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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
OSPI’s staff, with assistance from the Washington State Office of the Education Ombudsman, convened a group of school district and education service district representatives, who are experts in the field of family involvement, in order to help the QEC answer questions regarding an adequate level of staffing for classified parent involvement coordinators. The work group members were chosen because of their extensive experience working to engage the diverse families, in the State of Washington and beyond, in the education of their students.

The working group noted that while parents have traditionally been student’s support, students today often rely on a constellation of other individuals that make up their families. The working group recommends that this position be titled family involvement coordinator (FIC) in order to reflect and acknowledge, all families, not just the nuclear families of the students in our schools. Throughout this report the role is referred to as family involvement coordinator.

For purposes of this report family involvement coordinators are defined as the staff that work as an integral part of the student support team to involve families as full partners in the education of their students. Generally, family involvement coordinators are charged with building relationships with families and leveraging those relationships to help ensure the academic success of all students.

The working group drew on their professional experience, best-practice research in the field of family engagement and the input of other stakeholder groups to identify an adequate staffing level for classified family involvement coordinators. This recommendation was also informed by the tasks that the working group identified as the drivers of their work. In order to adequately support student achievement through the development of family-school partnerships, the working group recommends that districts receive funding for 1.0 FTE FIC in the prototypical elementary school, 1.0 in the prototypical middle school and 0.8 in the prototypical high school.

In addition to consulting with school and education service district representative, OSPI staff also consulted with both the Center for Improving Student Learning and the Building Bridges Work Group to solicit input on what level of staffing is required in order to achieve the States goals around closing the achievement gap; improving student achievement overall; and drop-out prevention, intervention, and re-engagement.

Funding Formula Technical Working Group Response
The funding formula Technical Working Group (FFTWG) had an opportunity to review and respond to the recommendations of the FIC work group. The FFTWG recommended that base for this staff should be lower and should vary based on district’s needs (i.e. concentrated poverty, and or high concentrations of ELL’s). In addition the group recommended that if funding for this staff must be phased-in priority should be based on those districts with the highest percentages of students in grades K-12 that are eligible for free or reduced price lunch.
HISTORY OF FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

In recent years there has been much debate about what constitutes adequate funding for basic education in the state of Washington. Various commission, task forces and pieces of new legislation have attempted to specify both the district and school personnel that are essential to school district operations. Those recommendations however, have been inconsistent in the inclusion of parent/family involvement staff among this group of essential personnel.

The K-12 advisory committee of Washington Learn, and the Basic Education Finance Task Force acknowledged parent/family involvement or outreach in their staffing models. In contrast, Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2261, which passed in 2009, did not include parent involvement staff among the classified staff categories identified in the prototypical school model. As follows, in January of 2010, the Quality Education Council did not recommend staffing for parent involvement as it was not a category of staff up for debate. Following the 2010 Legislative session, the debate over adequate staffing for parent/family involvement staff was reintroduced as Substitute House Bill 2776 included this staff among the school level staff in the state’s new prototypical model. A detailed description of each group’s recommendations follows.

Washington Learns: In their final report to the K-12 Advisory Committee of WA Learns researchers Picus and Odden noted that in most schools guidance counselors, social workers and other student support staff work in isolation from one another. Instead of this model, they proposed integrated family/community outreach-pupil support teams that would stress the actions that families can take to help their students learn.1

Picus and Odden go on to say that schools need a student support and family outreach strategy, and the level of resources devoted to this strategy should be influenced by the level of disadvantage of the student body. They noted a general standard of one licensed professional for every 20-25 percent of students from low-income backgrounds, with a minimum of one for every 500 students.

Their ultimate staffing recommendation was to provide one teacher for every 100 free and reduced price lunch eligible students, with a minimum of one for each of the prototypical schools. In addition, they recommended providing an additional 1.8 guidance counselors in the prototypical middle school and an additional 2.4 guidance counselors in the prototypical high school based on the American School Counselor Association’s standard of 1 counselor to every 250 students.

The recommendation would enable districts and schools to allocate FTE staff across guidance counselors, nurses, as well as social workers, in a way that best met each school district’s needs. Picus and Odden also noted that this recommendation would provide substantial and adequate resources for family outreach and involvement, as well as counseling for students.

Basic Education Finance Task Force: The Task Force recommended that an allocation for guidance counselors/parent outreach staff be included as part of the certificated educational staff
Classified Staff Adequacy

Parent (Family) Involvement Coordinator

associates. The allocation would provide 1.5 FTE per 432 students in middle school and 1.5 FTE per 600 students in high school. The recommendation did not provide for any such staff in the prototypical elementary school, and the recommendation did not speak to a need for classified staff in this role.

**ESHB 2261:** The legislations did not identify family involvement coordinators as one the staff types included in the prototypical model schools.

**Quality Education Council:** In its January 2010 report to the legislature the Quality Education Council did not recommend any level of staffing for a family involvement coordinator as it was not included among the staffing types in the prototypical model schools.

**SHB 2776:** The legislation included family involvement coordinators among the list of classified staff elements in each of the prototypical model schools. However, the Legislature determined that the baseline funding level for this staff is zero.

### 2008-09 Baseline Funding Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Involvement Coordinator FTEs</th>
<th>Staff per 1,000 Students</th>
<th>Elementary (400)</th>
<th>Middle (432)</th>
<th>High (600)</th>
<th>Amount per Student for Supplies</th>
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*At the time of the QEC submitted its January 2010 report the family involvement coordinator was not identified in the prototypical model, as follows, district practice for category of staff is undetermined.

### 2017-18 Funding Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Involvement Coordinator FTEs</th>
<th>Staff per 1,000 Students</th>
<th>Elementary (400)</th>
<th>Middle (432)</th>
<th>High (600)</th>
<th>Amount per Student for Supplies</th>
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INTRODUCTION TO FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

What is Family Involvement
Families play critical roles in student success. They support their children’s learning, guide them through a complex school system, advocate for more and improved learning opportunities, and collaborate with educators and community organizations to achieve more effective educational opportunities. Families raise their children in multiple settings and across time, in collaboration with many others.

What the Research Says
Joyce Epstein, well known researcher in family involvement, and her colleagues at the Johns Hopkins University Center for Family, School and Community Partnerships have developed a framework that identifies six types of family involvement. These involvement types include:

- **Parenting** – Assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as student at each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families.

- **Communicating** – Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications.

- **Volunteering** – Improve recruitment, training, work, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school or in other locations to support students and school programs.

- **Learning at home** – Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-linked activities and decisions.

- **Decision making** – Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, and other parent organizations.

- **Collaborating with the community** – Coordinate resources and services for families, students, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups, and provide services to the community.

Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family/School Partnerships was co-authored by Anne T. Henderson (a senior consultant with the Institute for Education and Social Policy at New York University), Dr. Vivian Johnson (leading researcher on Parent/Family Centers in schools), Karen L. Mapp (a lecturer on education at Harvard and former Deputy Superintendent for Family and Community Engagement in Boston) and Don Davies (the founder of the Institute for Responsive Education and Professor Emeritus at Boston University). The book identifies important elements of family engagement:
**Classified Staff Adequacy**

Parent (Family) Involvement Coordinator

- **Addressing differences**: Recognize, learn about, and affirm all cultures in the school. Connect families’ cultures to what students are learning. Recognize and support different forms of parent involvement. Build cultural competence. Make accommodations for language barriers. Address racial tensions and bias.

- **Supporting advocacy**: Help families understand and use advocacy to resolve problems. Give families and students information and support to make smooth transitions. Help families be actively involved in setting goals for their children’s future.

- **Building relationships**: Welcome all families to your school community. Honor families by recognizing their strengths and contributions. Connect with families through a focus on the children and their learning. Establish a family center.

- **Linking to Learning**: Help families understand what is happening in the classroom. Put student work front and center. Communicate regularly with families about learning. Put learning at the center of the parent-teacher conferences and include students. Use student achievement data to design programs for families. Collaborate with community organizations.

- **Sharing power**: Provide workable mechanisms for teachers, parents, and students to take part in decision making. Build a broad base of involvement by increasing families’ connections to others in the community. Strengthen families’ links with community organizations and resources.

Despite the fact that these framework exists, researchers acknowledge that family involvement will look different for every family. Ensuring a child gets enough sleep and eats a healthy breakfast before attending school every day is a form of involvement just as meaningful as attending parent-teacher conferences or volunteering in a child's classroom. Each of these types of involvement will lead to different results for students, families, and school staff. Schools must choose the practices that will help achieve the outcomes they want to see in their building.

**Why is Family Involvement Important?**

National research consistently shows that when a student’s family is actively involved in his or her education, that student’s rates of academic achievement increase. This success holds true for all students and families, regardless of ethnicity, income level or education backgrounds. Research shows that by increasing family involvement students’ achievement improves as measured by:

- Higher grade point averages and scores on standardized tests or rating scales,
- Enrollment in more challenging academic programs,
- More classes passed and credits earned,
- Better attendance,
**Classified Staff Adequacy**

Parent (Family) Involvement Coordinator

- Improved behavior at home and at school, and
- Better social skills and adaptation to school.⁴

**What Role Do Family Involvement Coordinators (FIC) Play?**

A family involvement coordinator is an integral part of a comprehensive guidance and counseling team. The family involvement coordinator works with the guidance and counseling team to “engage and assist families in participating as full partners in their children’s education.”⁵ FICs help to close achievement gaps by specifically reaching out to those families whose students struggle the most, and working with them to develop strategies that will help to ensure that their students achieve academic success. The roles played by the family involvement coordinator fall into three broad categories: relationship building, improving school climate, and build the capacity of families to support student achievement.

In their work to **build relationships** family involvement coordinators:

- Create partnerships between families and schools in an effort to ensure the academic success of their students.
- Helps to facilitate two way communications between families and schools.
- Help to create platforms for families to ask questions and voice their concerns.

In their work to **improve school climate** family involvement coordinators:

- Help to create a welcoming school environment that encourages family involvement.
- Act as a cultural bridge between families and the school environments.
- Assesses school climate as it relates to how welcoming the community is to all families
- Identifies trends that point toward ways in which school policies and operating procedures do not encourage family involvement
- Recommends strategies for improving climate (i.e. training in cultural competence, multi lingual communications, non-traditional conference/open house schedules)

In their work to **build the capacity of families to support academic achievement** family involvement coordinators:

- Help to ensure that families have access to the information they need in order to ask informed questions.
**Classified Staff Adequacy**

Parent (Family) Involvement Coordinator

- Develops strategies for families to support student achievement by both being present in school when able, and when is appropriate; and through at-home activities.

- Connects families with appropriate social and emotional supports (i.e. certificated building staff who can then make referrals to external services providers if necessary) that improve the stability of the family and ultimately bolster the families ability to support their students achievement.

- Help families manage transitions from one school level to the next, making clear for families the ways in which one school level differs from the next and how that impact the family’s interaction with the school and how they can continue to support their student’s achievement.

Family involvement coordinators play several roles, but there is a distinction between the role that these classified personnel plan in their work with families and the role that certificated staff (i.e. guidance counselors, and school social workers) play in their work.

In the context of Response to Intervention; a multi-level prevention system aimed at maximizing student achievement, FICs provide Tier 1 (universal) services. In cases where students have needs beyond Tier 1 and families therefore need access to professional staff support in order to devise strategies for supporting their student, FIC provide minimal Tier 2 services aimed at connecting families with those supports.

Family involvement coordinators should not be charged with delivering specialized social services rather they are in a position to leverage the strengths of families and the benefits that they can bring to schools. For example, the family involvement coordinator does not do “home visits” in the way that a social worker would, rather, they may schedule “meetings with families” in their homes if that is the best way to connect with them and begin to build relationships.

The family involvement coordinator is also not synonymous with the community partnerships coordinator or the volunteer coordinator. Community partnerships extend beyond families, and given that FICs are school level staff community partnerships may be coordinated more efficiently and effectively at the district level. Similarly, school volunteers extend beyond just families and in many districts these non-family volunteer represent community organizations businesses, and faith-based organizations. Coordinating the volunteer from these various organizations and doing the administrative work that comes along with this role could easily monopolize and entire staff person’s time. In order family-school partnerships to be developed fully FICs cannot be pulled in three different, and equally compelling, directions.

**What are the Tasks that Drive the Work of the Family Involvement Coordinator?**

The role of the family involvement coordinator (building relationships, improving school climate, and developing families’ capacities to support academic achievement) remains constant as students and
families move through the schools system. However, the tasks that drive the work of the FIC change slightly to meet the needs of family at the various stages in their students’ lives. The following list details examples of the specific tasks or activities that enable FICs to fulfill the roles that they play.

At all grade levels the FIC does the following:

- Reaches out to families through mailings, phone calls, and face to face meetings in an effort to inform families about ways in which they can help their students succeed (on-going; targeted communications during school conference, assessment, registration, and other times when family engagement is critical).
- Plays an active role in and is visible during school orientation activities (annually).
- Actively welcomes new families who enter after the start of the school year (on-going).
- Seeks families’ perspectives on how schools are meeting their needs (on an ongoing basis informally; and formally twice per year).
- Helps to develop peer to peer networks (on-going).
- Works with school leadership and families to identify meaningful ways that families can be involved in school governance, and helps to ensure that families are prepared for those interactions. (attend regularly scheduled staff meetings, and meetings of the school leadership team)
- Conducts workshops for other school staff regarding strategies for working with families given the feedback they get from families, and the strategies they learn from targeted professional development opportunities (annually).
- Works in collaboration with the guidance and counseling team to ensure that there is a parent component to all relevant activities, and that parent’s voices are represented in the decision making processes (attend regularly scheduled guidance and counseling team meetings through-out the year with).
- Contributes to the school improvement plan; especially as it relates to family involvement (attend school improvement planning meetings and monitor progress toward achieving family involvement goals).
- Provides information about how to support academic success at home and at school (on-going).
- Provides families with information about how to be an advocate for their children and how to navigate the school’s systems (on-going: i.e. daily expectations for attendance and absence notification, registration, special program assessments).
Classified Staff Adequacy

Parent (Family) Involvement Coordinator

- Shares age and developmentally appropriate expectations with families regarding state learning standards and grade level expectations (on-going; formally at the start of each new term).

- Conducts workshops for families regarding things they need to know, in addition to topics families say that they would like to know more about (monthly).

- Inform families about how to support their student’s transitions from one school level to the next, and help make families aware of how they can best support their students at each stage (annually).

- Connects families with continuing education opportunities if the FIC finds that is an effective strategy available to increase family engagement (on-going).

At the middle school level the FIC also:

- Informs families about strategies for maintaining engagement through middle school (on-going).

- Reiterates and clarify the details of course planning at the middle school and inform how middle school course taking impacts future post-secondary opportunities (bi-annually).

At the high school level the FIC also:

- Informs families about strategies for maintaining engagement through high school.

- Informs families about alternative routes to graduation

- Informs families about post secondary opportunities

What do we know about Family Involvement?

Current State and Local Funding for Family Involvement:
The state does not currently allocate funds for family involvement. Any staff working in the district must be funded by a combination of local levy, federal, and private funds. The existence of these staff varies from district to district with some staff working at the district level and some staff working in schools. OSPI does not currently collect data on these staff, but based on information we have received from district staff these staff have becoming more rare in recent years as districts budgets have become more constrained.

Federal Requirements and Funding for Family Involvement:
Federal law states that any district that receives $500,000 or greater of Title I, Part A funds must set aside 1% of that allocation for parent involvement. Of that one percent 95% of the funds must be allocated to Title I funded schools to build capacity for parent involvement (Section 1118 (b)).
Each Title 1 funded district and school that is subject to this requirement must work with parents to develop a written parent involvement plan. In addition, these funds must be used to implement programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents in the programs assisted by Title 1 funds.

As a component of the school-level parental involvement policy each school that receives Title 1 funds must work with parents to develop a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards (Section 1118 (d)).

The legislation goes on to say that in order to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership between the school, involved parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, districts and schools must work to build parent’s and the school’s capacity for involvement.

In the 2009-10 school year, 81 of the 295 school districts in Washington received more than $500,000 in Title 1 Funds (excluding temporary ARRA funds). Allocations to these 81 districts totaled nearly $152.6 million. Based on 2009-10 allocations for classified staff salaries and benefits 1% of these funds would only be sufficient to hire 31.826 FTE family involvement coordinators across the state.
METHODOLOGY USED TO DETERMINE CLASSIFIED STAFF ADEQUACY

Challenges with Determining the Adequacy of FIC Staff
Family involvement coordinator is a new element that was added to the prototypical school model in SHB 2776 that passed during the 2010 legislative session. The legislation determined that in the 2008-09 school year, funding for this staff type was zero. This inclusion of family involvement coordinators in the prototypical school model, and subsequent determination that current state funding is zero indicates that current funding for this element is wholly inadequate. However, this scenario presents the first challenge to determining and adequate level of FIC staff. There is no state-wide context in which to assess the extent to which districts have been able to achieve the goals of this position given current state funding.

Additionally, given that local districts have born the entire cost of having FICs on staff they have found creative ways to fund these critical positions. As follows, among the districts that do have FICs it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the activities of the FIC from the related work of other members of the student support team.

In the process of determining an adequate level of staffing for FICs it was important to note where the work of one staff ended and the work of the FICs begin in an effort to not duplicate efforts and to highlight the activities that will continue to need to be accomplished by the FIC if and when these other staffing categories are enhanced. In some respects, and the changing need for some staff as the number of these other staff grows and declines

Guiding Questions
When first asked to help determine adequate levels of state-funded family involvement coordinators, OSPI staff began by surveying the current landscaped around family and community involvement in the state. To that end staff met with representatives from the Building Bridges Work Group, the Center for Improving Student Learning (CISL), and the State’s Title 1, Part A program staff; groups that all have an interest in seeing that districts develop stronger partnerships with families. The following questions came out of those meetings and were used to guide the work of determining the adequacy of FIC staff.

1. Is the term “parent” involvement coordinator (PIC) reflective of the community of individuals school staff know to be students’ support?
2. What is the role of a PIC?
3. What tasks drive the work of the PIC?
4. How does the work of the PIC relate to the work of the larger student support network within the school (I.E. Guidance Counselors, Social Workers, School Psychologists, Instructional and Non-Instructional Aides, etc.)?
5. How is the work of the PIC distinct from the work of other school-based student support staff?
6. Given the role PICs play, the tasks that drive their work, and the relationship between PIC’s and other members of the school-based student support team, how many full-time equivalent PICs are required to support the prototypical elementary, middle and high school?

Work Plan
After working with these internal stakeholder groups, OSPI’s staff worked with the Washington State Office of the Education Ombudsman to convene a group of school district and education service district representatives, who are experts in the field of family involvement, in order to help the QEC answer these questions regarding FIC staffing. The work group members were chosen because of their extensive experience working to engage the diverse families in the State of Washington and beyond, in the education of their students.

The working group drew on their professional experience, best-practice research in the field of family engagement and the input of other stakeholder groups to identify an adequate staffing level for classified family involvement coordinators. This recommendation was also informed by the tasks that the working group identified as the drivers of their work.

Findings
The work group agreed unanimously with the Building Bridges group, CISL, and Title 1 program staff that the term family involvement coordinator is more inclusive then “parent” involvement coordinator and should replace the term in the prototypical model. While this recommendation is a small change in practice it represents a larger symbolic change that acknowledges the non-nuclear families that exist in society today. While parenting is an important part of family involvement, parents alone are not the sole parenting force in many students’ lives.

The group of family involvement experts described in detail the role of the FIC and the activities that drive their work. The descriptions provided by this group are represented in the description of roles and activities provided on pages 7 and 8 of this report. A description of how this role relates to those of other school staff is also summarized on these pages.
CONCLUSIONS

The family involvement coordinator must be an integral part of the guidance and counseling team. Family involvement coordinators must also play a leadership role in the school improvement planning process to help ensure that families’ voices are represented in the strategic planning process.

As a member of the student support team, family involvement coordinators should be included among the group of staff for whom districts receive allocations for professional development. FIC must be provided with opportunities to continually refine their intercultural communication, facilitation, and organizational management skills if order to help ensure that they are knowledgeable and effective resource for parents and families. FIC must also have access to formal opportunities to collaborate with and share strategies with their colleagues, and they must be trained in how all school processes, policies and systems work in order to best support family engagement.

RECOMMENDATION

To help to ensure that both families and schools have the tools they need to act as partners in the education of student, and to help support student achievement through the development of family-school partnerships, the Family Involvement Coordinator Work Group recommends that districts receive funding for 1.00 FTE FIC for the prototypical elementary school; 1.00 FTE FIC for the prototypical middle school; and 0.80 FTE FIC for the prototypical high school. The total cost to implement this recommendation is estimated at $98.7 million for the 2011-12 school year.

Funding Formula Technical Working Group Response

The funding formula Technical Working Group (FFTWG) had an opportunity to review and respond to the recommendations of the FIC work group. The FFTWG recommended that base for this staff should be lower and should vary based on district’s needs (i.e. concentrated poverty, and or high concentrations of ELL’s). In addition the group recommended that if funding for this staff must be phased-in priority should be based on those districts with the highest percentages of students in grades K-12 that are eligible for free or reduced price lunch.
Classified Staff Adequacy
Parent (Family) Involvement Coordinator

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4 (Henderson & Mapp, 2002)