

Snoqualmie Valley School District

On Time Graduation Task Force Summary Report

March 2015



Acknowledgements

In the spring of 2014, the District established the On Time Graduation Task Force. The purpose of the Task Force included:

1. Developing a comprehensive three-year plan to increase district on time graduation and extended graduation rates.
2. Providing a report to the Superintendent that includes specific recommendations for implementation, as well as associated costs.

This document is a summary of the Task Force work. When fully implemented, it provides a comprehensive system of supports and interventions to assist all stake holders in better preparing our students for college, career and citizenship, and when fully implemented, should also ultimately lead to improved graduation rates.

Special appreciation goes to the following participants on the Task Force for sharing their time, expertise and focus on student learning and success:

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- Kirk Dunckel—Principal, Chief Kanim Middle School
- John Belcher—Principal, Mount Si High School
- Amy Montanye-Johnson—Principal, Two Rivers School
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- Kellie Essig—Career Specialist, Mount Si High School
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- Chris Ratcliffe—Counselor, Chief Kanim Middle School
- Gayle Smith— Teacher on Special Assignment
- Jessica Easthope— Counselor, Mount Si High School
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- Emily Rourke—Teacher, Twin Falls Middle School
- Geri Flanagan— Teacher, Fall City Elementary School
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- Ryan Hill—Teacher on Special Assignment
- Karen Schotzko— English Language Learner Teacher/coordinator
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- Jan Formisano— Teacher on Special Assignment
- Maria Nutter— Teacher on Special Assignment
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- District Administrators—Jeff Hogan, Ruth Moen, Dan Schlotfeldt, Nancy Meeks

ON TIME GRADUATION TASK FORCE

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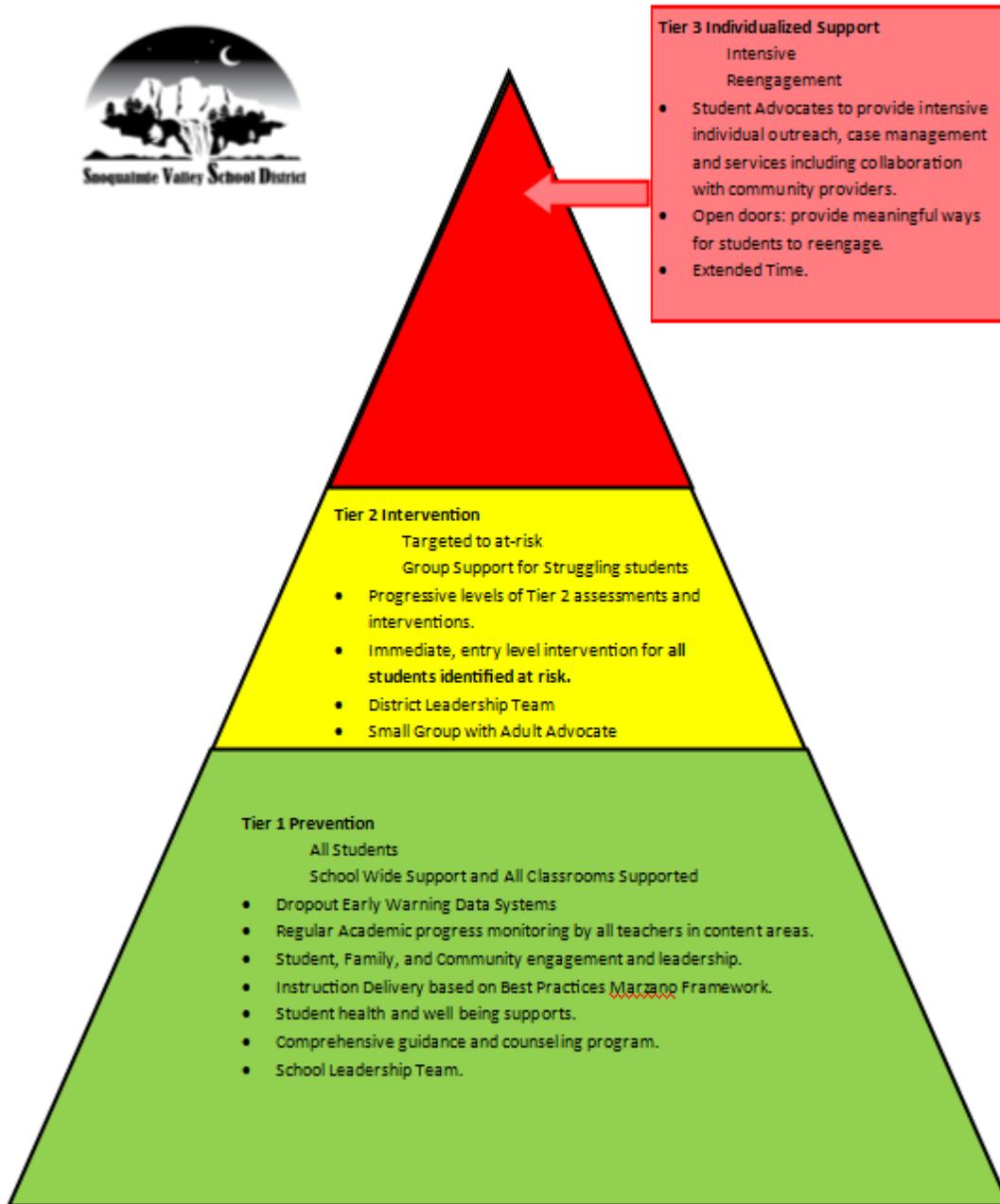
GRADUATION-A TEAM EFFORT

The work of the On Time Graduation Task Force was influenced by the OSPI graduation initiative (www.k12.wa.us/gate) around the whole child approach to dropout prevention, intervention and reengagement through individualized support. The Task Force believes the greatest success in reducing dropout rates will be achieved when multiple approaches are adopted as part of a comprehensive strategy to increase student engagement. This report recommends a strategic, tiered approach that integrates multiple recommendations as part of an integrated student support framework. The tiers of the support framework are:

- Tier 1: **Prevention** - classroom and school-wide initiatives
- Tier 2: **Intervention** - targeted interventions for struggling students and group supports
- Tier 3: **Individualized Support** - intensive case management and reengagement efforts

A diagram outlining the framework can be found on the next page and is based on a pyramid shape with prevention strategies forming the foundation and symbolically representing where the most significant energy should be invested (Tier 1). If executed well, prevention efforts will reduce the number of students needing programs and services in Tiers 2 and 3.

College and Career Readiness

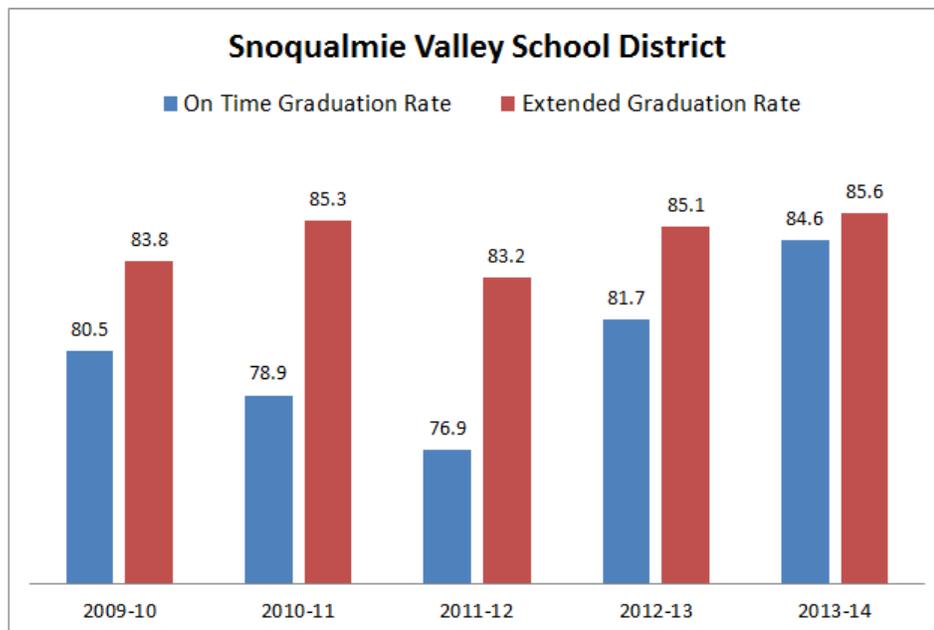
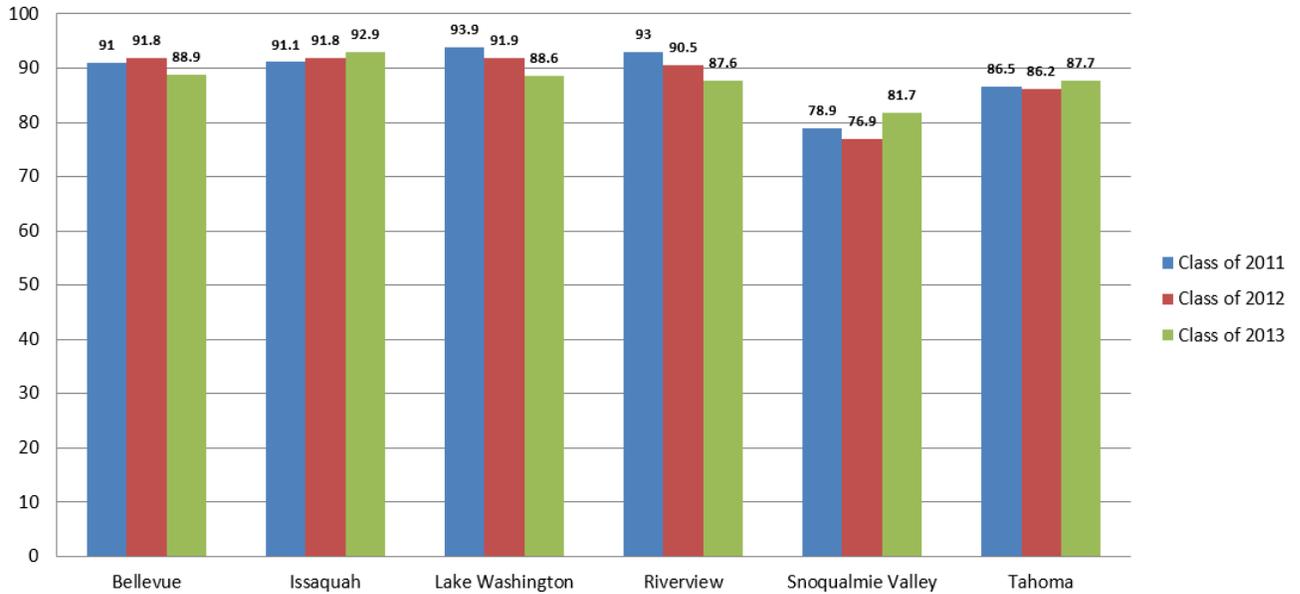


Integrated Student Support Framework “Graduation Not Optional”

WHY A SENSE OF URGENCY?

On time graduation rates and extended graduation rates in the Snoqualmie Valley School District continue to lag behind neighboring districts with similar demographics. Furthermore, while graduation rates are improving in Snoqualmie Valley, there are concerns those trends might slow or reverse course with rigorous new CORE 24 graduation requirements put in place by the legislature.

On-time 4 year Cohort Graduation Rate



The research is clear that students who don't graduate from high school face major hurdles as adults entering the work force and society. For example, dropouts typically earn significantly less than high school graduates, have an increased chance of landing in prison, and have lower life expectancies. The On Time Graduation Task Force was convened to review relevant data, take a deeper look at the complex issues that lead to high school dropouts and develop recommendations that will ensure student success for all. The belief that emerged from the Task Force was that graduation should not be "optional" for Snoqualmie Valley students and this message must be conveyed clearly and repeatedly to all stakeholders.

TOPIC WORK TEAMS

Task Force members were divided, based upon interest, into five key work topic teams. Each team then met independently over the course of several months to review relevant data, research best practices, and ultimately develop recommendations to be incorporated into the report. The five work topics were:

1. How do we influence culture for persistent school attendance? (e.g., attendance practices and policies)
2. How can we create personalized learning environments? (e.g., adult/peer advocates)
3. How can we create/apply a data-tracking system to ensure students are not falling through the cracks?
4. How can we provide academic support/interventions for "at risk" students?
5. How can we provide social-emotional behavior support for "at risk" students?

Work topic teams presented recommendations to the full committee in February 2015.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

There are numerous individual factors, school factors, family factors and community factors that contribute to students not achieving success and dropping out of school. The Task Force reviewed an earlier report drafted by consultant Patty Spangler for SVSD 410 on dropout interventions and suggestions for how to keep kids engaged in school. The team also reviewed broader research efforts and took a deeper dive into reviewing district data around attendance, behavior, course performance, and assessment - to see what patterns emerged and identify some of the challenges that might be unique to the Snoqualmie Valley School District. An appendix supplement is being compiled to complement this summary report. It will provide an in-depth look at some of the more compelling research reviewed in developing recommendations for increasing graduation rates.

At a high level, the Task Force identified chronic or excessive absenteeism, lack of engagement, social and emotional readiness to learn, and grading practices as four of the more significant barriers to graduation here in the Snoqualmie valley School District. Another finding was that systems in place are weighted toward remediation, rather than a more systematic approach of

early prevention. An example of this is the Online Credit Recovery Program at the high schools. For sustained success in improving graduation rates, we must continue to remediate and reengage, but most importantly, we must approach the work of prevention (Tier 1) systematically, beginning in earnest with a robust pre-K education that can then be built upon in subsequent years. It will also require that we focus on increasing student engagement through the purposeful action of improving core instructional strategies in every classroom across the district. This will require meaningfully investment in our model of instructional support for teachers, so that every classroom has a well-trained and well-supported teacher focused on the eight criteria in our growth-oriented instructional model (Marzano Framework). Support for new teachers has also been identified as an important element of dropout prevention work. The instructional framework criteria are:

1. Centering instruction on high expectations for student achievement
2. Demonstrating effective teaching practices
3. Recognizing individual student learning needs and developing strategies to address those needs
4. Providing clear and intentional focus on subject matter content and curriculum
5. Fostering and managing a safe, positive learning environment
6. Using multiple student data elements to modify instruction and improve student learning.
7. Communicating and collaborating with parents and the school community
8. Exhibiting collaborative and collegial practices focused on improving instructional practice and student learning

The Task Force also identified inconsistent protocols among schools in how and what data is reviewed and what strategies are recommended/implemented for students that struggle academically, with attendance or behaviorally.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

In totality, the recommendations will provide a multi-tiered integrated support framework that includes: emphasis on prevention through development of an early warning system and the use of data to adapt instruction; a focus on early learning and classroom instruction/coaching to increase rigor and improve engagement strategies; and implementing a comprehensive behavior framework. Numerous other recommendations (in all three tiers) address strategies to improve attendance, launch district committees focused on daily schedules and grading practices, and expand college and career planning opportunities. Additional recommendations focus on building strong, positive relationships, improving work ethic and addressing academic readiness through interventions (specifically math and English Language Arts (ELA)), reengagement, and individualized support.

To drive these recommendations and monitor progress, a district leadership team, made up of representatives from each school's Multi-Disciplinary Response to Intervention (RTI) support

team, will be established and meet quarterly to ensure common school level alignment and vertical transition alignment strategies are in place. The leadership team will work collaboratively to monitor impacts of Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 support in key areas of targeted implementations and action plans. This team will serve in a vital role, engaging in difficult conversations on how to assure proven instructional practices are being utilized system wide, so that every student is engaged in learning and graduates “college or career ready.”

The recommendations of the On Time Graduation Task Force will require a significant investment in resources to address the challenge: *to educate all Snoqualmie Valley children to prepare them for college, career, and citizenship.* The recommendations generally fall into the following groups:

- Planning and program development to put recommendations into action and monitor
- Instructional coaching and early learning program coordination to support teachers
- Focused professional development on using data to inform and differentiate instruction
- Support for college and career planning initiatives and for personalized learning
- Effective interventions to support students struggling in math and reading, social and behavior support, chronic absences, reengagement and credit recovery

Because of the complexity of the recommendations, exact funding requests are still being refined. It is anticipated that a comprehensive funding proposal will be available later this spring. Note that not every recommendation is dependent on funding and numerous opportunities exist for incremental, systemic change, regardless of the funding level available.

Dropping out of high school is a process, not an event. As stated earlier in the summary, there are numerous and often complicated factors that contribute to students not making it to graduation. Each of the Task Force work topic sub-committee recommendations addresses one or more of these factors and will help to mitigate the process of disengagement that leads to students not achieving success in school.



Snoqualmie Valley School District

OUR MISSION

Educate all Snoqualmie Valley children to prepare them for college, career, and citizenship.

OUR VISION

To become the best school district in Washington State by any measure.

WE VALUE

- A focus on success for all students
- A clear and open communications environment
- Collaboration at all levels
- Dedication to continuous improvement and best practice
- Mutual respect
- Positive relationships
- High quality instruction
- Honesty and integrity
- Leadership
- Striving for innovation and excellence
- Transparent governance

EXPECT THE BEST: FROM OUR STUDENTS • OF OUR STAFF • FOR OUR COMMUNITY