



REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

Washington Integrated Student Supports Workgroup Final Report

2017

Authorizing legislation: Chapter 72, Laws of 2016, Sec. 802 (<http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2015-16/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1541-S4.SL.pdf>)

Integrated Student Supports Workgroup

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary..... 3

Introduction 4

Overview of the Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol 5

Findings 7

Recommendations 7

Conclusion and Next Steps 10

References 10

Appendices

Appendix A: Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol..... 11

Executive Summary

Why do some students succeed while others struggle? The reasons are varied and complex. Some students may have academic barriers, others nonacademic barriers – and some students may face both.

In 2016, the state Legislature tasked the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning (CISL) with developing the Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol. The developed protocol framework was drawn from the work of Child Trends, a national child, youth and family research organization. It is flexible enough to adapt to the needs of individual students and structured enough to provide concrete support. It also understands that support cannot be done only in a classroom; it takes a community. That includes social workers, mental health counselors, doctors and others, including parents.

In addition to the protocol, the Legislature also established the Integrated Student Supports (ISS) Workgroup, which would make recommendations on implementing the protocol in school districts. This report describes the workgroup's recommendations.

Integrated Student Supports Implementation Recommendations

The following recommendations are designed to make it easier for school staff to leverage resources in the community and across the education, healthcare, workforce, and social services systems in their efforts to meet both the academic and nonacademic needs of their students and families. When implemented, these recommendations will also help OSPI staff identify best practices for implementing ISS in multiple contexts that will support efforts to scale successful models across the state.

- 1) **Revise or create model policies to help districts partner with local health and human services agencies and community-based organizations more effectively.**
- 2) **Create a temporary, state-level, inter-agency student support coordinating committee to increase equity in access to whole child supports.**
- 3) **Provide targeted implementation support to Integrated Student Supports demonstration sites.**

Introduction

In 2016, the Washington State Legislature created the [Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol](#) (WISSP) when it passed [4SHB 1541](#). The WISSP was one of an extensive set of interdependent strategies for closing educational opportunity gaps recommended by the State’s [Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee](#) (EOGOAC). The components of the WISSP framework include needs assessments, community partnerships, coordination of supports, integration within the school, and data-driven practices.

According to Child Trends, a national child, youth, and family research organization, “Integrated student supports (ISS) are a school-based approach to promoting students’ academic success by developing or securing and coordinating supports that target academic and nonacademic barriers to achievement.”

Integrated Student Supports Workgroup

In addition to adopting the WISSP framework the Legislature also charged OSPI with creating a workgroup to determine how best to implement the WISSP framework. Specifically, the workgroup was charged with making recommendations for policies that needed to be adopted or revised in order to implement the WISSP framework in schools and districts across the state. The membership of the workgroup was to include the following:

- Superintendent of Public Instruction or designee
- Three principals
- Three superintendents
- Representative from a statewide organization specializing in out-of-school learning
- Representative from a statewide organization with expertise in the needs of homeless students
- School counselors from an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school
- Representative of an organization that is an expert on a multi-tiered system of supports
- Representative from a career and technical student organization

The ISS workgroup met between August 2016 and August 2017 to develop the recommendations contained in this report. In the sections that follow we provide a brief introduction to ISS, summarize the components of the WISSP (see Appendix A for the full protocol) and offer recommendations to help facilitate implementation of the WISSP framework across the state.

Overview of the Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol

Purpose of the WISSP

The Legislature charged the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning (CISL) at OSPI with developing the Washington Integrated Students Supports Protocol. The purpose of the protocol, as outlined in the legislation, is to:

- Support a school-based approach to promoting the success of all students;
- Fulfill a vision of public education where educators focus on education, students focus on learning, and auxiliary supports enable teaching and learning to occur unimpeded;
- Encourage the creation, expansion, and quality improvement of community-based supports that can be integrated into the academic environment of schools and school districts;
- Increase public awareness of the evidence showing that academic outcomes are a result of both academic and nonacademic factors; and
- Support statewide and local organizations in their efforts to provide leadership, coordination, technical assistance, professional development, and advocacy to implement high-quality, evidence-based, student-centered, coordinated approaches throughout the state.

Requirements for the WISSP Design

In addition to describing the purpose of the WISSP, the Legislature outlined a set of requirements for its design. First, the Legislature specified that the WISSP must be sufficiently flexible to adapt to the unique needs of schools and districts across the state, yet sufficiently structured to provide all students with the individual support they need for academic success. In addition, the Legislature specified that the WISSP must facilitate the ability of any academic or nonacademic provider to support the needs of at-risk students, including, but not limited to: Out-of-school providers, social workers, mental health counselors, physicians, dentists, speech therapists, and audiologists.

The ISS workgroup used these requirements to help guide its discussion of the kinds of policy and resource infrastructure that needs to be in place to support implementation of the WISSP framework across the state.

Components of the WISSP Framework

The components of the WISSP Framework include needs assessments, community partnerships, coordination of supports, integration within the school, and a data-driven approach. A brief description of each component is described below.

Needs Assessment - A needs assessment must be conducted for all at-risk students in order to develop or identify the needed academic and nonacademic supports within the students' school and community. These supports must be coordinated to provide students with a package of mutually reinforcing supports designed to meet the individual needs of each student.

Community Partnerships - Community partners must be engaged to provide nonacademic supports to reduce barriers to students' academic success, including supports to students' families.

Integrations and Coordination of Supports - The school and district leadership and staff must develop close relationships with providers of academic and nonacademic support to enhance effectiveness of the protocol.

Data-Driven - Students' needs and outcomes must be tracked over time to determine student progress and evolving needs.

The components of the WISSP framework are not unique to ISS. They are also found in other student support frameworks such as Response to Intervention (RTI), School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF), and other tiered systems of support that address one or more domains of learning and development.

These components are also present in a comprehensive multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework that, when implemented, enables educators and community members to work together to effectively and efficiently address students' needs across multiple domains of learning and development within one seamless system.

Outline of the WISSP

The WISSP is broken into three substantive parts (see Appendix A for the complete Protocol). The first part outlines features of a school and community context that will enable implementation of an ISS approach. Features of an enabling context include cultural norms, such as a vision for student learning and high expectations for student success, along with structural components like policies, procedures, and communication protocols. Successful implementation of ISS requires participation from all school staff and the engagement of families and communities within a context that supports this collaborative way of work.

The second part of the WISSP includes a description of each of the key components of the WISSP framework and outlines essential practices linked to each component. The essential practices are drawn from research on both ISS (also known as full-service community schools, school community partnerships, community schools, school-based services, school linked services, or full-service schools) and other tiered support frameworks. Collectively, if implemented, these practices will help ensure students have equitable access to the supports they need to be successful at the earliest sign of need. These practices include

using needs assessments to identify students' academic and nonacademic barriers to learning, collaborating with the community to secure additional resources for students and their families, using data to monitor progress, and creating alignment across student support services and programs.

Lastly, the WISSP highlights characteristics of successful implementation of an ISS approach. In many cases, implementing an ISS approach will require both cultural and systemic change. These shifts take time, but research suggest they have the potential to have lasting positive impacts on the context for learning in a school community, and ultimately, student achievement. As school teams progress through the implementation process there are several aspects of the student support delivery system and individual practices that they can look to measure their implementation success.

Findings

In the course of developing the WISSP, the staff at the CISL identified two key findings. First, the concept of ISS is not new. There is a vast body of literature on the subject of (or on subjects related to) ISS. These subjects include, but are not limited to family, school, community partnerships; community schools; school linked services; and multi-stakeholder collaboration. There is a robust body of research on all of these topics, so we have more work to do to learn what works in ISS from this literature.

In the course of developing the WISSP we also learned that there are some elements of ISS being implemented in most schools and districts across the state. These efforts include Communities in Schools (CIS) of Washington; comprehensive, integrated multi-tiered system of supports; family and community resource centers; full-service community schools model; housing and education partnerships; and wraparound services. Districts are managing multiple initiatives. A first step in moving in the direction of implementing more comprehensive integrated system of supports should therefore include inventorying all existing initiatives, evaluating their effectiveness, and beginning to work to fill in the gaps in existing systems of support.

Recommendations

Learning and development occur in multiple contexts. Students' experiences at home and in the community impact their performance in school. If we rely solely on school-based solutions for eliminating the barriers to success that students face outside of school, students will continue to experience opportunity gaps that have a negative impact on their academic success. There are insufficient resources in the K-12 systems alone to address students' needs for both academic and nonacademic supports. In order to ensure that all students have access to the support they need to be successful, schools must partner with students' families and the larger school community to identify, secure, and coordinate the resources students need to be successful.

Research shows that ISS, which focuses on developing or securing and coordinating supports that target academic and nonacademic barriers to achievement, is a promising approach to improving student learning and promoting healthy development. There are several national ISS models, of which Communities in Schools is most prevalent in our state, and there are also local models that districts like Vancouver and Tumwater are implementing with support from local organizations.

Many schools have embraced a whole child approach to education, and are ready to make a transition to an integrated system of student support. However, as they begin to make these shifts in policies, practices, and school culture they need support for implementation.

The following recommendations are designed to make it easier for school staff to leverage resources in the community and across the education, healthcare, workforce, and social services systems in their efforts to meet both the academic and nonacademic needs of their students and families. When implemented, these recommendations will also help OSPI staff identify best practices for implementing ISS in multiple contexts that will support efforts to scale successful models across the state.

Revise or create model policies to help districts partners with local health and human services agencies and community-based organizations more effectively.

Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) currently has a model policy for *Cooperative Programs with Other Districts, Public Agencies, Private Schools and Daycare Agencies*, but it does not have a similar model policy for partnerships with non-profit, youth development, or social services agencies. For small schools and districts in particular, navigating the process of establishing memorandums of understanding (MOUs) or partnership agreements and data sharing agreements to monitor progress can be a barrier to getting partnerships established. In connection with the Federal Race to the Top program, the PSESD has invested significant resources in developing a student success data link that helps to provide community organizations with access to student progress data that they can use to inform their work with students in the out-of-school time context. As part of this work, PSESD has developed sample MOUs and data sharing agreements that districts can use to govern their partnerships with these organizations.

In a similar example, several innovative housing authorities¹ across the state have been working with their local school districts to implement housing and education partnerships designed to support student achievement by stabilizing low-income families. The state's Interlocal Cooperation Act provides the authorizing language for these public agencies to share resources and engage in cooperative activities, but still, establishing MOUs and

¹ King County, Seattle, Tacoma and Vancouver Housing Authorities are participating in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Moving to Work (MTW) demonstration. MTW provides these housing authorities with the opportunity to design and test innovative, locally designed strategies that use federal dollars more efficiently, help residents find employment and become self-sufficient, and increase housing choices for low-income families. Their participation in this demonstration has enabled them to engage in innovative partnerships with their local school district to improve student achievement.

partnership agreements consistent with the state and federal data sharing and privacy laws that govern these agencies is a challenge. Additionally, current community schools' initiatives working in partnership with school districts across Washington State have developed strong MOUs and data sharing agreements which may provide additional samples to support this recommendation.

The ISS workgroup recommends that the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) be directed to work in partnership with the CISL at OSPI, the PSESD, the state's innovative housing authorities, and representatives of youth development and community-based social services organizations to gather input to inform the revision to, or creation of model policies, sample partnership and data sharing agreements, and other resources to support local school boards in developing comprehensive community partnership strategies that are linked to their district goals and aligned to the Washington School Board Standards related to engaging the community in education.

Create a state-level student support coordinating committee to increase equity in access to whole child supports. The ISS workgroup recommends that the Legislature create a temporary state-level student support coordinating committee that includes representatives from the CISL at OSPI, ESDs, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families, the Department of Social and Health Services, the Department of Health, the Healthcare Authority, and WIN211 to identify strategies for leveraging existing resources to improve the coordination of referrals and connections to services across systems.

A core component of ISS is the coordination of supports across providers. Currently, district staff or partner agency staff must navigate a loose network of providers and multiple sources of funds with different allowable uses in order to connect students and their families to all of the resources they need to be successful. A coordinating committee could help streamline this process.

The specific charge of this committee would be as follows:

- Identify ways to leverage the existing regional agency office network and statewide 2-1-1 provider database to create a more effective network for referring students and families to community-based services and programs;
- Identify specific strategies for leveraging existing state and federal funds to implement an ISS approach across Washington with districts of varying sizes and resources; and
- Create guidance for districts describing how to implement the funding strategies identified above.

Provide targeted implementation support to pilot sites. The ISS workgroup recommends that the Legislature allocate funding for capacity grants to schools to use the WISSP as a guide to support implementation of an ISS model. Piloting the Protocol in a small number of sites will allow staff at the CISL to identify challenges and opportunities

related to implementing ISS in different contexts before attempting to scale the approach statewide.

Access to community-based youth development organizations, healthcare and social services providers, transportation infrastructure, and workforce development opportunities varies across the more than 2,000 schools in the state. Each school's specific community context and the needs and strengths of the students and families they serve will influence the design of their ISS models. By coupling targeted implementation support with evaluation, the CISL will have an opportunity to identify best practices that will help to ensure successful implementation of ISS in schools with similar contexts in other parts of the state.

Conclusion and Next Steps

During the course of developing the protocol and working to generate recommendations for implementation with the ISS workgroup, the staff at the CISL realized that schools and districts would benefit from having access to additional implementation support, in the form of tools, resources, and a professional learning network of other individuals working to address similar issues in other parts of the state. To that end the CISL team is working on an implementation guide that it hopes to release in the spring of 2018.

In addition, the staff at the CISL also hopes to work in partnership with schools and districts that are doing this work to learn about both organizational and financial barriers to implementation to inform future recommendations to the Legislature.

References

Anderson, K. & Emig, C. (2014). Integrated student supports: A summary of the evidence base for policymakers. *Child Trends*. Retrieved from <https://childtrends-ciw49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/2014-05ISSWhitePaper3.pdf>

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol

To review the full Protocol visit: www.k12.wa.us/CISL/ISS

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