



# Student success is at the **heart** of our work.

## WHO WE ARE

Partnership for Learning believes **every** student deserves a quality education. Since 1994, as the Washington business community's voice in education, the Partnership has focused on communicating and advocating for the success of **every** student. Our goal is to create a stronger public education system that prepares **all** students for college and the world of work.

## WHAT WE DO

As a trusted source of information about Washington's efforts to improve public schools, Partnership for Learning makes complex issues accessible. Our strong roots in three key areas help build demand for an education system in which **every** student is taught by an effective teacher and attends an excellent school.

### COMMUNICATOR

Through policy briefs and community events, the Partnership provides practical information that offers policymakers the tools they need to make decisions that improve our schools.

Through our creative campaigns, we educate and engage a wide range of audiences to build demand for important reforms such as school accountability and teacher and principal evaluation.

Through our e-newsletters and website, we provide timely, razor-sharp analysis of the most relevant education issues being discussed and debated in Washington.

### COALITION BUILDER

An effective education system takes dedicated and engaged leaders, policymakers and families. The Partnership helps groups connect and work together to yield positive results for students.

Co-led by Partnership for Learning, the Excellent Schools Now coalition brings together education and community groups to promote a shared set of education reform priorities.

Through stakeholder engagement and ongoing outreach, the Excellent Schools Now coalition developed a comprehensive reform plan to forward a common agenda of college and career readiness for all students.

### CONVENER

The Partnership informs and mobilizes leaders and communities across the state to break down barriers and accelerate student achievement.

The Partnership hosts events to discuss education issues, identify challenges and design innovative solutions to address problems such as math and science education and performance.

We draw from the best national work and research to help inform education reform strategies in Washington state.

## FIND OUT MORE

For daily updates on key education issues, visit our website at [www.partnership4learning.org](http://www.partnership4learning.org)



Washington State's education system continues to deliver disappointing results for our students and the future of our state. This, combined with the ripple effects from the 2007 economic recession, has caused unemployment rates to hover between nine and ten percent, fierce competition for a family-wage job, and deep state budget cuts to K-12 and higher education.

Qualifications that were once sufficient to obtain a family-wage job, such as a high school diploma, are no longer enough. By 2018, it is estimated that at least 67 percent of new family-wage jobs in Washington will require post-secondary education or training. And yet, just 39 percent of Washington's young adults, ages 25-34, currently hold a college degree. Furthermore, of those who do graduate from high school and attend a post-secondary institution, more than 37 percent end up in remedial classes. Additionally, three out of ten freshmen do not return their sophomore year. This disconnection between educational attainment and workforce demand is not acceptable for the economic health of our state or its citizens.

To address these skills gaps, the state must reprioritize its investments in education. At Partnership for Learning, we believe every student should graduate from high school prepared to succeed in college and in the workplace. **To achieve this goal, our state's education leaders must take real action to strengthen our K-12 education system and support the state's higher education institutions.**

# 1

## **Raise Student Achievement through Performance-Based Policies**

Teacher and principal effectiveness has a greater impact on student learning than any other factor in a school system. Washington can ensure that our most effective educators are in our classrooms and schools by:

- Implementing an educator evaluation system that incorporates multiple measures of student growth; and
- Enacting performance-based policies that drive decisions regarding teacher placement, continuing contracts, compensation, and professional development.

# 2

## **Accelerate Student Performance in Math and Science**

Success in high school math and science is critical to student success in a two- or four-year university, a technical training program, and in virtually every family wage career. Washington must continue to support opportunities and access for students to explore STEM fields, programs and classes by:

- Supporting implementation of the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and mathematics, the Next Generation Science Standards, and the curriculum and assessment tools needed to deliver student results.

# 3

## **Support Washington's Higher Education System**

Faced with mounting budget challenges, Washington state has disproportionately reduced its funding for higher education relative to other services. This undermines Washington's ability to develop a globally competitive workforce and foster research and innovation critical to economic expansion. Lawmakers must place greater priority on postsecondary education in 2012 by:

- Working to increase public and private investments and provide institutions with the latitude necessary to remain competitive.

# 4

## **Streamline Education State Governance**

Washington's education governance system is fragmented. Diffuse accountability among agencies leads to well-intentioned plans that become mired in implementation and decision-making gridlock. Lawmakers must take action to remove these silos by:

- Streamlining state education governance to establish clear pre-kindergarten through grade 13 education goals, measures, standards, areas of responsibility and authority, and accountability for student performance and education reform.