



HOW DOES WASHINGTON SUPPORT STUDENTS' SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT (SEAD)?

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT (SEAD) IS A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO SUPPORTING STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING THAT IS INTEGRAL TO ENSURING POSITIVE OUTCOMES IN SCHOOL AND BEYOND.

Schools must ensure students experience healthy development and rigorous learning. Unfortunately, students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, and other underserved students often do not have positive learning experiences. This brief highlights how Washington is supporting students' SEAD and areas for growth across each of these six policy issues, as well as questions to ask district leaders about local implementation. State leaders should:

1 Develop inclusive school discipline and dress code policies

4 Engage students, families, and communities as full partners

2 Provide meaningful professional development and supports for all adults in schools

5 Provide access to integrated wraparound services and supports

3 Ensure equitable access and support for success in rigorous and culturally sustaining curricula

6 Diversify the educator workforce

While many of these policy areas are led at the local level, state leaders can support local leaders with three key levers:

1. Prioritize policies that impact SEAD in state goals. In doing so, state leaders can set the expectation for local leaders to implement SEAD with an equity lens

2. Provide evidence-based, equity-focused guidance and sufficient funding to ensure local leaders have the necessary resources to meet these goals

3. Make data publicly available so advocates and local and state leaders can make informed decisions about what works and how to improve

Notes on implementation

State actions set the stage for districts and schools to implement strong practices that holistically support students' social, emotional, and academic development. However, there is a wide range of implementation at the local level. Some states may have strong policies that are not yet being implemented with fidelity at the district level, and some districts may choose to implement strong policies and practices despite a lack of policy or guidance from the state level. If your school district is not fully implementing the policies discussed below, you can ask district leaders what they are doing to meet or surpass the expectations set forth by the state.

District leaders looking to implement better practices can utilize the tools available from the Alliance for Resource Equity (ARE), a partnership between Ed Trust and Education Resource Strategies, which categorizes the student experience into [10 "dimensions of equity."](#) ARE's toolkit includes a diagnostic tool that is organized around "key questions" and how to identify problem areas. It also includes practical guidebooks that offer actions to address these problems. Under each section below, relevant key questions from the ARE diagnostic tool and guidebooks are highlighted for district leaders and advocates who want to improve policies and practices at the local level.



HOW DOES WASHINGTON SUPPORT SEAD THROUGH SCHOOL DISCIPLINE?

TOO OFTEN, HARMFUL SCHOOL DISCIPLINE PRACTICES AND DRESS CODES HAVE BEEN USED TO DAMAGE STUDENTS' SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT. As such, students of color and students with disabilities are disproportionately excluded from school and miss opportunities to learn and develop holistically. States can influence [district and school disciplinary actions](#) by setting clear goals to reduce disparities and overuses in discipline, ensuring a strong set of data is publicly transparent, and adopting more positive approaches to discipline, such as restorative justice.

Bright spots

Washington stands out as doing positive work in school discipline by...

- Setting policies and providing resources that...
- [Ensure students do not experience physical harm in schools](#) by banning corporal punishment and having sufficient, explicit parameters around restraining students
- [Ban harmful discipline policies and practices](#), including zero-tolerance policies, the use of exclusionary discipline for young learners and minor offenses, and discriminatory hair and grooming codes

How to improve

Washington still has much to improve, however, and should prioritize...

- Setting clear and equity-centered goals that aim to decrease the use of exclusionary discipline and reduce disparities in discipline
- Setting policies and provide resources that...

- Provide guidance and funding for schools and districts to adopt restorative discipline policies and practices
- Provide guidance and funding for schools and districts to provide professional development in positive discipline practices
- Ensure the state education agency has staff to support districts with technical assistance and implementation for positive discipline practices
- Collecting and publicly reporting data that...
 - Shows the categories of the offenses, distinguishes types of punishments in addition to lengths of punishments, and identifies the number of students suspended or expelled more than once
 - Is disaggregated beyond race and gender to also show information for English Learner students and students with disabilities and can be cross-tabulated to show the intersections of identities in discipline data.

Key question for district leaders

Does each student experience a safe school with transparent, culturally sensitive, and consistently enforced rules and discipline policies?



HOW DOES WASHINGTON SUPPORT SEAD THROUGH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

TO EQUITABLY SUPPORT STUDENTS' SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATORS MUST HAVE THE SKILLS TO CREATE CULTURALLY AFFIRMING ENVIRONMENTS, BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR STUDENTS, AND SUPPORT STUDENTS' ACADEMIC SUCCESS. They must also have mindsets geared toward anti-racism. [Professional development](#) (PD) ensures that educators learn these mindsets and skills. States should encourage and support districts to provide [high-quality](#) and relevant [professional learning opportunities](#), especially in asset-based pedagogies (e.g., culturally responsive practices); diversity, equity, and inclusion; adult social-emotional learning (SEL) or adult mindsets; and strategies and approaches for evidence-based, equity-focused, systemic SEL for students.

Bright spots

Washington stands out as doing positive work in professional development by...

- Setting policies and providing resources that...
 - [Require preparation programs to provide training](#) in effective, culturally responsive pedagogy
 - [Provide online SEL modules](#) for staff to improve their own understanding and skills
 - [Showcase approved providers](#) for professional development to ensure high-quality training is provided in various skills needed for SEAD

How to improve

Washington still has much to improve, however, and should prioritize...

- Setting clear and equity-centered goals that clearly articulate a vision for professional development with an aim of addressing adult mindsets and SEL, and providing the skills necessary to support students' well-being
- Setting policies and provide resources that...
 - Require preparation programs to provide training that improves educator mindsets, such as diversity, equity, and inclusion training, or anti-bias/anti-racism training
 - Require educators to demonstrate mastery of a combination of skills and knowledge needed to support students' SEAD for licensure renewal or recertification
 - Ensure the state education agency has staff to support district leaders with identifying and funding high-quality professional development
- Collecting and publicly reporting data that shows educators' perceptions of professional development offerings at the district level

Key questions for district leaders

[Does each student have access to strong teachers?](#)

[Does each student have positive relationships with staff and other students?](#)

[Is each student enrolled in a school and attending classes that are racially/ethnically and socioeconomically diverse?](#)



HOW DOES WASHINGTON SUPPORT SEAD THROUGH EDUCATOR DIVERSITY?

ACCESS TO A RACIALLY AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE TEACHER WORKFORCE IS BENEFICIAL FOR ALL P-12 STUDENTS, PARTICULARLY FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR, WHO OFTEN THRIVE IN CLASSROOMS LED BY TEACHERS WHO [SHARE THEIR RACIAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND](#). Educators of color are more likely to have [higher expectations for their students of color](#). Students of color and White students also [feel cared for and academically challenged by teachers of color](#). Additionally, research shows that Black students who have at least one Black teacher are [less likely to drop out of school and more likely to enroll in college](#), and [teacher-student racial matches affects social, emotional, and academic skills](#). By working to diversify the educator workforce and retain diverse educators, schools will foster a sense of belonging and challenge students to thrive.

Bright spots

Washington stands out as doing positive work in educator diversity by...

- Collecting and publicly reporting data that [shares school-level data](#) on the racial demographics of the educator workforce

- [Setting policies and providing resources](#) that...
 - Provide funding for preparation programs, districts, and candidate conditional loan scholarships to support [alternative routes programs](#) that engage Grow Your Own teacher strategies to address district and candidate needs
 - Invest in the scholarship and loan forgiveness programs, such as the Future Teacher Conditional Scholarship Program, to attract students of color into preparation programs
 - Convene multiple stakeholder groups to develop publicly available reports on areas that impact the racial diversity of the workforce in the state
 - [Adopt rigorous program approval standards](#) to compel teacher preparation programs to recruit and graduate candidates of color
 - Interrogate licensure policies for racial bias and adopt licensure policies that increase diversity while maintaining quality and rigor through the Testing Barriers Workgroup
 - Develop a micro-credential program to develop culturally responsive practices and an equity lens to continue teachers' education

How to improve

Washington still has much to improve, however, and should prioritize...

- Setting clear and equity-centered goals that are developed with local stakeholder input and support for the goals
- Setting policies and provide resources that...
 - Invest in preparation programs that prepare a high number of teachers of color, including minority serving institutions
 - Invest in diversifying the educator workforce in areas that influence hiring and recruitment decisions, including the education leaders at teacher preparation programs, district leadership, and school leadership
- Collecting and publicly reporting data that...
 - Shares the racial makeup of candidates attending in-state teacher preparation programs and completing in-state teacher preparation programs
 - Shares school-level information about the retention rates of educators of color

Key questions for district leaders

[Does each student have access to strong teachers?](#)

[Does the teacher workforce reflect student diversity?](#)



HOW DOES WASHINGTON SUPPORT SEAD THROUGH RIGOROUS AND CULTURALLY SUSTAINING CURRICULA?

IN ORDER TO THRIVE, STUDENTS MUST BE CHALLENGED AND ENCOURAGED TO MEET HIGH EXPECTATIONS. This means students should have access to [rigorous, deeper learning](#) and [culturally sustaining](#) curricula. When students can both see themselves in the work and feel their teachers challenging them to excel, what follows is a stauncher belief in themselves to reach their goals.

Bright spots

Washington stands out as doing positive work in rigorous and culturally sustaining curricula by...

- Setting clear and equity-centered goals that...
 - [Identify the need for education to be both rigorous and culturally sustaining](#)
 - [Call on districts to equitably enroll students in advanced coursework](#)
- Setting policies and providing resources that...
 - [Ensure the state education agency has staff available](#) to support districts with curricular needs
 - [Provide guidance for schools and districts](#) to adopt culturally sustaining curricula across some core subjects
 - [Provide guidance for schools and districts](#) to select standards-aligned curricula
 - [Require automatic enrollment](#) in advanced coursework in high school
- Collecting and publicly reporting data that [shows dual credit completion](#) with disaggregation by student demographics

How to improve

Washington still has much to improve, however, and should prioritize...

- Setting clear and equity-centered goals that...
 - Explicitly state curricula should be rigorous and culturally sustaining
 - Identify specific actions that must be taken to equitably enroll students in advanced coursework
- Setting policies and provide resources that...
 - Ensure the state education agency's staff can support the implementation of culturally relevant or culturally sustaining curricula
 - Provide guidance on how to select culturally sustaining curricula that is aligned to learning standards, and provide a review process for determining whether curricula meet these criteria

- Collecting and publicly reporting data that is disaggregated by course type, and shows both enrollment and success rates for students

Key questions for district leaders

[Does each student have access to teaching practices that are engaging, culturally relevant, and standards-aligned?](#)

[Does each student have access to high-quality and culturally relevant curriculum and instructional materials?](#)

[Is each student enrolled in courses that set them up for success in college and a meaningful career, including equal access to advanced courses?](#)



HOW DOES WASHINGTON SUPPORT SEAD THROUGH STUDENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

[STRONG PARTNERSHIPS](#) BETWEEN EDUCATORS, STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT. When educators engage the communities they serve, they gain a deeper understanding of their students, including their strengths, identities, and needs. This fortifies relationships with students and [increases students' academic success](#). It is also important that school leaders ensure that the voices of students of color and their families, and those from low-income and other marginalized backgrounds, are [centered in policy and practice decisions](#).

Bright spots

Washington stands out as doing positive work in student, family, and community engagement by...

- Setting clear and equity-centered goals that [include having students engaging in their schools and broader communities, and encourage meaningful family and community engagement at every level of the education system](#)
- Setting policies and providing resources that...
 - [Include student, family, and community engagement in teacher evaluation rubrics](#)
 - Offer [multiple parent guides in different languages](#), a [multilingual families toolkit](#) to help schools and districts maintain relationships with multilingual families, and has a [Family Engagement Framework Workgroup](#) with several student and family groups from diverse representations
 - [Provide guidance that explicitly links family and community engagement to student learning](#), identifies evidence-based strategies, and offers guidance on partnering with community organizations to accelerate learning
 - Ensure student voice is included in state-level decisions by having a [student representative on the state board of education](#)
 - Include student, family, and community engagement in [teaching standards](#) and [school leader standards](#)

How to improve

Washington still has much to improve, however, and should prioritize...

- Setting clear and equity-centered goals that provide a clear plan that details how districts can use evidence-based practices for engagement
- Setting policies and provide resources that...
 - Create a statewide office for student, family, and community engagement
 - Provide professional development to educators in engagement
 - Ensure family and community voice is included in state-level decisions, such as including a parent on the state board of education or having a parent advisory council
 - Requiring training in student, family, and community engagement for teacher certification and leader certification
- Collecting and publicly reporting data that shows disaggregated information about student, family, and community engagement, such as student and family survey and satisfaction data

Key questions for district leaders

[Does each student attend a school that actively and meaningfully engages families?](#)

[Does each student who needs targeted social-emotional support receive it?](#)

[Does each student who needs targeted physical and mental health supports receive it?](#)

[Does each student who needs targeted family support receive it?](#)



HOW DOES WASHINGTON SUPPORT SEAD THROUGH WRAPAROUND SERVICES?

MULTI-TIERED OR INTEGRATED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT (MTSS) — ALSO KNOWN AS WRAPAROUND SERVICES — PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH ACCESS TO RESOURCES TO OVERCOME ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC BARRIERS TO SUCCESS. [MTSS are frameworks](#) that districts and schools can use to [connect services](#) to students. When schools identify and provide targeted supports to each student, when the health and well-being of students are met, and when efforts are made to ensure students feel they belong, students can better engage in schools.

Bright spots

Washington stands out as doing positive work in wraparound services by...

- Setting clear and equity-centered goals that [encourage schools to adopt MTSS](#)
- Setting policies and providing resources that...

- [Provide guidance](#) for districts and schools to develop and fund evidence-based MTSS
- Provide health and housing support, including [oral health supports](#) to students and information for supporting [students experiencing homelessness](#)
- Prohibit [lunch-shaming for unpaid meal debt](#)
- Include a [comprehensive anti-bullying policy](#) that explicitly names groups of students most likely to be bullied and harassed
- Support [transgender K-12 students](#) in participating in athletics and using facilities based on gender identity
- [Require districts to monitor the progress and impacts of multi-tiered or integrated support systems](#) for continuous improvement, including using student data to inform decisions
- Collecting and publicly reporting data that [requires districts and schools to conduct both student-level and school-level needs and strengths assessments](#)

How to improve

Washington still has much to improve, however, and should prioritize...

- Setting clear and equity-centered goals that explicitly prioritize developing and implementing multi-tiered systems for students with the highest needs
- Setting policies and provide resources that...
 - Create a council or commission to coordinate interagency services for children and youth
 - Expressly authorize school districts to bill for services delivered to all Medicaid-enrolled students without requiring services to be documented in an IEP or IFSP
 - Increase access to nutrition by requiring all schools to participate in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program and requiring early childhood education programs to provide meals or snacks that meet nutrition guidelines for licensing
 - Mandate school counseling for all grades with no greater than the 250:1 ratio recommended by the American School Counselor Association
- Collecting and publicly reporting data that requires districts to measure and report on the fidelity of implementation of multi-tiered or integrated systems of support

Key questions for district leaders

[Does each student who needs targeted social-emotional support receive it?](#)

[Does each student who needs targeted physical and mental health supports receive it?](#)

[Does each student who needs targeted family support receive it?](#)