



Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Chris Reykdal, State Superintendent

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for post-secondary pathways,
careers, & civic engagement.*

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: Gangs in Schools Task Force

2018

Authorizing legislation: [RCW 28A.300.490](#)

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Executive Summary

A Gangs in Schools Task Force was created under Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28A.320.490 to examine current adult and youth gang activities that are affecting school safety. The task force met regularly from 2008–2013 to examine current adult and youth gang activities affecting school safety and to make recommendations to the Legislature.

The Gangs in Schools Task Force submitted legislative recommendations for several years. Ultimately, the task force chose to focus on three primary areas of activity with direct impact on gang activity in schools: data, policy guidance, and training. The task force stopped meeting in 2013 and reiterates the previous recommendations as submitted to the Legislature. Task force reports from earlier years can be found on the School Safety Center [Gangs in Schools webpage](#).

Background

In 2007, the Legislature passed Substitute Senate Bill (SSB) 5097, which required the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to convene a task force to examine how gangs are affecting school safety. The task force must annually report its findings and recommendations to the education committees of the Legislature. The Gangs in Schools Task Force submitted legislative recommendations for several years. Ultimately, the task force chose to focus activity on three primary areas of activity with direct impact on gang activity in schools: data, policy guidance, and training.

Update Status

Due to turnover in organizational staffing and task force membership, and little to no changes in the recommendations, the Gangs in Schools Task Force has not met since 2013.

Data: The Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) includes one question related to youth gang affiliation and activity ('In the past 12 months, have you been a member of a gang?'). In 2016, 5 percent of 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students surveyed responded 'yes.'

There is *no category* defined for reporting gang activity in current state or federal reports.

Policy guidance: Previously, the task force examined local, regional, and national policies and guidance for dealing with gang activity in schools. The task force then drafted policy guidance for school districts and communities, including definitions and identification criteria for recognizing gang activity within a school setting. School districts may use the guidance to create their own policies and procedures regarding gang activity in their schools. The OSPI Gangs in Schools web page has these draft policy and procedure guidance documents.

Trainings: Since the previous report, there have been no trainings offered through the task force.

Meetings: As noted above, the task force is no longer meeting. The School Safety Advisory Committee would address any new issues related to gang activity in schools.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The School Safety Advisory Committee will address any new issues around gang activity in schools. The Gangs in Schools Task Force report reiterates the three recommendations

previously forwarded to the Legislature. If addressing gang activity within schools is to be a priority for schools and districts, the task force recommends that the Legislature:

1. Provide funding to support future task force work.
2. Provide funding for training, data collection, and implementation of innovative programs and promising practices. The task force also recommends that the Legislature provide funding to support the work of promising, community-based efforts.
3. Provide a dedicated apportionment for transition/re-entry programs for adjudicated youth. As a component of its draft policy and procedural guidance, the task force recognizes the importance of wraparound educational and re-engagement services for students who are suspended or expelled for gang-related activity. The task force recommends funding such activities.



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