



Office of the Washington State Auditor

Pat McCarthy

Ensuring Notification to Schools and Districts of Student Criminal Offenses

Presented to Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee
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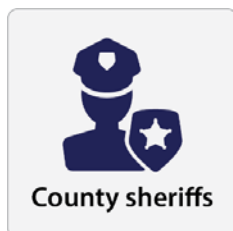
Courts, agencies and sheriffs notify schools and districts



Courts notify school principals for a long list of offenses



State agencies notify school districts before release or transitions to lower levels of confinement



County sheriffs notify schools and districts when a person required to register as a sex offender self-reports an intent to enroll in school

Audit questions



Were K-12 schools and districts notified of offenses committed by students as required by law?

If not, are there opportunities to improve the notification processes?

Key results



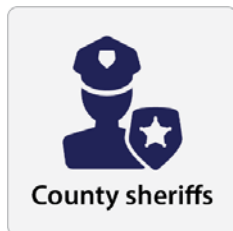
Most courts could not demonstrate sending all required notifications. Courts report improving documentation, training and monitoring.



State agencies missed some notifications.

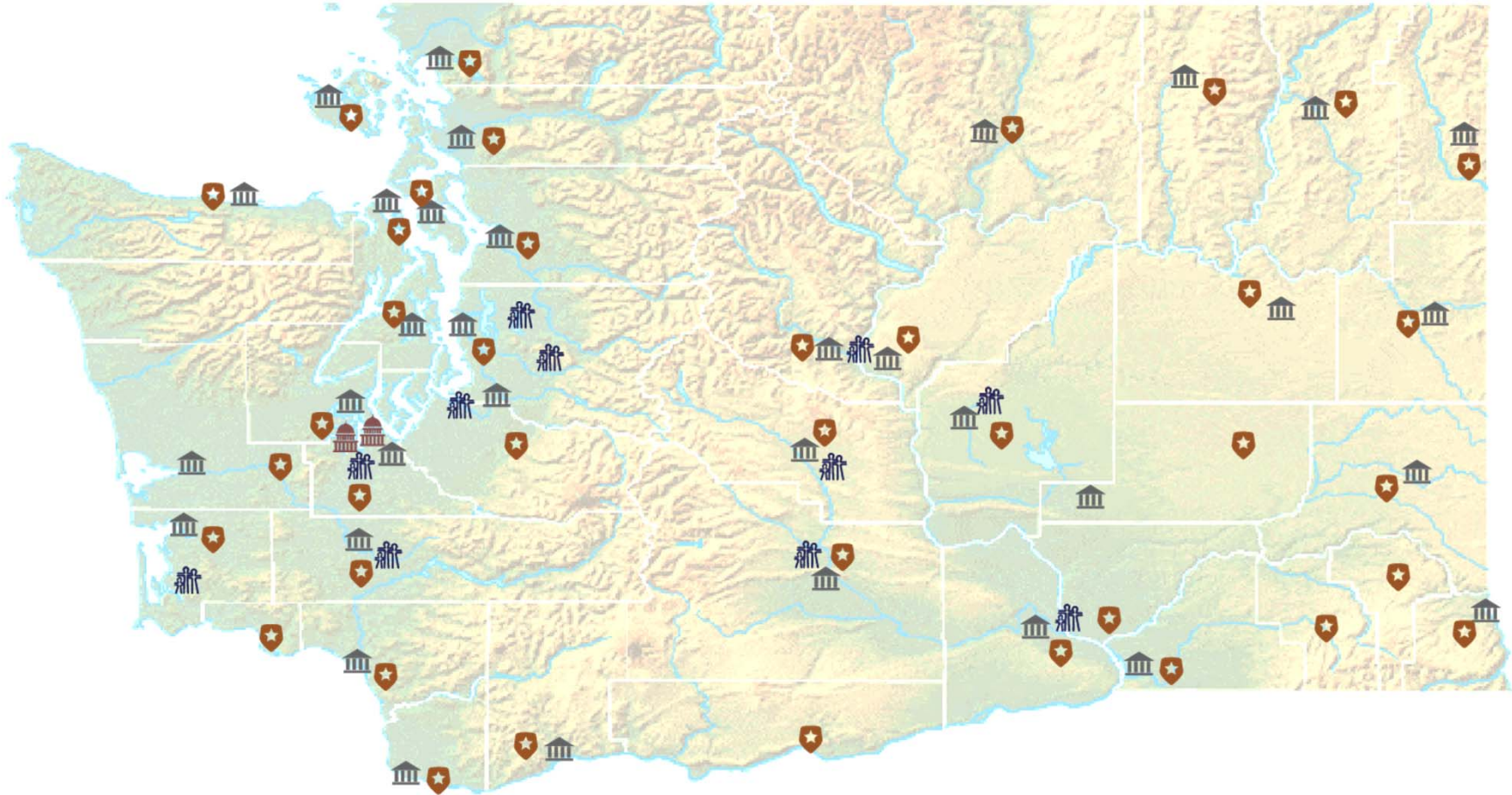


However, many process issues have been resolved.

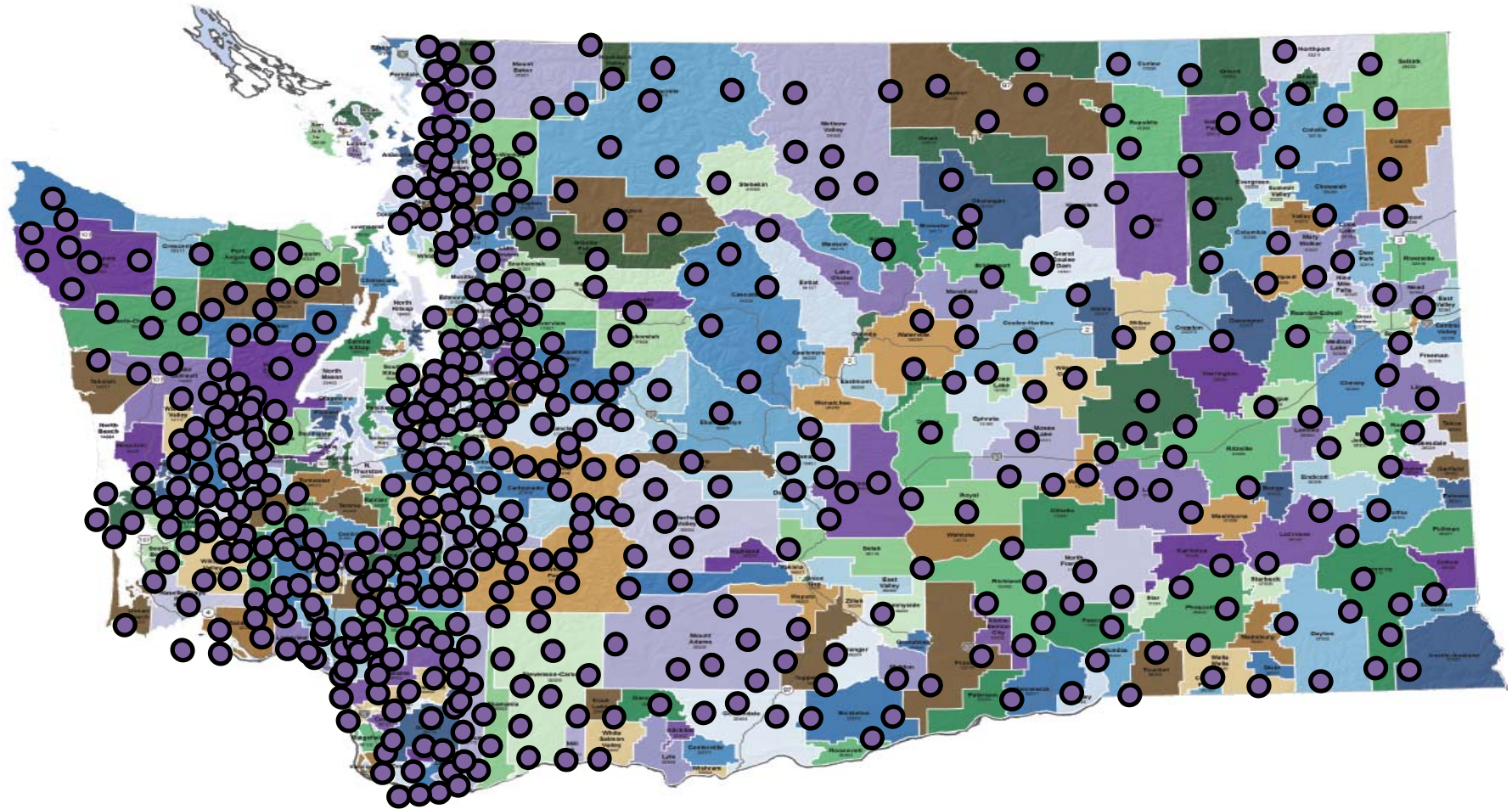


Staff at many sheriff's offices did not identify processes for consistently notifying schools and districts. Their association responded by clarifying requirements.

Notification processes are complex



Notification processes are complex



Audit methodology and scope

Method

To verify if courts, state agencies, and sheriffs notified schools and districts:

- Reviewed available documentation
- Compared that documentation to records showing who required notification

To determine if school districts could confirm they received notifications:

- Identified appropriate district officials
- Asked if they could confirm receipt

Scope

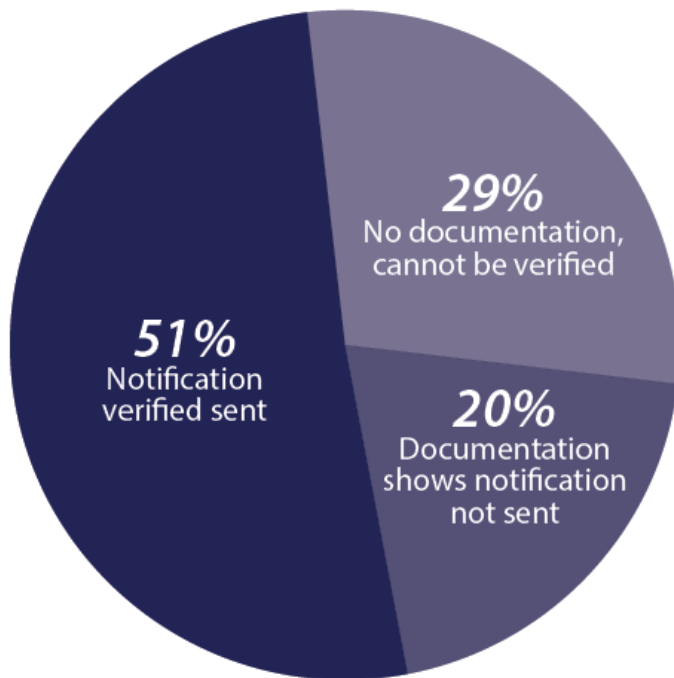
We did not contact principals to determine if they could confirm they had received notifications.

A follow-up audit is currently reviewing notifications within and between schools and districts.

Courts are improving training, monitoring, documentation



Overall, half the notifications could not be verified as sent



The Administrative Office of the Courts, the Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators and individual courts report improving training and guidance

Courts that did not retain documentation report they will in the future

Agencies resolved issues to ensure notifications are sent



Corrections did not send 10 percent

- Agency improved flow of information to staff
- Started notifying for transitions to work release



Juvenile Rehabilitation did not send 4 percent

- Agency improved guidance for staff

Both agencies report they will better monitor processes moving forward

Sheriff's association clarified notification requirements



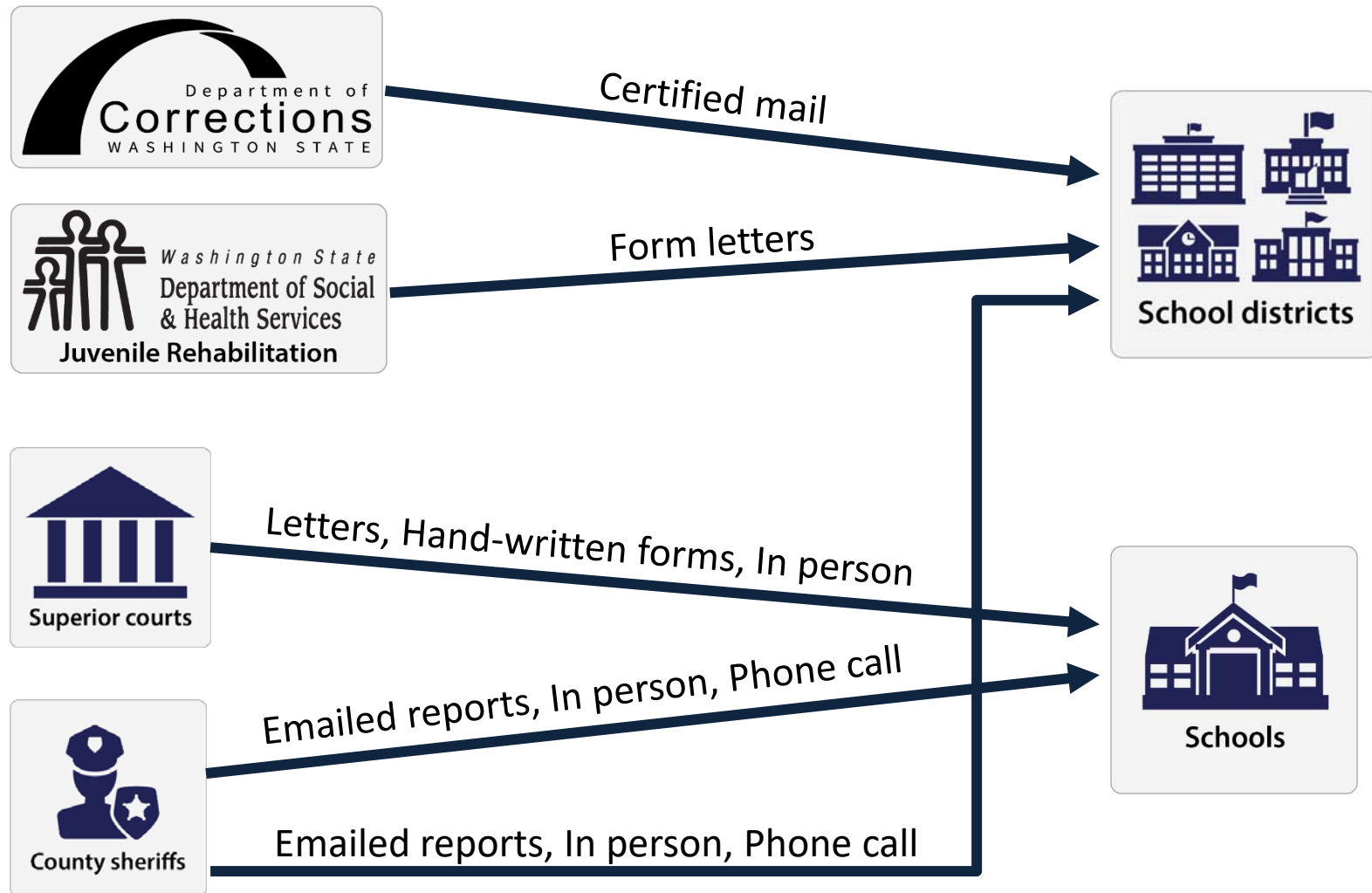
Employees interviewed at three-fourths of the sheriff's offices could not describe a process for consistently notifying schools and school districts

The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs clarified school notification requirements

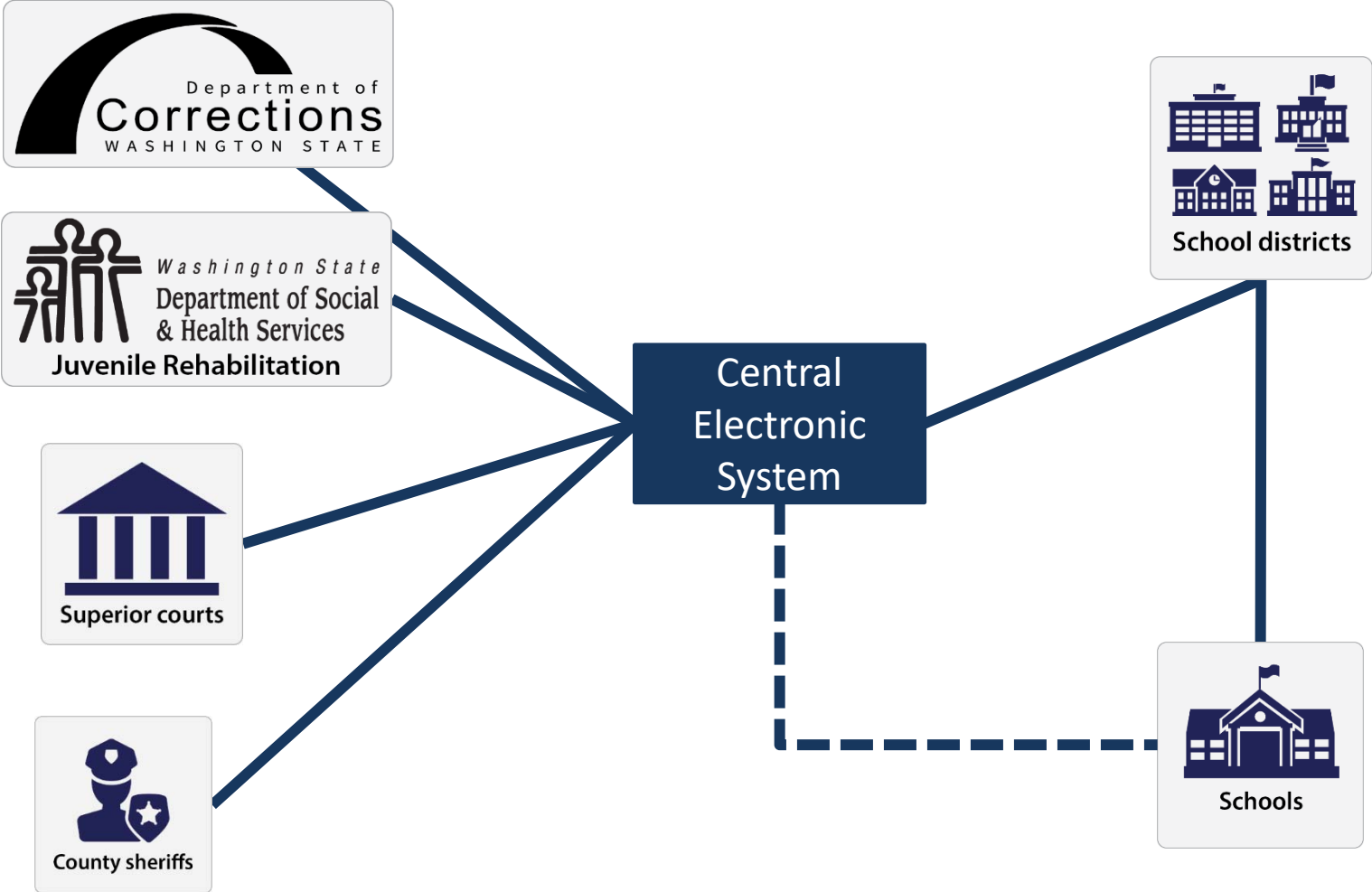
Changes to make it more likely districts can confirm receipt

- Corrections now notified by certified mail before release
- Juvenile Rehabilitation is considering the same
- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and education associations suggested school districts could designate recipients in OSPI's Education Data System

Notifications currently come from many directions



Notification process for consideration



Revisit the list of crimes



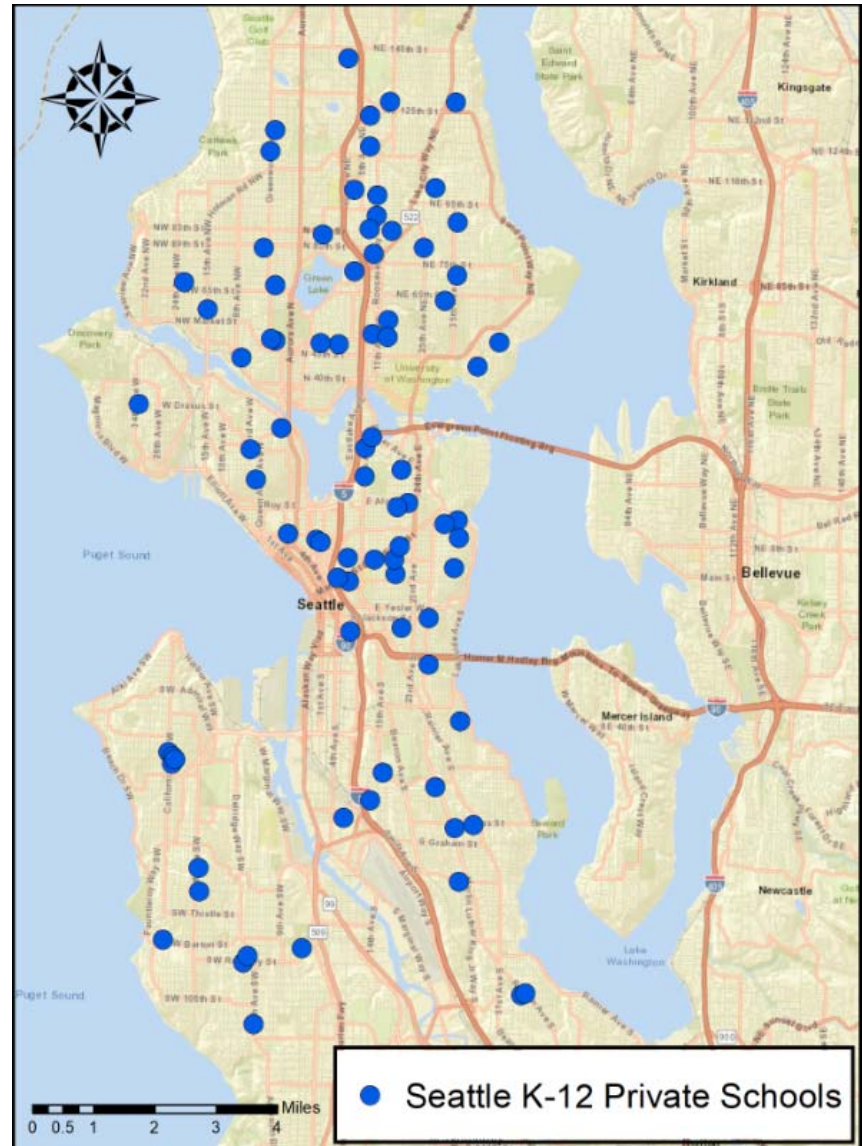
Aggravated Murder-1
Aiming Or Discharging Firearms
Alien Unlawful Possess Firearm
Animal Cruelty-1 w/Sex Mot
Arson-1
Arson-2
Assault-1
Assault-2
Assault-2 Sex Motivation
Assault-3
Assault-4 Prior DV
Assault 4th Deg
Assault Of Child-3
Atmpt Aggravated Murder 1st Degree
Atmpt Arson-1
Atmpt Assault-1
Atmpt Burglary-1
Atmpt Child Molestation-1
Atmpt Child Molestation-2

Only notify schools and districts students may attend



Limit notifications to people who have not received a high school diploma or GED

Notify only those private schools that are part of a juvenile's re-entry plan



Recommendation

The Legislature formalize the work group that met during the audit.

Issues to address include:

- Establish a process to ensure those sending notifications have access to needed information
- Assign a single point of contact at each school district to receive all notifications
- Assemble a proposal and budget to develop and maintain an automated notification system
- Continue to improve guidance, training and monitoring
- Consider potential statutory changes

Recommended members of the workgroup

The Office of the Governor
Administrative Office of the Courts
Association of Washington School Principals
Association of Washington Superior Court Administrators
Department of Corrections
Department of Social & Health Services – Juvenile Rehabilitation
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators
Washington Association of School Administrators
Washington Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs
Washington Federation of Independent Schools
Washington State Association of Prosecuting Attorneys
Washington State Legislature staff
Washington State School Directors' Association

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