

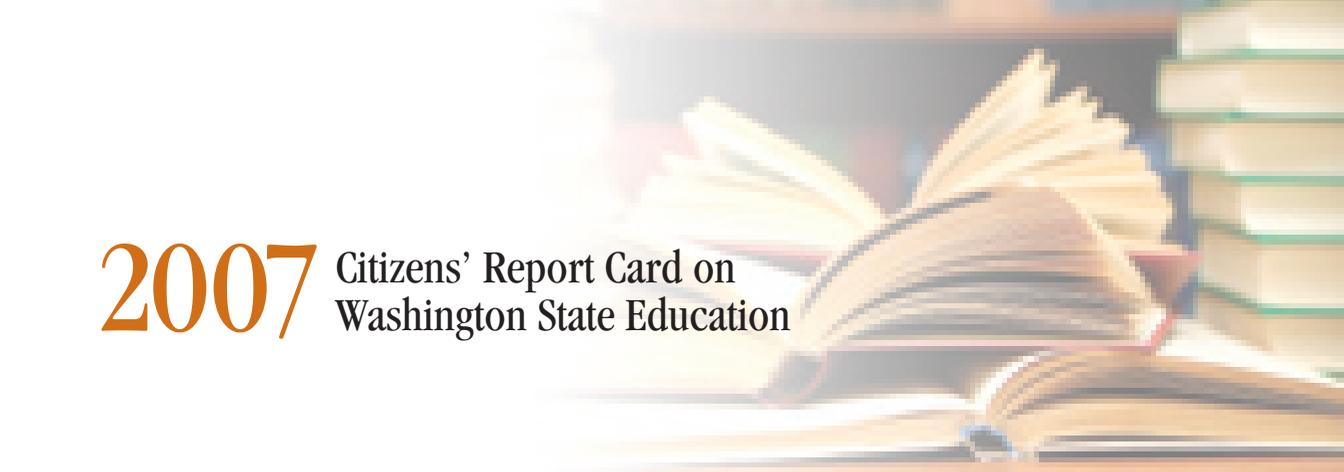
League of  
Education Voters  
Foundation

# 2007

Citizens' Report Card on  
Washington State Education







# 2007 Citizens' Report Card on Washington State Education

## Foreword

The League of Education Voters Foundation applauds the leadership of Governor Gregoire and legislators for establishing Washington Learns in 2005. We agree fundamentally with their premise that the fast-changing global economy ties Washington's future to the quality of our education system.

One of the commission's most profound recommendations is benchmarking our state's education efforts against the eight Global Challenge States, identified as leaders in the new economy.

Commission members have skillfully framed the issues facing education in our state. Here, in our second report card on education in Washington, we capitalize on the five Washington Learns frames to define the problems, measure progress, and call out promising strategies for improvements.

LEV Foundation gives each major area of focus a grade. The marks are mediocre or poor – and they paint an alarming picture. Too many students are not challenged to reach their full potential. Too many students don't get the education they will need to thrive as members of society. For the first time in history, a generation of children is at risk of being less well educated than our generation.

High expectations for students will not be reached without high performance by grown-ups. We need to hold our educators, legislators, and policy makers accountable just like we do our students. In our representational democracy, ultimately that means we citizens must hold ourselves responsible. We get the schools we deserve. A bright future for our families, our communities, and our state depends on rising to the challenge of providing all our students with the quality education they deserve.

*“To be competitive in the global economy, we must educate more people to achieve at higher levels.”*

— Washington Learns Commission



**Nick Hanauer**, Co-Founder  
LEAGUE OF EDUCATION  
VOTERS FOUNDATION



**Lisa Macfarlane**, Co-Founder  
LEAGUE OF EDUCATION  
VOTERS FOUNDATION

# 2007 Citizens' Report Card on Washington State Education

## GRADE

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**The Early Learning Years:**  
A Smart Investment

**C**

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**Math & Science:**  
A Competitive Edge

**D**

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**Personalized Learning:**  
Helping Every Student Succeed

**C**

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**College and Workforce Training:**  
Increasing Opportunities

**C**

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**Quality & Accountability Investments:**  
Keeping the Promise

**D**

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## Washington's Leaky Education Pipeline



Of 100 9th graders:



70 graduate from high school



30 enter a community college or university



23 return for their sophomore year



16 receive a diploma within 6 years

Source: NCHEMS/IPEDS, 2004

NOTE: The available college going rate is significantly understated and does not include many high school graduates with uncertainty about their enrollment goal and those who took college courses while in high school (through programs like Running Start).



# Our Top Five Priorities

*LEV Foundation believes the state should set five priorities and focus its efforts. Here are our recommendations:*

**Redefining Basic Education:** This Legislature should redefine Basic Education in statute and, using the Global Challenge States to benchmark per-student funding, pass a six-year plan that phases in full funding. Our schools need the increased funding to reduce class sizes, add classroom time and increase compensation to attract and keep the best educators.

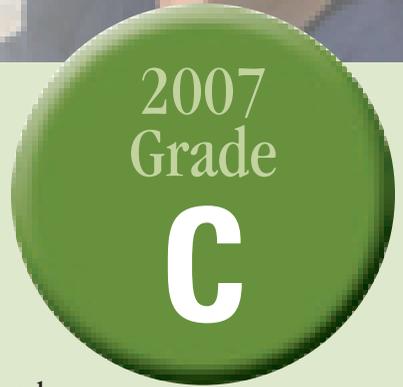
**Reading by the Fourth Grade:** Make it the state's top education priority that every child is an able reader by the fourth grade. This will require increasing support in early learning, focused on the Quality Rating & Improvement System, Thrive by Five Washington, and phasing in all-day kindergarten.

**Boosting Math & Science:** The state should launch an aggressive Math and Science Campaign from pre-school through college. We should start by charging the newly reformed State Board of Education and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction with adopting internationally recognized standards and two or three top math curricula.

**Making Education Relevant:** Schools should adopt Navigation 101 or one of several other promising programs that help students make personal education plans with their families, starting in middle school. A key component must be providing better career and technical education options. Community and technical college students and university students would also benefit from more personalized counseling and mentoring.

**Opening Doors to Higher Education:** Cost is the biggest barrier for those populations of students least likely to pursue and complete post-secondary education. The state needs to adopt a long-range plan that benchmarks Washington's per-student funding level to the Global Challenge States. More immediately, we need to invest in Opportunity Grants and Washington Learns Scholarships, and provide all eligible part-time students with State Need Grants.

# The Early Learning Years: A Smart Investment



## *State Takes Major Steps, But Too Many Young Children Still Start School Unprepared*

**B**rain development research tells us that children are born learning and that the foundation for academic success and rewarding community membership is built early in life. Parents are children's first and most important teachers, but they often lack information about how to help their children thrive emotionally and intellectually. Many families struggle to find and afford the quality child care and early learning programs. As a consequence, too many Washington kindergarteners come to school unprepared. Nor does the state provide all our neediest students with all-day kindergarten. Evidence suggests that children who aren't ready for kindergarten are less likely to master reading by the 4th grade, the foundation for school success. The achievement gap all too often starts as a preparation gap. *Ensuring that every child can read by the 4th grade is the single most fundamental step we can take to improve education.*

### **2007 PROGRESS REPORT**

IMPROVEMENTS	NO MEASURABLE CHANGE
Establishment of the Department of Early Learning	Over 10,000 eligible low-income preschoolers are not served by Head Start or ECEAP
Establishment of Thrive by Five Washington, a new public-private partnership	No improvement in the percentage of African-American students who passed the 4th grade Reading WASL
Increase in the percentage of 4th graders who met the reading standard	

## STRATEGIES

- Adopt and fund Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)
- Invest in Thrive by Five Washington
- Support better compensation and training for child care and early education teachers
- Enhance ECEAP quality and expand eligibility to birth through age five
- Create a Kindergarten Readiness Assessment
- Phase in all-day kindergarten, targeting high poverty schools first
- Make voluntary parenting information and support readily available to parents, grandparents and other caregivers
- Expand capacity in higher education to produce well-trained child care providers and early education teachers

## INDICATORS

**ACCESS:** In Washington, only 4% of all birth to 3-year-old eligible children and families are served by Early Head Start in 2004. (Zero to Three, HSPC)

**AVAILABILITY:** In 2005, there were 8,394 licensed child care facilities, down by 7% from 2004 (predominately family homes). (NARA/NCCIC/DCCCEL)

**ACCREDITATION:** 0.3% of Washington's family child care homes are accredited by NAEYC and 9.5% of child care centers are accredited in 2006. (NACCRRA)

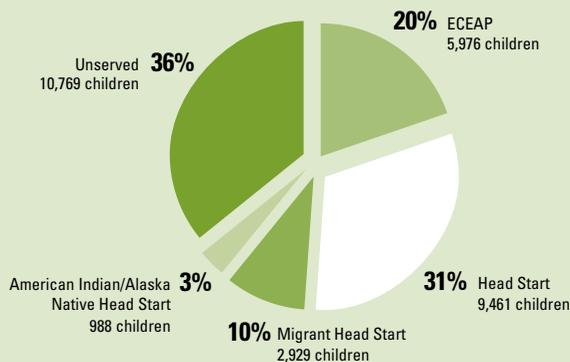
### COMPENSATION:

- Child Care Workers: \$18,900 annual salary
- Pre-school Teachers: \$25,110 annual salary
- Kindergarten Teachers: \$42,680 annual salary

(Bureau of Labor Statistics: Pre-school and Kindergarten teacher salary does not include special education pay)

**PRE-SCHOOL TEACHER EDUCATION:** In 2005, 77% of Head Start and Early Head Start pre-school teachers had an Associate's Degree or above. (Head Start/ECEAP Association)

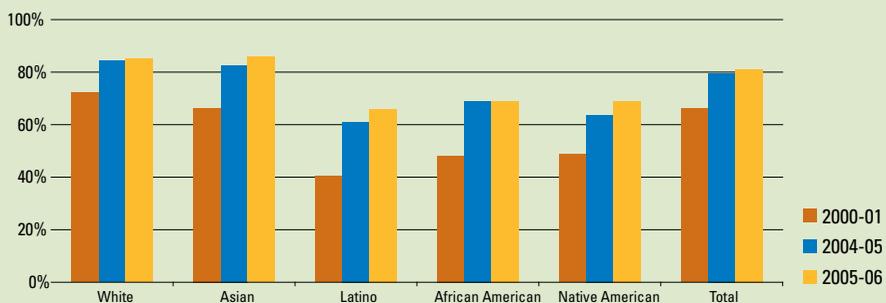
### Over 10,000 Low-Income Preschoolers Not Served



Participation of Eligible Preschoolers, 2005-06

Source: CTED

### Steady Gains in 4th Grade Reading Achievement



Percentage of 4th Graders who Passed the Reading WASL by Race and Ethnicity, 2000-06

Source: OSPI

# Math & Science: A Competitive Edge



## *Urgent Need to Boost Math & Science Performance at All Levels*

To be competitive in today's knowledge-based economy, employers tell us young people need to master higher level skills in math and science. Nearly half of tenth graders cannot pass the Math WASL and the failure rates for Latinos, African-Americans, and Native Americans are unconscionable. A large part of the problem is we cannot agree on the standards we should ask students to meet, nor the best curricula to teach math. Too many high school students avoid challenging math and science courses, only to find they have to take remedial math courses in college. As it stands, we cannot attract and keep enough qualified math and science teachers. It should be no surprise then that our universities can't meet employer demand for mathematicians, engineers, and scientists.

### **2007 PROGRESS REPORT**

#### IMPROVEMENTS

Slight increase in the percentage of 10th graders who passed the Math WASL

Decrease in the college math remediation rate by 7% in the past three years

#### NO MEASURABLE CHANGE

No progress made in 5th grade Science WASL scores

#### GOING BACKWARD

Slight decrease in the percentage of 4th and 7th graders who passed the Math WASL

Slight decrease in the percentage of 10th graders who passed the Science WASL

## STRATEGIES

- Increase high school graduation requirements to include more math and science
- Select two to three top math curricula and fund their adoption
- Identify the number of qualified math and science teachers needed to meet the demand then recruit and train them
- Increase the percentage of math and science teachers with a major in the subject that they are teaching
- Expand higher education enrollments for students seeking math and science degrees

## INDICATORS

**COLLEGE REMEDIATION:** 32% of the class of 2004 attending college enrolled in remedial math courses compared to 39% of the class of 2001. (SESRC)

### MATH ACHIEVEMENT:

- Both 4th grade and 7th grade Math WASL scores declined 2% since 2004-05. (OSPI)
- Only 51% of 10th graders passed the Math WASL, however results have increased by 3% when compared to last year. (OSPI)

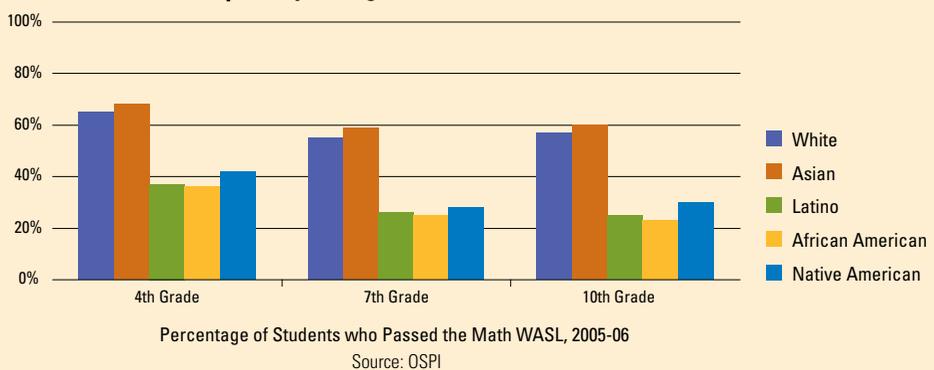
**RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT:** In 2003, Washington ranked 21st in per capita academic expenditures on research and development (\$142), compared to 20th in 1999. (National Science Foundation)

### RIGOROUS CURRICULUM:

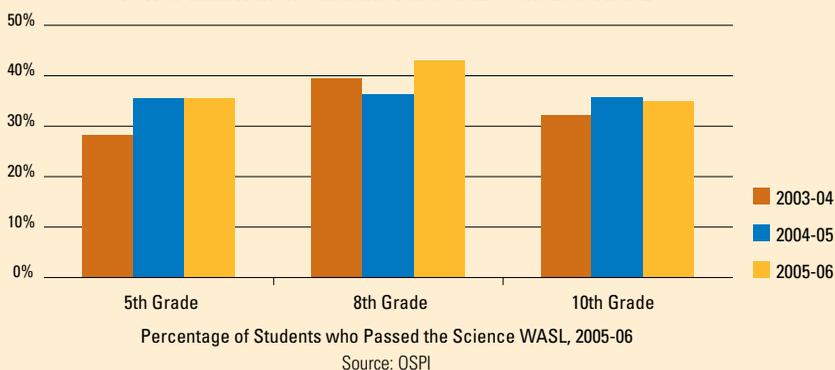
- In 2003, 20% of Washington's 8th graders reported taking Algebra I (36th in the Nation), compared to 26% in 1996. (Council of Chief State School Officers)
- 9th -12th graders taking at least one upper-level math course: No data. (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education)

**TEACHER EXPERTISE:** In 2005-06, Washington ranked 38th, with 65% of 7th-12th graders taught by teachers with a major in their subject. (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education)

### Math WASL Scores Are Low, Especially Among Latinos, African-Americans, and Native Americans



### Fewer than Half of Students Passed the Science WASL



# Personalized Learning: Helping Every Student Succeed

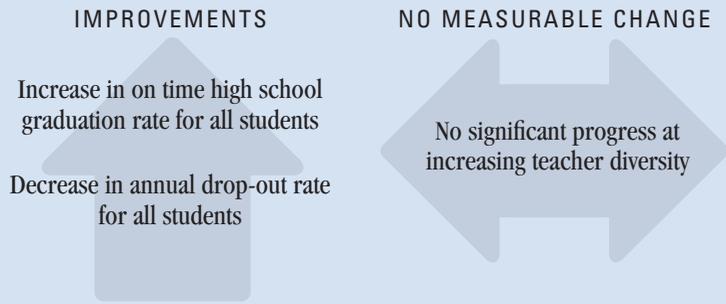


## *Personalized Learning is the Key to Raising Student Achievement for All Students*

**R**esearch shows that in today's highly competitive economy, the new education standard is no longer a high school degree but at least one year of rigorous post-secondary education. That is the tipping point between family wage and dead-end jobs. In this new era, Washington State can no longer tolerate drop-out rates ranging from 19% statewide to 45% in Pasco. In particular, the achievement gap between white and minority students is unconscionable and spells disaster for our state's long-term competitiveness.

We know what we need to do to increase achievement for all students – engage them one-on-one with caring adults. All students would benefit from lower class sizes, especially in the earliest grades, but our class sizes are among the highest in the nation. Many struggling students need intensive tutoring and mentoring. Many more don't get the opportunity to develop their talents in technology, music, language and the arts. All would benefit from more challenging AP and dual-credit courses and career and academic counseling. But our school districts are struggling to meet today's demands with yesterday's inadequate funding system.

### **2007 PROGRESS REPORT**



## STRATEGIES

- Increase opportunities for career and technical education
- Increase access to early college and dual-credit programs that allow high school students to take college courses
- Attract more people of color into the teaching profession
- Create training programs for mentors and instructional coaches
- Provide additional tutoring and support for struggling students
- Increase access to technology
- Fund 6th period in middle and high school to encourage art, music, career and technical education programs, and foreign languages
- Provide Navigation 101 and other mentoring programs for middle and high school students

## INDICATORS

**GRADUATION RATES:** 75% of students graduated from high school on time in 2003-04 (best state: Nebraska, 88%; Washington ranks 27th in the nation). (NCES)

**ANNUAL DROP-OUT RATES BY RACE AND ETHNICITY (on time):** In 2004-05, annual drop-out rate by race and ethnicity: White: 4%; Asian: 3% (+1 compared to Whites); African-American: 7% (-3); Latino: 8% (-4); Native American: 9% (-5). (OSPI)

**FOREIGN LANGUAGES:** In 2002, 34.4% of students in grades 7-12 enrolled in a foreign language course. (Asia Society)

### CREATIVITY:

- 81% of students get no Dance instruction per week
- 73% of students get no Theater instruction per week
- 34% of students get no Visual Arts instruction per week
- 18% of students get no Music instruction per week

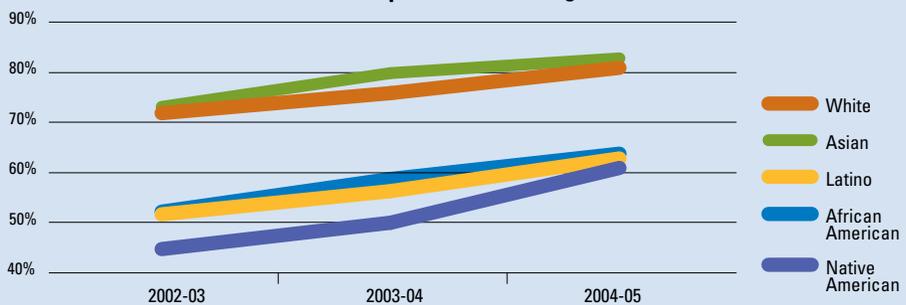
(Washington State Arts Commission, 2000)

**TECHNOLOGY:** *Technology Counts* 2006 Score for Washington: B-

- Access to Technology: C
- Use of Technology: B-
- Capacity to Use Technology: B

(Ed Week)

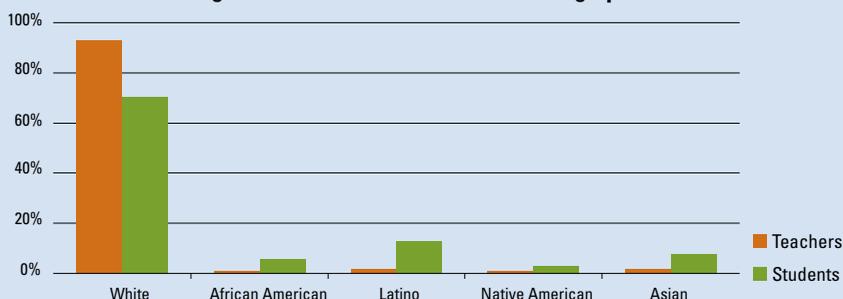
### Graduation Rates Improving for all Ethnic Groups, but Achievement Gap Remains Too Large



High School Graduation Rate by Race and Ethnicity (on time), 2002-05

Source: OSPI

### Teaching Force Mismatch with Student Demographics



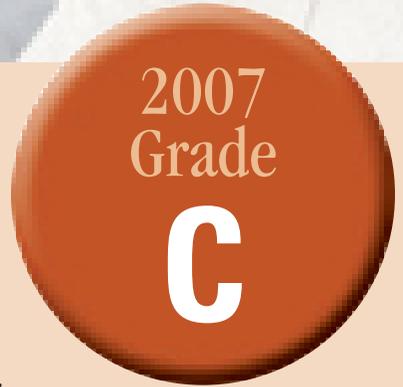
Teacher Demographics Compared to Student Demographics, 2004-05

Source: OSPI

# College and Workforce Training: Increasing Opportunities

*To Stay Competitive, Our State Needs  
to Reduce the Barriers to Higher Education*

**I**n today's economy, education is more important than ever. The highest-paying, fastest-growing jobs require education or training beyond high school. We know that Washington is not producing enough highly-trained employees to meet employer demand. Washington's knowledge economy is surviving by importing skilled workers from other states and countries — and students educated in Washington are left with lower-wage jobs. If our goal is to have a workforce that is among the best trained and educated in the world, and one that reflects our state's increasingly diverse student population, post-secondary education must be made affordable for all — especially for students from low-income families. Other artificial barriers must be eliminated: high school requirements that don't match college admission standards and community college courses that aren't accepted for credit at universities. Finally, if we don't find a way to encourage and support more students of color and more first-generation college students to continue their education beyond high school, we can not hope to produce the highly-trained workers with Industry Certificates, AAs, BAs, and post-grad degrees our state needs to stay competitive.



## 2007 PROGRESS REPORT

### IMPROVEMENTS

Small gains in college participation rates for Latinos, African-Americans and Native Americans compared to last year

### NO MEASURABLE CHANGE

No change in overall college participation rates

No change in the affordability of public four-year colleges and universities for Washington's poorest families

### GOING BACKWARD

Small increase in student debt by undergraduate students since 2004

Community colleges are less affordable for Washington's poorest families, compared to 2004

## STRATEGIES

- Fund additional enrollment slots in two- and four-year institutions
- Align high school graduation requirements with community college admissions standards
- Establish Washington Learns Scholarship for students participating in the free- or reduced-price lunch program and for students who would be the first in their family to attend college
- Expand eligibility for the State Need Grants for part-time students
- Expand Opportunity Grants for adults who pursue job training in high-demand fields

## INDICATORS

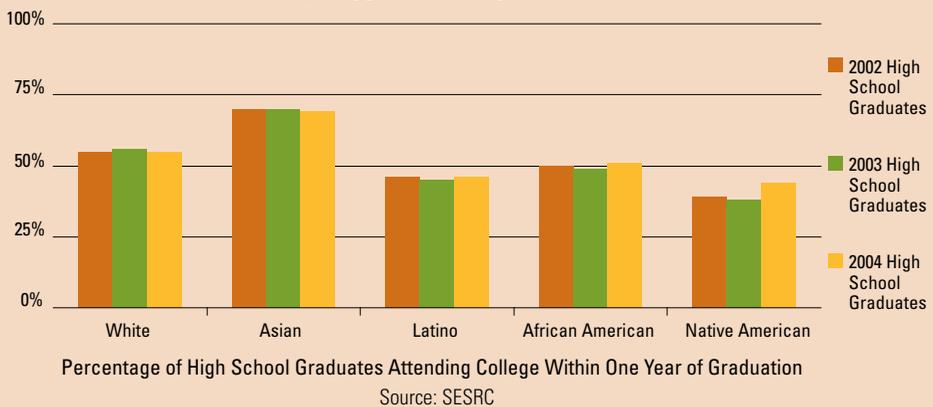
**AFFORDABILITY – FAMILIES:** Percentage of income that Washington’s poorest families paid for college over and above financial aid in 2006: community colleges: 68%; public four-year colleges and universities: 76%; private 4-year colleges/universities: 178%. (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education)

**STUDENT DEBT:** In 2006, Washington students borrowed an average of \$3,801 per year during undergraduate study, a 5% increase since 2004. (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education)

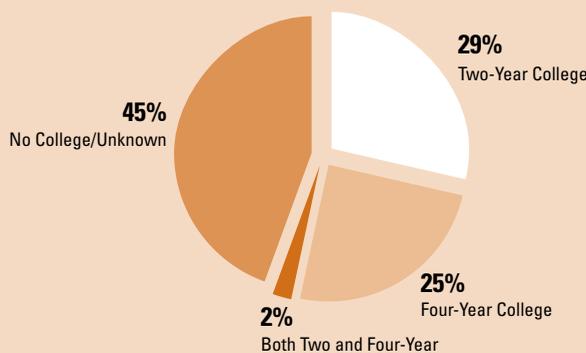
**COMPLETION:** In 2006, 63% of first-time, full-time students completed a bachelor’s degree within 6 years of college entrance. Washington ranks 3rd among the eight Global Challenge States. (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education)

**ECONOMY:** In 2005, 51% of firms surveyed, reported difficulty finding qualified job applicants compared with 45% in 2003. (Washington State Workforce Training Board)

### College Opportunity Gap Continues



### 2004 High School Graduates: Where Did They Go?



# Quality & Accountability Investments: Keeping the Promise



## *Education Improvements Will Require Performance — and Financial — Goals*

In 1993, the state passed standards based education reform, shifting our focus from counting inputs like seat time and per-student funding to measuring student achievement. The result has been a profound shift from an education system that tolerated mediocre standards and high rates of failure as normal, towards one that aims to be accountable for educating all students to high standards.

Over these same 14 years, however, per-student funding in Washington has lost ground against inflation and the national average. **Washington has arrived at the point where we cannot realize significant improvements in WASL scores, graduation rates, or increased post-secondary education participation without new investments.** It's time we citizens hold ourselves responsible for providing the resources families, schools, and colleges need to meet the demand for quality education.

**Washington Learns has pointed the way by benchmarking achievement and investments to the eight Global Challenge States.** These top eight states in the New Economy Index have economic and demographic characteristics similar to Washington's but surpass us in performance and funding. We need financial goals for system improvements that are benchmarked against states we compete with in the global economy.

## 2007 PROGRESS REPORT

### IMPROVEMENTS

Washington Learns adoption of Global Challenge States to benchmark performance and investments

Work has started on a student-centered data system connecting K-12 with early learning and higher education

### NO MEASURABLE CHANGE

No progress made at improving data collection and analysis

No change in Washington's rank for teacher compensation

### GOING BACKWARD

Widening gap between National Average and K-12 per-student spending

## STRATEGIES

- Benchmark K-12 and higher education funding to Global Challenge States
- Decrease class-size, with a focus on grades K-3 and poor schools
- Redefine state definition of basic education
- Continue development of Pre-K through higher education longitudinal data system
- Reform compensation system for K-12 educators to attract and retain the best educators
- Establish a P-20 Council to hold policy makers accountable

## INDICATORS

**TEACHER COMPENSATION:** In 2003-04, Washington ranked 18th in average teacher salaries at \$45,437 (national average: \$46,597; best state: Connecticut, \$56,516). (AFT)

NOTE: Figure does not include supplemental pay, including TRI pay which varies widely from district to district.

**NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHERS:** In 2004-05, 1.6% of the teaching force was National Board Certified (898 total). (NBPTS, OSPI)

**STUDENT/TEACHER RATIO:** Washington ranked 46th in student/teacher ratio in 2004 with 19.3 students per teacher (best state: Vermont 11.3, national average: 15.1) and 7th out of the 8 Global Challenge States. (NCES)

NOTE: Student/teacher ratio includes all certificated staff including those who are not classroom teachers, i.e. librarians, gym teachers, and other specialists. Therefore actual class sizes are higher.

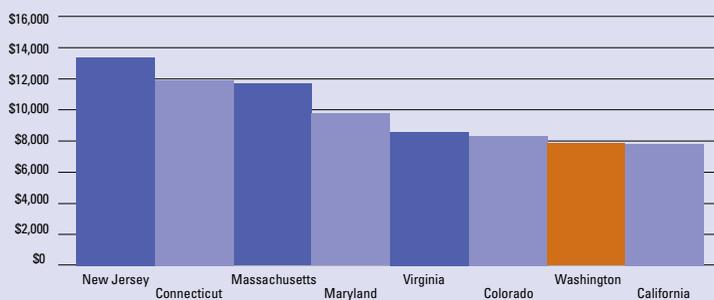
### DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS:

LEV has adopted the Data Quality Campaign's criteria for identifying elements of a useful data collection system. Washington is making progress on a longitudinal data system, but is missing:

- A teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students
- Student-level college readiness test scores

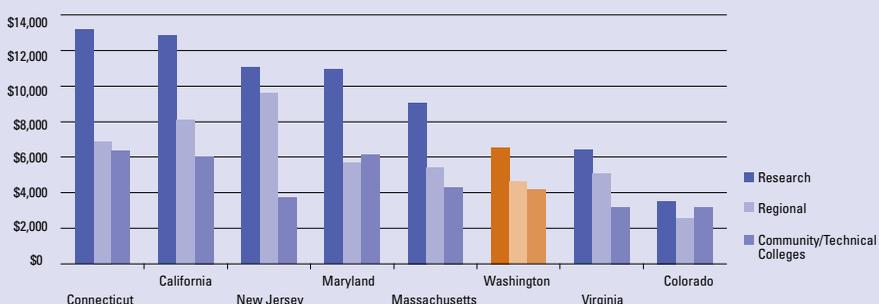
(Data Quality Campaign)

### Washington's K-12 Per-Student Spending Ranks 7th Among the 8 Global Challenge States



Source: NEA, 2004-05

### Washington Ranks Towards the Bottom of the Global Challenge States in Per-Student Higher Education Revenues



Source: NORED

## Acknowledgements

### LEV FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lisa Macfarlane  
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## References

- CTED:** Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development
- DCCCEL:** Division of Child Care & Early Learning
- ECEAP:** Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program
- ED Week:** Education Week
- HECB:** Higher Education Coordinating Board
- HSPC:** Human Service Policy Center, University of Washington
- IPEDS:** Integrate Postsecondary Education Data System
- OSPI:** Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
- NACCRRRA:** National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
- NAEYC:** National Association for the Education of Young Children
- NARA:** National Association for Regulatory Administration
- NBPTS:** National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
- NCCIC:** National Child Care Information Center
- NCES:** National Center for Education Statistics
- NCHEMS:** National Center for Higher Education Management Systems
- NEA:** National Education Association
- NORED:** Northwest Education Research Center
- SESRC:** Social and Economic Science Research Center, Washington State University

For complete list of all sources and an explanation of our grading criteria, please go to our website: [www.levfoundation.org](http://www.levfoundation.org)



**The League of Education Voters Foundation** is an independent, nonpartisan, charitable 501(c)(3) organization. LEV Foundation is dedicated to engaging ordinary citizens, educators, policymakers, and the media in the effort to provide a quality education for all students in Washington State – from pre-school

through college. The purpose of LEV Foundation’s publications and reports, including our annual Citizens’ Report Card, is to effect public policies that will improve education at all levels, for all children.

(206) 728-6448 [www.levfoundation.org](http://www.levfoundation.org)



*“Education is the single most important investment we can make for our children, our state, our economy, and our future.”*

— Governor Gregoire, Washington Learns

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