



Education beyond high school is necessary for our students.

Training or education after high school is key to giving Washington students the opportunities they need to be successful. Studies show that a credential after high school – such as a degree, apprenticeship, or certificate – is one of the strongest indicators of lifetime earnings. Expanding opportunities for education and training beyond high school and promoting credential completion helps ensure that students can succeed regardless of their family circumstances.

But we aren't doing enough.

Washington state is projected to have more than 700,000 job openings in the next five years, most of which will be filled by workers who have a degree, certificate, apprenticeship, or other credential beyond high school. But just 40% of our students go on to complete a credential by age 26 today. That rate is even lower for students of color. In its “Path to 70% Credential Attainment” report, the Washington Roundtable and Partnership for Learning project that “overall, 40% of students in the high school class of 2015 will earn a credential by age 26. Less than 30% of Hispanic and black students will reach that milestone. Just 14% of Native Americans will do so.”

Earning a credential of some kind after high school helps Washingtonians get family-wage jobs and produces well-rounded, informed citizens who make our communities strong.

We should invest in our students to give them the opportunity to succeed here at home. If we don't, they will face a life of limited options. In addition, employers will be forced to bring in workers from out-of-state or grow their business elsewhere.

The goal: 70% of our students earn a degree, apprenticeship, certificate or other credential after high school.

To get there, we must focus on strategies that increase enrollment in programs after high school and provide supports to help students complete these programs. These strategies must focus on closing racial, gender and income opportunity gaps. College Promise Coalition supports:

Expanded pathways:

- 1) Expand student access and reduce financial barriers to **dual credit/enrollment programs** (Running Start, AP, IB, College in the High School).
- 2) Expand access to **high demand certificate and degree programs** to meet workforce needs.
- 3) Build multiple pathways for **Career Connected Learning**.

- 4) **Adult re-engagement.** Support programs that give adults more opportunity to access the education and training needed to get better jobs or increase their pay.

Increased completion & equitable opportunity:

- 1) Address **affordability** (State Need Grant, College Bound, Promise programs, Opportunity Scholarship, Opportunity Grants, State Work Study, Passport to College). But more than tuition, we must look at other costs and barriers to enrollment and completion.
- 2) Expand **supports** to help students enroll and complete (more counselors and navigators, Guided Pathways, student support services, expansion of career connected learning).
- 3) In order to make sure our students can complete their program of study and earn their credential or degree, we must ensure that our state universities and community and technical colleges can offer competitive salaries to attract **high-quality faculty and staff** which are critical to student support success.

Accountability:

- 1) Our state's data systems must do better to track **outcomes** for students across the education and training system.

About the College Promise Coalition:

The College Promise Coalition brings together leaders and advocates from education, business, labor and community-based organizations to open up diverse pathways for Washington students to pursue the unique opportunities in our state.

Washington students have big dreams for their futures. But too few Washington students are prepared to compete in our state's workforce. Some 740,000 jobs are expected to open in Washington by 2021, most of which will require at least some postsecondary education or training. Yet, only 31% of Washington high school students go on to earn a credential after high school, and only 51% of all Washingtonians have a postsecondary credential.

This unprecedented partnership will advocate for higher education opportunity and access for all Washington students, and work with policymakers to adopt and fund policies that increase higher education attainment.