

# Student Planning and Graduation Support for Secondary Students

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## Resource Proposal

Provide a *comprehensive guidance program* that organizes crucial services to middle and high school students, and their parents, as they navigate credit and graduation requirements, credit retrieval, requirements to meet standard in reading, writing, mathematics, and science, five<sup>1</sup> alternative routes to meeting standard, career and technical education, and requirements for a Culminating Project and High School and Beyond Plan. Personalizing education through sustained planning support for students and including their families' involvement pays dividends in improved education achievement and post secondary success.

The proposal has two components: resources to implement Navigation 101 at the middle and high school level based on grants of \$20,000 per secondary school and a staffing allocation for a graduation advisor in high schools (a ratio of 1:1000 students in grades 9-12). The two components provide critical help with managing new requirements and routes to meeting requirements for graduation, staffing for Navigation coordination at the district and building levels, resources for extra time spent on Navigation responsibilities by educator-advisors, and support for the logistical costs of added activities, such as the student-led conferences. Funding would support activities and costs driven by the portfolio/planner used to meet the High School and Beyond Plan and Culminating Project and the myriad of options for meeting graduation requirements.

*This proposal primarily addresses educational and career planning guidance. It complements the guidance, counseling and social work support provided by certificated counselors, social workers, and/or family advocates requested for all students in Component D of the staffing model.*

## Background on Student Requirements and System Changes

**More Rigor, More Relevance:** In 1992, the Governor's Council on Education Reform and Finance (GCERF) called for more rigor in Washington schools resulting in new high school graduation requirements. Students must now meet standard on mathematics, reading, and writing through the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) or five different available alternatives. They must also complete a Culminating Project and a High School and Beyond Plan. And the effort continues as the State Board of Education considers adding more math requirements and increasing the total credits required for graduation.

The increased graduation requirements are not satisfied by academic class work alone. A High School and Beyond plan is a student's individual statement of intent, experience and goals. Similarly a

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<sup>1</sup> Alternatives include attain a specific score level on the SAT/ACT/PSAT college entrance tests; attaining high scores on Advanced Placement tests; Grade Point Average comparisons and benchmarking; meeting standard on a Collection of Evidence (COE); and continuing to take math courses (applies to meeting standard on the mathematics WASL only).

# Student Planning and Graduation Support for Secondary Students

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Culminating Project is an encapsulation of the individual students' learning and experience. These tasks are intentionally defined to personalize education and motivate student performance. But each complicates the job of supporting educational success, expanding the school work load and the kinds of resources it needs.

HB 1209 also noted students' need for greater connection between their school work and their working futures, an observation that resulted in Goal 4 "**Understand** the importance of work and finance and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect future **career and educational opportunities.**" Helping students set career and education goals has only been supported financially through career and technical education (CTE).

**Understanding Choices:** Further, students preparing for life after high school face diverse options. Beyond higher graduation standards, students and parents now face more choices in high school than in the decades when the current staffing/funding formula was developed. To choose well, they must know their goals, their abilities, their preferences – and prepare accordingly. To avoid choices that limit their futures, they must begin considering options in middle school. Even choosing "college" presents complicated choices, because preparing for a highly competitive university can be different from preparing for a one to three-year technical certification. Skills Center? Running Start? These opportunities are a boon for motivating and preparing students only if they have the information and perspective to make sound choices.

**Keeping Track of Student Progress to Graduation:** Schools have always had to monitor student progress toward graduation requirements. Specific requirements such as mandatory courses (Washington State history or occupational credits) and the fact that students can accumulate some credits in middle school have always complicated the task. Requirements for a culminating project and post-secondary plan have added a new layer of detail.

The requirement to meet standard on reading, writing, mathematics, and science, and the options to meet these requirements through several simultaneous routes make accurate tracking of student progress very intensive. Students must meet standard on two WASL assessments (reading and writing), they must meet standard on the WASL mathematics assessment or keep taking courses, and soon students will also have to meet standard in science. Students can take each assessment up to five times, and pursue any one or all of six alternatives to the WASL, for one more of the WASL components. A 10th grader who does not meet standard in a content area has at least twenty opportunities in the 11th and 12th grade to demonstrate they have met standard in that content area (4 retakes, 4 COE submissions, 1 or 2 WASL/Grades comparison, and 13 college admission tests).

# Student Planning and Graduation Support for Secondary Students

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Tracking student progress became a management struggle for schools as the Class of 2008 prepared for graduation and as they attempted to help the Class of 2009 address potential deficiencies during their junior year. In the 2007-08 school year, districts assisted students with over 60,000 retakes, at least 2,300 portfolios of student work, nearly 400 WASL/grades-comparisons, 1460 test scores on the SAT, PSAT, or ACT to demonstrate meeting standard, and 1250 out-of-state waivers for students new to this state. Districts also assisted many of the 174 students who filed appeals to the state regarding their WASL scores.

Tracking student progress must begin when high school credits are first awarded. In a 2007 report, the National Center for Education Statistics reported a strong correlation between lower than average credits earned in the 9th grade and leaving school before graduating.

## **Background on Navigation 101**

**Navigation 101 Model:** Navigation 101 first emerged from the experimentation of one Washington school district, Franklin Pierce, which faced performance disparities among its students, and between its students and those in other districts. They sought to better connect students and parents to high school, implement a comprehensive guidance program, help students plan their course needs, and connect students with other non-academic support where needed -- all to assist more students to make their time in high school meaningful and ensure that they graduated on time.

To date, Navigation 101 is the only model for a comprehensive guidance program in Washington schools for which there is proven effect upon student outcomes. While districts have chosen to implement Navigation 101 for a variety of reasons, most responded to its direct approach to improving performance among minority and disadvantaged youth. In fact, Navigation is particularly lauded by families who find it difficult to advise and support their students. The exceptional turnout of parents and guardians for student-led conferences is evidence of that. While Navigation 101 districts previously averaged a 40% parent attendance at conferences, some individual schools struggled to achieve a 20% attendance rate. Yet in 2007 among the Navigation 101 schools, 93% of the students holding a student-led conference had a parent or guardian attend. And students, parents and educator-advisors routinely give the conferences high marks for their value.

Details of Navigation 101 implementation vary among schools. Some districts emphasize the development of the advisor-student relationship, so Navigation classes meet several times a week, even daily. Other districts focus more on the delivery of the Navigation 101 curriculum and opt for fewer but longer Navigation sessions. No district meets less often than eight times a year (essentially, once a month). Yet every Navigation 101 district has five program elements in common. All districts:

- ◆ Assign students an educator-advisor with whom they will meet consistently throughout their time in that building (one advisor during middle school; one advisor during high school.)

## Student Planning and Graduation Support for Secondary Students

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- ◆ Require students to create a planner/portfolio reflective of their work across time and indicative of their educational and career planning. In many district, this portfolio has the depth and rigor to meet the graduation requirements of both the High School and Beyond Plan and the Culminating Project.
- ◆ Hold student-led conferences at least annually, in which the students present their portfolio of work to their parents (or significant adult), display their work from the past year, explain their course choices for the coming year, and discuss their academic and career plans.
- ◆ Create “student-driven schedules”, meaning that the districts schedule the courses students request as needed to progress on their individual education plans. Some districts, like Vancouver, have been adjusting their schedules to student requests for years. Some districts struggle to find the teachers needed to meet growing student demand. But all Navigation 101 districts are committed to helping students reach their educational and career goals.
- ◆ Use data to make program improvements and contribute to the state’s understanding of the program.

To achieve these goals, districts need resources at the state, regional and school level. Essential elements include:

- a) **Motivated staff:** In short, students do not just need an advisor. They need an advisor who cares and who knows how to help. Fortunately, experience with Navigation 101 creates educator commitment. Data that demonstrates how students change and how performance improves helps sustain that commitment. Staff in many places, however, feel beleaguered by the number of changes in their schools, no matter how worthy the initiative. Districts must make sure they are uniting rather than fragmenting the changes. Many districts need time for more staff development so that educators understand how Navigation activities contribute to learning, and how Navigation skills meet the graduation requirements. Many districts need time for more educators to develop advisor skills: educators want to be good at what they teach.
- b) **Logistical support:** Engaging parents in successful student-led conferences demands organization before, during and after the event. Students need tools (portfolios as well as preparation). Parents need translators, take-away tools, and more communication with schools than one annual event. The delivery of the Navigation curriculum, while provided by the state, must be tailored to the school, timed with the school schedule, and given just-in-time support for educator-advisors. Students who transfer in, miss sessions, or otherwise fall out of sequence must be afforded opportunities to catch-up. All these operational details require staff time and materials.
- c) **State-level leadership:** It is not cost-effective for every district to create a comprehensive guidance curriculum for itself nor to create the tools (like a model portfolio) each district needs. Local innovation has been a hallmark of Navigation 101, but state leadership replicates and disseminates emerging and promising practices across the state. State-level support for technical assistance and evaluation is also essential.

## Student Planning and Graduation Support for Secondary Students

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**Navigation 101 Historical Funding and Costs:** On its own, Franklin Pierce attracted others to its model and now, with state assistance, over 100 districts have adopted or begun adopting it.

The newest districts to implement Navigation 101 were able to utilize a state-funded grant, authorized by the legislature in 2006. The temporary grants (averaging \$ 10,000 per building for three buildings per district) were intended only to defray the costs of organizing and initiating Navigation 101. The temporary, two-year grants are now ending for the first round of districts, funded in 2006-2007. Districts funded in 2007-2008 will end this school year.

There is more to sustaining Navigation 101 than the initial work. With two years experience with wider implementation, it is clear that Navigation requires staff to serve as district and building leaders on an on-going basis. In most districts the part-time duties of many staff equate to a single FTE for Navigation 101 coordination. Additionally, many districts have chosen to recognize the added responsibilities of advising beyond the previously contracted duties of teachers. Further, Navigation 101 increases parental involvement. The time required to organize successful student conferences is well worth the effort, but when 93% of a schools' students have at least one family member attend a conference, the logistics are daunting. The positive outcome is more parent-school interaction throughout the year. These are admirable outcomes that drive real costs

**Research on Effectiveness of Navigation 101:** The Social & Economic Sciences Research Center (SESRC), Washington State University, has initiated an evaluation system for Navigation 101 districts. They are tracking: participation and satisfaction for student-led conferences (students, parents and educators); course-taking patterns (whether students take more chemistry, physics and algebra 2, key courses for college preparation); WASL pass rates; graduation rates; dropout rates; and remedial rates. They will also be analyzing demographics for each of these outcomes.

To date, however, the only districts with Navigation 101 programs mature enough for a reasonable evaluation are the "lighthouse" districts: Bremerton, Franklin Pierce, Grandview, Mead and Vancouver. Since these districts were not tracking a common set of data until recently, different outcome data are available at each site. Collectively, however, they indicate positive changes in student behavior for students who graduate after several years' of Navigation experiences.

Examples of the Navigation-related changes include:

- ◆ substantial participation in student-led conferencing (71% of students in high schools implementing Navigation 101 held a student-led conference in 2007)
- ◆ remarkably high parent participation (averaged 93% of students with one or more adults attending)
- ◆ consistent approval of conferences: all parents average 94%; high school students average 84% and educators at comprehensive high schools average 87%. (Educators at multi-age and alternative schools actually gave a 100% approval rating.)

## Student Planning and Graduation Support for Secondary Students

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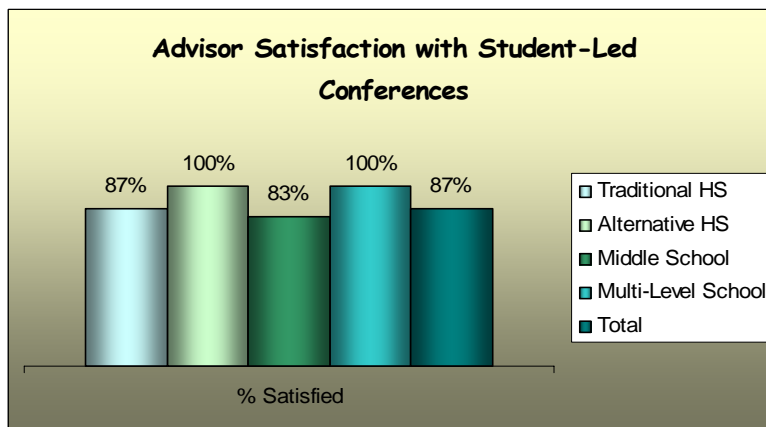
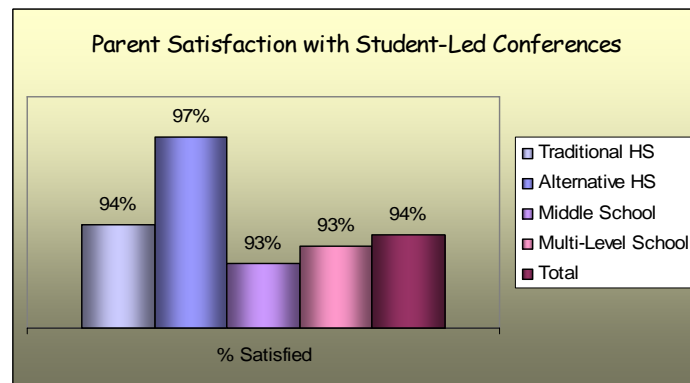
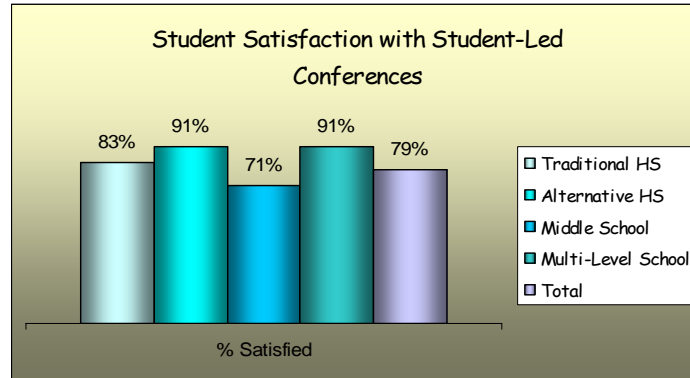
- ◆ reduced remediation among students attending college from the Franklin Pierce School District (a decline from over 70% to 52%, which is only 5% above the state average.)

For additional evidence of Navigation 101 effectiveness see Appendix A.

# Student Planning and Graduation Support for Secondary Students

## APPENDIX A Navigation 101 Evidence of Success

The first goal of Navigation 101 is personalizing education. The Student-Led Conference is the focus around which much of the educator-advisor and student relationship forms. This annual event demonstrates students' skills as planners, articulating both their educational experience and goals, and directly involves parents and family with the school as the students' support.

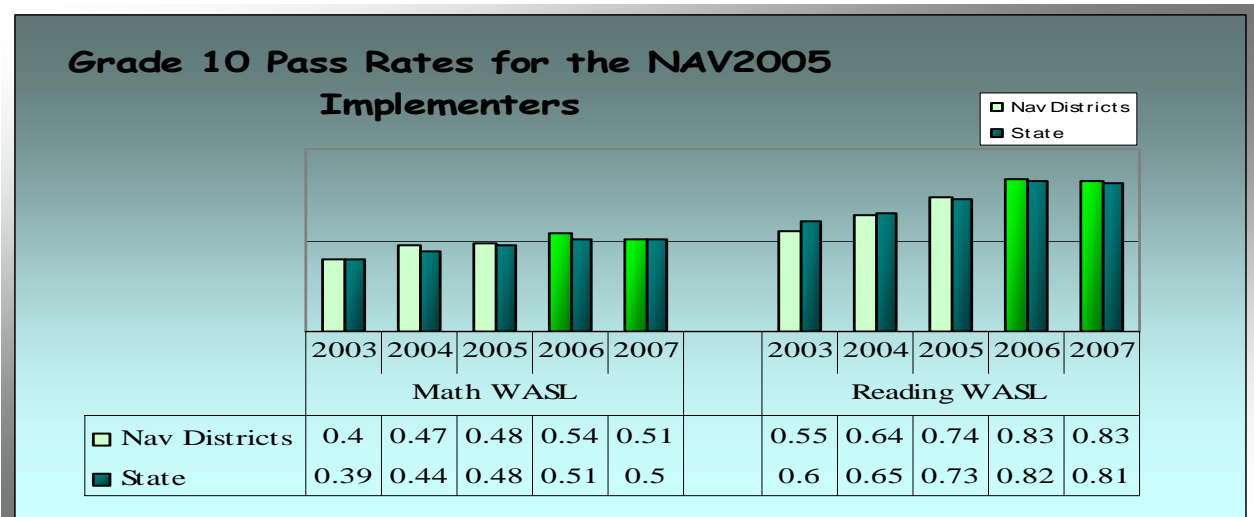


# Student Planning and Graduation Support for Secondary Students

While Navigation 101 has operated in several districts for five years or more, the systematic evaluation of the program is more recent. SESRC/WSU, the program evaluator, uses a combination of data submitted directly by the districts (including parents, students, and educators satisfaction with the student-led conferences) and data derived from OSPI reports (such as WASL scores and graduation rates) to provide the districts with feedback on the effectiveness of Navigation statewide and locally. In the example below, for example, districts that implemented Navigation 101 before the state grants were available can see that they:

- ◆ Continue to meet or beat the state average in WASL math passage;
- ◆ Continue to gain in math achievement;
- ◆ Improved their reading performance, which used to be lower than the state average but now surpass it.

To date, however, few graduating classes have progressed through high school entirely engaged in Navigation. Measuring the effectiveness of a program implemented across multiple years is a daunting task, but some districts now show us how they are faring. An example is this representation of 10<sup>th</sup> grade WASL pass rates for those districts that implemented Navigation in 2005.

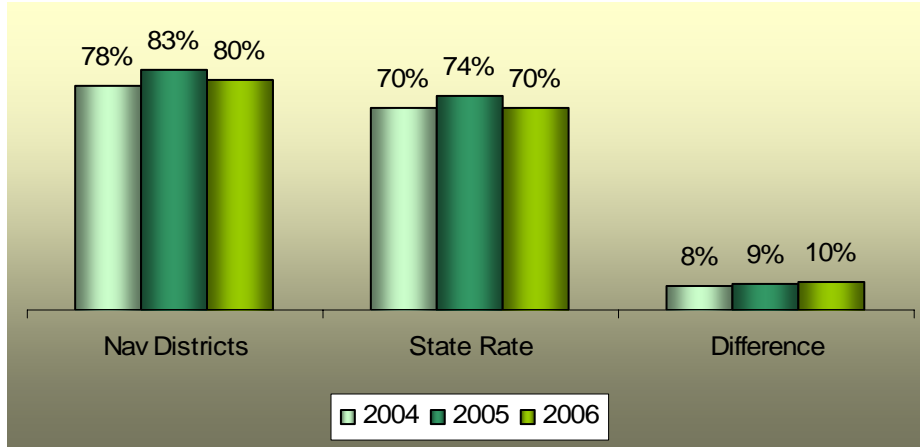




# Student Planning and Graduation Support for Secondary Students

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Further, those Navigation districts that implemented in 2005 graduated a higher proportion of their students than the state overall. Both these Navigation districts and the state saw slight improvement and then decline in the graduation rate in 2006, but the decline among the Navigation districts was slightly less than the rest of the state and their graduation rate continued to improve against the state rate:



## APPENDIX B

### Other States Implementation of Comprehensive Guidance Models

Navigation 101 was developed in the Franklin Pierce School District and is unique to Washington. No other state implements it, although it is being implemented in individual districts in other states (e.g., Paterson, New Jersey)<sup>2</sup>. Navigation 101 derived, however, from guidance models and programs utilized in other states, particularly Missouri and Utah. Both were, in turn, based upon the work of the two most well-known advocates of comprehensive guidance and teacher advisory: Norm Gysbers and Robert Myrick. Both advanced the idea that guidance is an integral part of a school's educational mission rather than an auxiliary service to the academic curriculum.

Gysbers' guidance model tightly integrates the guidance function with the academic mission of schools. It emphasizes the centrality of guidance to the total education program, and defines the relationship between guidance and other aspects of the student's education. Essential elements include: a) a guidance curriculum, including structured classroom activities; b) individual student planning, including activities that help student understand their own growth and development; c). responsive services, including assessment, counseling and teacher/parent/specialist consultation; and d) system support, which include those activities that support the program and its operations. Dr. Gysbers has been an advisor to Navigation 101 as well as the chief architect of the guidance standards adopted by the American School Counselors Association.

The assumption behind Robert D. Myrick's Teacher Advisor Program (TAP) is that each student needs a friendly adult in the school who knows and cares about him or her in a personal way. The advisors help their advisees deal with the problems of growing up and getting the most out of school. A teacher-advisor is usually responsible for an advisee's cumulative folder, work folders, teacher-student conferences, parent conferences, group guidance experiences and follow-up on academic progress reports. Advisors also consult with other teachers, school counselors, and support personnel about their advisees.

TAP is designed to provide an opportunity for all the students in a school to participate in a small and cohesive group of 15 to 25 peers led by a caring teacher who promotes and monitors individual students' educational and developmental experiences as they progress through school. Teacher-advisors meet with their advisees on a regular basis through a "homeroom" or "homebase" group. This becomes,

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<sup>2</sup> Paterson School District newsletter, winter 2008.

## Student Planning and Graduation Support for Secondary Students

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in effect, the students' home within the school, where they have a supportive teacher and group of peers with whom they can explore personal interests, goals, and concerns.

Since many high school teachers have never had a guidance course, they are unsure of how to lead a non-academic group discussion with adolescents. Counselors therefore assist teachers as they plan and prepare for advisory. In some structures, counselors and teachers work as together as teams to deliver advisory curriculum. Administrative support and periodic evaluation are also essential.

Utah currently provides \$8.7million of state funding for a Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Program (CCGP). To qualify, districts must demonstrate that they meet state CCGP standards. Funds are then awarded to districts at a base level of \$19,227 for the first 400 students and on a prorated basis for 500-1200 students, where they are capped. The maximum any single district receives is just under \$500,000. In total, the \$8.7 million serves 226,206 students at an average of \$38.84 per student. Utah tallied the guidance expenditures made by local districts on counselors, administrative support, career centers and material, extended day contracts, and counseling inservice. The total exceeded \$50 million. With the state CCGP funding at only 13.7% of that total, they are requesting an increase for the next biennium to add \$8.2 million to the CCGP specifically to lower the counselor ratio to 1:350. That would increase state-level spending in Utah to over \$75 per secondary student.

In comparison, Virginia averages 1 guidance counselor to 500 students in its elementary schools; 1 per 400 in middle schools; and 1 per 350 students in its high schools. Tennessee's ratios are 1 per 500 in elementary schools and 1 per 350 in secondary schools.

# Student Planning and Graduation Support for Secondary Students

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## APPENDIX C

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