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# MARCH, 2017

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# Office of the Education Ombuds

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Digging into data together; Ensuring success for students in foster care; Upcoming Islamophobia webinar; and introducing monthly "Ask an Ombuds" lunchtime webinars – here's what's happening at OEO!

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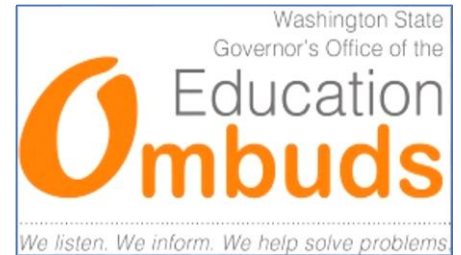
## DIG INTO DATA TOGETHER: A PROPOSAL TO WORK TOGETHER

In OEO's [Winter Newsletter](#), we highlighted how school communities are using data more to identify areas for improvement and put an equity lens on program development and revision.

In February, OSPI rolled out another set of statewide data that school communities can use to take a close look at how students are doing in their path toward graduation. OSPI has shared data on how many students, broken down by race, ethnicity, gender, disability and income status, are [not passing their 9<sup>th</sup> grade courses](#). OSPI also shared information and tools for how to make sense of the data and how to put it to use with [free webinars](#) that you can find on their website.

One of the tools on OSPI's website is a Reflective Questions Worksheet for district leaders, and one of the first questions on it is "Who needs to see this data?" We suggest that in addition to district and school leaders, teachers, school counselors and other staff working with students at the middle and high school levels, families and community organizations must be in the dialogue. Those conversations could be difficult, as families and community members look at the data and share their perspectives on how to make sense of it, and what to do about it.

Difficult conversations are necessary to have, especially if a significantly disproportionate number of students from a certain community or identity are not doing well. Families and communities contribute valuable information to what the root causes of these disparities are. We urge district leaders to reach out and invite families and community groups to join your data review teams. We urge families and community organizations to reach out and offer to engage with the data review. We urge all stakeholders to sit down with open minds, assuming that each person is there with the intent to ensure opportunity for all students, and dig into that data.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

"ASK AN OMBUDS" LUNCHTIME  
WEBINAR 03/14/17 AT 12:00 PM

New monthly webinar held 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month offers opportunity for Education Ombuds to answer your questions! Please email your questions in advance to: [oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov](mailto:oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov) with subject line: Ask an Ombuds

Join the Webinar at:  
<https://zoom.us/j/271657262>

Or dial in: 1-408-638-0968  
Meeting ID: 271 657 262

## OEO ISLAMOPHOBIA WEBINAR

In the works...Webinar addressing Islamophobia. Date to be determined.

Registration information will be posted on OEO's Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/WAEducationOmbuds/>

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR OEO CLINICS

Organizations working with families who have concerns about their children's education in the K-12 public schools can contact OEO to discuss opportunities to host an Ombuds Clinic or provide workshops for families.

Email: [oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov](mailto:oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov)  
Subject: Ombuds Clinics

## SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE

In January, OEO hosted a [webinar](#) to share important updates for students in foster care. Previously, some children who were “awaiting foster care placement” were covered under McKinney Vento protections. With the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), that provision was removed from McKinney Vento, and ESSA added new protections specifically for students in foster care, including school of origin protections. OSPI's Foster Care Program Supervisor, Jess Lewis, provided an overview of those recent changes and a review of state laws that provide various protections for students in foster care, including support when they experience excessive absences and help with consolidating credits toward graduation. Here are a few highlights:

1. Stay in their [School of Origin](#)

When a child enters foster care, or has to move to a different foster care placement that is in a different district, or different neighborhood, the child can **STAY IN THE SAME SCHOOL**, unless it is not in the child's [best interest](#). This is known as the “school of origin” protection. You can find new [guidelines for deciding what is in a child's best interest in choosing a school](#) when a child in foster care changes homes, online at OSPI's Foster Care Program page. In order to make sure students can get to and from school if it's in their best interest to stay in the school of origin, districts and Children's Administration will be working together to design plans for how to provide transportation. If there are additional costs for transportation, they should work together to determine who will cover those costs. For additional details on how transportation can be worked out, check the Frequently Asked Questions page on [OSPI's Foster Care Education Program](#) site.

2. Get [Enrolled Immediately](#)

If a student in foster care does need to change schools, the student should be enrolled in the new school, in an appropriate classroom, and participating fully in school activities right away. The new and old schools should work together to transfer records right away. Staff in the new school should work with the student and caregivers to connect them with resources, as needed, extra-curricular activities, transportation, access to free meals, and extra academic support.

3. Get [Extra Academic Help](#)

Recent changes in the Every Student Succeeds Act, (ESSA), make all children and youth in foster care “categorically eligible” to receive Title I, Part A services. If a student in foster care needs extra help with school, you can ask the district to set up tutoring or other supports through Title I, even if there isn't already a Title I program in the student's school.

Finally, some of the most common questions we hear regarding supporting students in foster care center around which adults can and should be involved in discussions and decisions about their educational programs. A great place to look for guidance on these questions is this recently published [Educator's Guide to Supporting Students in Foster Care](#). Put together by Treehouse, DSHS and OSPI, it includes a whole chapter (chapter 3), and another section specific to special education services (in chapter 8), explaining the different adults commonly involved in supporting a foster child's education, and identifying who has authority to receive records, and to make different decisions.

### MISSED OEO'S WEBINARS? FIND THEM NOW ON OUR WEBSITE!

The School Stability for Students in Foster Care webinar can be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=farYcBJL67A&feature=youtu.be>

The Disability Identity webinar can be viewed here:

<https://youtu.be/OkPVGBb7CAw>

The School Discipline Changes webinar can be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fc90Lkev5v8>

Visit OEO's Facebook page for upcoming webinars and events.