
SEPTEMBER, 2016

Office of the Education Ombuds

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Introducing the OEO Quarterly Newsletter!

We've seen a lot of changes over the past ten years at OEO, but the core of our work has remained the same: helping families navigate Washington's K-12 public schools, improving communication between families and schools, working with educators and community partners, and providing policy recommendations to the legislature.

We hope you enjoy this quick summary of what's new at the OEO!

OEO ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016 RELEASED

You can now read the 2015-2016 OEO Annual Report, available on the OEO web site: <http://oeo.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/Annual-Report-2015.2016.pdf>

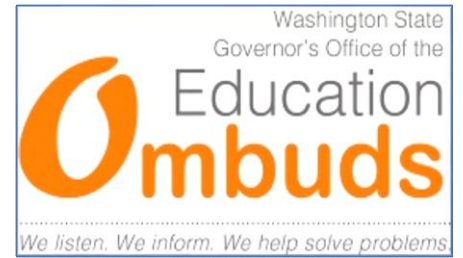
Highlights include a brief 10-year overview, 2015-2016 annual data, as well as policy recommendations to legislature, such as:

Supporting social emotional learning and mental health supports for every student by leveraging professional expertise and consulting with communities and families meaningfully

Creating ongoing, required professional development to increase cultural responsiveness in schools

Bolstering language access for Washington families and students through collaborations between districts and a statewide emphasis on timely, clear information for every family

Requiring data-driven accountability and training for school boards by building on existing requirements and drawing on multiple sources of data



UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 11

Discipline Webinar, 11 a.m.-12 p.m.

Register at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/oeo-webinar-what-do-recent-discipline-changes-mean-for-washington-schools-tickets-28058060414>

We will post a recording on our website (oeo.wa.gov) afterwards.

OCTOBER 21

Family Engagement Surveys Due!

OEO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY – DUE OCT. 21ST

OEO has been asked to define what family and school collaboration look like. We want to hear from families across Washington. You can access the survey online [here](#):

<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s/3/3066346/Family-Engagement-Survey-Focus-on-Families-Input>

Please submit your survey by Oct. 21st.

WHO IS NEW AT OEO?

A QUICK INTRODUCTION TO STAFF CHANGES AT OEO

CARRIE GRIFFIN BASAS, DIRECTOR

Carrie Griffin Basas is the Director of the Office of Education Ombuds. She joined us in September 2015. Carrie is a former civil rights and labor law attorney. For many years, she was a law professor, specializing in disability rights, criminal justice, and ethics. She has taught at the University of North Carolina School of Law, Penn State University, Case Western Reserve University, the University of Tulsa College of Law, and Saint Joseph's College of Maine. In 2014, Carrie returned to graduate school to attain a MEd in Education Policy, Organizations, and Leadership from the University of Washington. Carrie is also a graduate of Swarthmore College (Honors B.A. in Psychology with a minor in Sociology/Anthropology) and Harvard Law School (Juris Doctorate degree).

Carrie identifies passionately with the work of the OEO as a woman with a disability, the mother of a child with disabilities and English Language-learning needs, and a first-generation college graduate. She lives with her husband and daughter in Seattle.

SEAN HEANS, INTAKE SPECIALIST

Sean Heans is the Intake Specialist for the Office of the Education Ombuds. Sean speaks Spanish fluently. He was a medical and private interpreter for seven years where he provided service and support in a range of difficult situations. Before working as an interpreter, he tutored Mathematics, Spanish and English in the United States, Mexico and Canada. Sean came to the United States in 2003 from Peru.

YASIN ABSHIR, ASSOCIATE OMBUDS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SPECIALIST

Yasin Abshir is an Associate Education Ombuds and Community Engagement Specialist with the Office of Education Ombuds.

He worked previously at a non-profit organization in Seattle helping the East African community navigate the education system. Yasin can attest to the opportunities an education provides. Each child that receives a quality education can reduce poverty on the individual level, increase a state's economic growth, and reduce gender inequality on a national scale. He plans to pursue a Masters in either Public Administration or Public Policy. Yasin is fluent in Somali.



Eastern Regional Ombuds, Sam Blazina, celebrates graduation with her son William.

ATTENDANCE MATTERS!

This fall, OSPI and partners such as OEO are highlighting the importance of attendance. Missing just **two** days of school each month can affect a child's path towards graduation and academic success. Schools and families are valuable partners in addressing barriers to attendance.

You can read OEO's Attendance toolkit, and Frequently Asked Questions [here](http://www.oeo.wa.gov/education-issues-topics/attendance-and-truancy/):

<http://www.oeo.wa.gov/education-issues-topics/attendance-and-truancy/>



OEO Staff from left to right: Rose Spidell, Carrie Basas, Sam Blazina, Stephanie Palmquist, Sean Heans, Yasin Abshir, Danielle Eidenberg-Noppe