

## **White House Commitment Form: Improving School Counseling/College Advising (December 4, 2014)**

President Obama has called for the United States to once again lead the world by 2020 in the share of young people with college degrees. Consistent with that goal, we are seeking details about commitments from higher education institutions, school districts, and non-profit organizations to prepare school counselors and non-profit professionals to deliver College and Career Readiness (CCR) information to students. If your organization is considering concrete steps to expand access to CCR counseling, we would like to hear from you.

For example, a school counselor program could add graduation requirements or enter into a training agreement with a school district or non-profit organization. We hope that commitments will include a description of how such changes will impact CCR goals in the following areas: the percentage of seniors completing a FAFSA, the percentage of seniors submitting college applications or the average number of applications submitted per student; a reduction in the developmental education needs of graduating seniors, the percent of graduating students who enroll in postsecondary institutions, and other quantifiable metrics tied to improving postsecondary enrollment, persistency and graduation rates.

We respectfully request that you submit this form no later than October 31, 2014. We intend to make these responses public in conjunction with the summit in December. While we hope to invite as many organizations making substantial commitments as possible, we have not finalized the details of the event and will share more information in the coming weeks.

Everett Public Schools, Everett, Washington, has seen its extended high school graduation rate rise above 90%. With more students earning a high school diploma, we have added college and career readiness to our graduation focus. Currently, we are re-committing and expanding our efforts to leverage college and career counseling to mobilize students, families, and staff to reach our vision to ensure all students transition from high school with the ability to turn postsecondary plans into reality.

The current Everett Public Schools vision is for all graduates to complete at least two years of post-secondary training, such as a transferable Associates degree, a trade or industry certificate, or Associates degree, or earn a Bachelors degree or training in the armed forces. Our commitment has been the focus of our collaborative work with our local community college, Everett Community College, and other local institutions, such as the University of Washington, that serve the majority of Everett Public Schools students upon graduation. The purpose of this collaborative focus has been to reduce remediation at the postsecondary level, to increase postsecondary credentials earned, and to promote persistence and completion of postsecondary credentials.

Everett Public Schools college and career goals include:

- 100% of Everett Public School graduates will have college and career plans, “High School and Beyond Plans”
- 100% of Everett Public School graduates will graduate with high school courses aligned with postsecondary goals
- 90% of Everett Public Schools graduates will have participated in at least one college-level course prior to graduating from high school
- 75% of Everett Public Schools graduates will have completed the FAFSA prior to graduating from high school
- 75% of Everett Public Schools graduates will have earned college credit prior to graduating from high school
- Less than 10% of Everett Public Schools graduates will require postsecondary remediation

Everett Public Schools counselors and counseling curriculum have been critical to ensuring all students are able to access and are prepared for college and career options, starting as early as kindergarten and supporting students through and beyond high school graduation. This fall, we committed to expanding our college and career portfolio for middle school students, increasing the tools and counseling options available throughout the high school years, and expanding and revising our senior year advisory course into a College and Career Readiness Seminar. We also re-committed to collaborating with our local postsecondary institutions, so as to be able to support students through completion of postsecondary credentials. Counselors continue to lead this work, but it is really the work of our entire district – from the Board and superintendent, to teacher and paraprofessional, to food service worker and bus driver, to students and their families. We are committed to college and career readiness for all students and committed to learning how to better serve and prepare our students for the future.