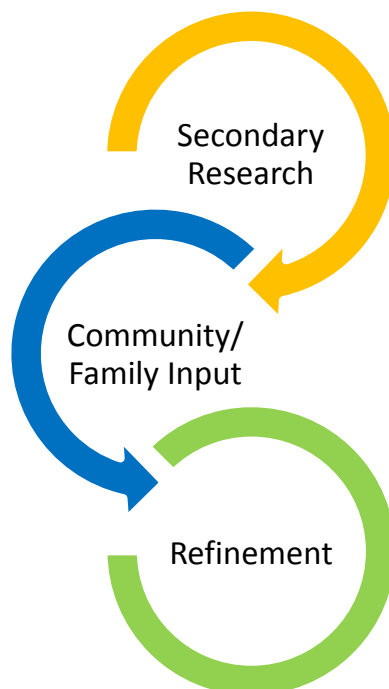


## House Bill 1408: Family Engagement Report Summary and Recommendations (December 1, 2016)

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During the 2015-2016 session, the legislature directed the Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO), along with the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC) to develop and recommend a definition and model/framework for the staff position sometimes called “family engagement coordinator”, “parent and family engagement coordinator”, or “parent involvement coordinator”.<sup>1</sup> OEO conducted background research and engaged with stakeholders to:

- Synthesize prior recommendations to the state related to this position and its importance in Washington schools;
- Review the background and context of the various frameworks for family or parent engagement statewide in both law and practice;
- Identify existing local and national research on best practices for family engagement;
- Get input from stakeholders, ranging from school directors to school counselors, families with children receiving special education services to families whose native language is not English;
- Learn from the wisdom of current educators and staff running family engagement programs.



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<sup>1</sup> SSHB 1408, <http://lawfilesex.t.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2015-16/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1408-S2.SL.pdf>.

# House Bill 1408: Family Engagement Report Summary and Recommendations (December 1, 2016)

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OEO recommends that the legislature provide leadership, clarity, and vision in the development and sustainability of meaningful, culturally responsive school and family partnerships by taking the following steps:

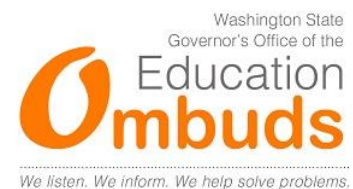
1. **Adopt as the state's commitment to family engagement the guiding statement crafted by the ESSA Family and Community Engagement Workgroup;**
2. **Form a multi-year statewide workgroup that brings direct family, educator, and community voices together to create a framework for implementing the EGOAC's recent family and community engagement recommendations;**
3. **Devote adequate resources to this state-level workgroup to conduct community-based meetings to draw on families' experiences statewide and support cultural responsiveness, language access, and other forms of access (e.g., supporting nontraditional families and guardians, providing for disability accommodations) from the outset of planning and throughout implementation; and**
4. **Fund a comprehensive system of education with family and community engagement as a foundation.**

It may be tempting to jump to adopt a new title, a definition of the role, and a framework for family engagement coordinators based on existing national research, prior recommendations from various stakeholder groups, and feedback from the families surveyed by OEO in connection with this report. However, if there is one thing that stands out from that work, it is that **there is nothing that can adequately substitute for direct participation by a diverse group of families, educators, and community members in determining what works for families, communities, and educators to effectively collaborate in support of student success in our schools.**

Unfortunately, because no funding was allocated to complete the work of 1408, and also due to the short timeframe for the project (6 months), it was impossible to engage in a process that could be expected to offer a meaningful opportunity for families, community members, and educators across the state to directly provide input. We are, however, able to provide through this [report](#)<sup>2</sup> a foundation and roadmap for the kind of collaborative process that can lead to a definition and framework best suited for Washington's schools, families, and students.<sup>3</sup>

The process that we recommend—of leveraging the direct voices of diverse families, educators, and community members—is the very kind of culturally responsive, shared-decision making that fosters effective family and school partnerships to advance student learning.

**We would love your feedback on this report. Contact OEO at [oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov](mailto:oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov) or call toll-free: 1-866-297-2597.**



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<sup>2</sup> <http://oeo.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/1408Report.2016.11.30.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> OEO would like to thank the families, community and agency partners, and OEO staff that contributed to this report. Without families willing to share their experiences through surveys, panels, and focus groups, this report would not have been possible.