature passed HB 1418, demonstrating a strong state commitment to provide meaningful re-engagement opportunities for students who drop out across Washington state. HB 1418 allows state education dollars to be used toward re-engagement programs that are connected to public school districts. Open Doors programs are now in operation across the state, with over 90 districts participating with many partners. Programs help students earn a high school credential and connect to post-secondary and employment opportunities. As Open Doors continues to scale up, additional support is needed to ensure the successful implementation of these programs.

	Specific Priorities
Adequate funding	<p>12-Month Funding Currently, Open Doors programs are funded on a 10-month cycle, in accordance with a traditional K-12 funding calendar. However, many programs run year round, which means that during the summer months, they serve students without funding. A 12-month funding cycle for Open Doors programs would increase options for young people during the summer, would encourage more programs to operate year-round, and would alleviate the burden on programs that are currently doing so.</p>
	<p>Barrier Funding Students accessing Open Doors programs face many barriers including homelessness, behavioral health challenges, teen parenting, food insecurity, and transportation costs. Due to limited funding and constraints around the use of BEA dollars (e.g., limitations on gifts of public funds), programs need funding for barrier reduction in order to effectively meet the varied needs of their students (needs ranging from a new pair of shoes to bus passes). A portion of the state general fund marked as “education barrier funding” is already distributed to Skill Centers with the intended use to support high-risk youth.</p>
Effective support for implementation	<p>Increased Central Staffing Support Open Doors programming has expanded significantly over the past four years. Centralized staffing support at OSPI is extremely limited, yet support is needed to help districts develop programs, approve new programs, track program implementation and outcomes, and build capacity across the state. With over 90 districts now operating Open Doors programs, OSPI needs at a minimum two dedicated FTE to support this growing effort.</p>

These priorities were developed by the Community Center for Education Results and United Way of King County with input from Open Doors providers and opportunity youth stakeholders from across the state.