

ESSER Attendance and Reengagement Project

Building Capacity to Reengage Students and Keep them Engaged

What is the ESSER Attendance & Reengagement Project?

Throughout the pandemic, students have been disconnected or disengaged from their education at unprecedented levels¹. Absences from school increased in Washington State² and nation-wide³ during SY 2021. The US Department of Education recently published national data⁴ from 2020-21 which shows 10.1 million students were chronically absent; and due to known data quality issues during the pandemic, this is understood to likely be an undercount. Washington school districts report that chronic absence was even higher in SY 2022.

This project is:

- reconnecting youth & families that have disengaged from education or are at-risk of disengaging
- building attendance and engagement systems that will help prevent students from disengaging in the first place

This ESSER project is supporting the work above by investing \$15.9 million in the following ways:

- Expanding Staff Capacity for Direct Service Reengagement
 - Proactively Increase Attendance by Building or Enhancing School and District Systems

Expanding Staff Capacity for Direct Service Reengagement

Funding is supporting school districts, State-Tribal Education Compact schools (STECs), and Educational Service Districts (ESDs) to provide the following direct reengagement services:

- Outreach, locating students, family visits
- Creating relationships & building a bridge back to an educational pathway
- Mentoring, guidance, coaching
- Case management
- Connection to community resources, wrap around supports, and reduction of barriers
- Academic and postsecondary advising
- High dosage tutoring (academic support)

¹ [Missing in the Margins 2021: Revisiting the COVID-19 Attendance Crisis](#), Bellwether

² [OSPI Report Card – Regular Attendance Data](#)

³ [COVID-19 and Education: A K-Shaped Recovery](#), McKinsey & Company

⁴ [Pandemic Causes Alarming Increase in Chronic Absence and Reveals Need for Better Data](#), Attendance

Works



Proactively Increase Attendance by Building or Enhancing School and District Systems

1. Funding is provided for ESDs to deploy Attendance Coordinators. Attendance Coordinators provide coaching, technical assistance, and peer learning networks to identified districts and school teams on the following topics:
 - Enhancing Tiered Supports and Interventions when Students are Absent
 - Early Warning Systems and Teaming on Attendance
 - Partnering with Students, Families and Communities to Address Barriers to Attendance and Increase Opportunities for Engagement
2. Funding supports OSPI staff to manage the project, administer funds, support and monitor school districts, lead the ESD team, and co-design the evaluation.
3. Funding also supports contracts with national experts to provide professional development to project participants (Attendance Works and Everyone Graduates Center).

Which students will this project support?

This funding will support students who have disengaged or are at-risk of disengaging in all grades K-12. Grantees will prioritize students that have the most need, based on student demographics, including race/ethnicity, and other student or program characteristics, and based on these indicators:

- Students that are missing from the education system (not in contact and/or not enrolled anywhere)
- High levels of absences (e.g. >20%)
- Low grades/failures
- Incompletes & no credit

ESDs are Essential Partners and Service Providers in Reengagement

The network of ESDs are essential partners. They provide critical services, particularly for small and rural districts in this project including: 1) hiring on behalf of districts, 2) consolidating direct service staffing across multiple districts where a full-time employee in one small district otherwise would not be feasible, and 3) can provide a level and intensity of service through coaching and technical assistance that is not feasible at the state level. In addition to providing direct reengagement supports, ESDs are supporting districts and schools to enhance their systemic response to attendance through ESD led peer learning networks, technical assistance and support/coaching.

Addresses System Gaps in Reducing Truancy

Additionally, Washington has undergone significant shifts in our approach to truancy over the last several years. Legislative changes have pushed districts, courts, and OSPI to re-think functions and roles. This ESSER project is a pilot demonstration, building on the success of ESD 112's unique partnership with Clark County through the Truancy Project, of the unique and essential role that ESDs play as intermediaries, between school districts and courts, adding more opportunity for students to reengage, without court involvement.

Implementation Partners

- 9 ESDs
- 24 District Grantees
- 6 of 7 State Tribal Education Compact School (STEC) Grantees
- 40 Districts Served by ESD Reengagement Staff
- Office of Native Education
- Puget Sound ESD Evaluation Team
- Attendance Works
- Everyone Graduates Center (Johns Hopkins University)

Measures of Success

Student outcomes

- Students are located or identified
- Build strengths-based relationships with students and families
- Break down barriers and help them access resources
- Students re-enroll and commit to an educational pathway
- Students remain enrolled and feel/show success
- Improved attendance and grades

System Outcomes

- Build and strengthen partnerships with communities and Tribes
- Learn from students and families about how our systems can support and serve them better
- Create or enhance teams that pay attention to attendance data and respond
- Reflect and rebuild our core universal supports for all students
- Enhance attendance tier 2 & tier 3 interventions
- Shift from responding only to unexcused absences to all absences

Timeline

This project was funded in the Fall of 2021 and awarded to 39 grantees. Grantees received their funding in spring 2022. Several grantees hired in the spring and were able to provide services

over the summer, however for many grantees, services began in September of 2022. The project's funding ends on Sept. 30, 2023, resulting in just over one year of implementation.

Budget

Item	FY22	FY23	Total
Grants			
ESDs (Attendance Coordinators & Reengagement Specialists)	\$2,812,000	\$4,666,000	\$7,478,000
Districts (Reengagement Specialists)	\$1,617,200	\$5,807,800	\$7,425,000
Grants Subtotal	\$4,429,200	\$10,473,800	\$14,903,000
OSPI Statewide Supports			
Project Staffing	\$175,000	\$175,000	\$350,000
Contracts for Evidence-Based Practices & Professional Learning	\$45,000	\$102,000	\$147,000
Project Evaluation & Stakeholder Engagement to Revision Truancy Policy (PSESD)	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$500,000
OSPI Statewide Subtotal	\$470,000	\$527,000	\$997,000
Total	\$4,899,200	\$11,000,800	\$15,900,000

Contact

For questions related to the current project, please contact Krissy Johnson, Assistant Director of Attendance & Engagement at krissy.johnson@k12.wa.us