

OLN Research Alliance 2014–15 Working Group Summaries

The Oregon Leadership Network (OLN) Research Alliance seeks to further evidence-based practice and inform the design of policies, programs, and practices that promote equity for Oregon students. The research alliance is a group of interested parties who agree to work together to examine specific problems of practice by defining research questions, sharing data, conducting research, and using the results to improve student outcomes and success.

Below are summaries of the current OLN Research Alliance Working Groups, formerly called task forces. These working groups are open to representatives from OLN member districts and organizations, some limitations apply due to work currently underway.

For information on the OLN Research Alliance please contact, Dr. Hella Bel Hadj Amor, Coordinator, OLN Research Alliance, at Hella.BelHadjAmor@educationnorthwest.org or at 503.275.9587.

Equity in Behavioral Practices Working Group

The Equity in Behavioral Practices Working Group supports the use of evidence to eliminate school discipline disparities and to dramatically reduce the use of exclusionary discipline practices to maximize student instruction and success. This work is guided by the *OLN Statement of Principles and Commitments for Eliminating School Discipline Disparities*.

Goal

The Equity in Behavioral Practices Working Group aims to reduce suspensions and expulsions for students overall and to eliminate disproportionate rates of exclusionary discipline imposed on African American, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian students.

Key Staff

Dr. Vicki Nishioka (Vicki.Nishioka@educationnorthwest.org, 503.275.9498)

Dr. Zafreen Jaffery (Zafreen.Jaffery@educationnorthwest.org, 503.275.9589)

Proposed Activities September 14, 2014 through December 14, 2014

- Develop and conduct a webinar series that districts may use as professional learning tools:
 - Webinar 1: *Keeping Students in School: Strategies for Preventing Suspensions* presented by Dr. Vicki Nishioka and Dr. Jeffrey Sprague. Moderated by Dr. Zafreen Jaffery. The webinar is scheduled for September 25, 2014.

- Webinar 2: Using School Discipline Data to Identify and Track Disproportionate Rates of Exclusionary Discipline tentatively scheduled for late October, 2014.
- Develop a guidance document to help district use disaggregated discipline data to identify problems and monitor progress toward reducing the discipline gap.

Proposed Activities January 15, 2015 through December 15, 2015

- Design data tools that districts can use to gather qualitative feedback from teachers and families on ways to prevent, identify, and reduce discriminatory discipline. Support data collection, analyses, and reporting findings to OLN stakeholders.
- Continue development of a webinar series that districts may use as professional learning tools:
 - Webinar 3: Classroom engagement, use of discipline data, and culturally responsive practices
 - Webinar 4: Family engagement practices
- Co-sponsor and plan a full-day workshop on discipline disparities with the NW PBIS Network and the University of Oregon. The workshop will be on March 6, 2015.
- Conduct a breakout session, *Linking Policy and Practice to Reduce Discipline Disparities*, at the Oregon School Boards Association on November 15, 2015.

High School Success Working Group

The High School Success Working Group seeks to eliminate student performance disparities through the use of equity-focused tools and strategies for graduation and to increase high school graduation rates.

Goal To support OLN districts in building and implementing an Early Warning System (EWS) to keep every student on track and to identify students at risk of not graduation on time from high school.

Key Staff

Dr. Sarah Frazelle (Sarah.Frazelle@educationnorthwest.org, 503.275.9639)

Kendra Hughes (Kendra.Hughes@educationnorthwest.org, 503.275.0459)

Proposed Activities September 14, 2014 through December 14, 2014

- REL Northwest staff are currently working with three OLN districts. Staff will continue to meet with EWS districts to provide coaching and technical assistance as requested.

Proposed Activities January 15, 2015 through December 15, 2015

- Provide coaching and technical assistance/support to current EWS districts

- Work with new districts interested in building an EWS. REL NW staff will use the EWS Module Series to engage alliance members in the process of building and implementing their system

Supporting ELs Working Group

The Supporting ELs Working Group will focus on serving the needs of English learners (ELs) by sharing research-based practices, successes, challenges, information and resources to better support Oregon's growing population of students learning English. The working group will decide on goals and frequency and location of meetings.

Goal

To increase use of tools and processes to review data through an equity lens in order to increase educational access, opportunities and success of ELs.

Key Staff

Dr. Claudia Rodriguez-Mojica (Claudia.Rodriguez-Mojica@educationnorthwest.org, 503.275.9492)

Proposed Activities September 14, 2014 through December 14, 2014

- Completed a study that examined the rates of suspension and expulsion for English learners, reasons for such discipline, instructional days lost to suspension, and how suspension and expulsion were associated with achievement on state assessments in reading and mathematics. The report will be ready for distribution to OLN members soon.
- Constructed a rubric designed to help districts assess their progress in developing coherent and consistent instructional programs for ELs. The rubric focuses on curriculum, teaching, assessment, family engagement, and other areas.

Proposed Activities January 15, 2015 through December 15, 2015

- Proposed to work with participants in the Massive, Open Online Course (MOOC), "Supporting English Language Learners under New Standards", being offered by Oregon State University. We will support OLN district staff's course participation by assessing the needs of the course participants, facilitating professional learning team activities and supporting learning and use of student language data after course completion.
- Proposed to gather youth in OLN districts to begin the process of listening to student perspectives on dropout prevention, disproportionate discipline practices, challenges for English learners, and engaging diverse families. Listening to student perspectives on these issues may help us better understand the problem and provide ideas for solutions.
- Proposed a follow up activity that would allow us to assist districts' use of the instructional programs for ELs rubric.