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Terry Bergeson's Path to Leading Washington State Education ===== Teresa M. Bergeson is a former three-term Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction, serving from January 15, 1997, to January 14, 2009. Born on October 5, 1942, in Massachusetts, U.S., she graduated from Emmanuel College with a B.A. in English and later earned her master's degree in counseling and guidance from Western Michigan University in 1969. Bergeson worked as a counselor at Lincoln High School in Tacoma, Washington, and as a teacher and guidance counselor in Massachusetts and Alaska. She also served as chair of the National Education Association's Women's Caucus and implemented their National Women's Leadership Training Project. In 1981, Bergeson was elected vice-president of the Washington Education Association, and in 1985, she became president. In 1989, she joined the Central Kitsap School District as an executive director, overseeing nine schools out of 21. From 1993 to 1996, Bergeson led the development of statewide standards for students and standardized tests through her role at the Washington State Commission on Student Learning. She was elected Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1996 and re-elected in 2000 and 2004. Under Bergeson's leadership, further development of statewide standards and standardized tests occurred, particularly after the Commission on Student Learning was dissolved in 1999. She launched a successful bid for the non-partisan office in 1996. Although defeated by challenger Randy Dorn in 2008, Bergeson's tenure had significant impacts on Washington State education. Her focus on early learning programs and standardized testing paved the way for future generations of students. Bergeson's efforts also highlight the importance of partnerships between schools and local communities. The expanded access to the Imagination Library program in 2022 demonstrates this commitment, providing free reading materials to children aged birth to 5 across Washington State. The current funding model for the Imagination Library program, with each book costing \$2.60 - 50% paid through local partners and the other 50% funded through the state budget, showcases Bergeson's approach to making education accessible to all families. Today, the Imagination Library serves 120,000 children across Washington State, operating in each of the 39 counties. ===== The Imagination Library program in Washington state is facing a financial crisis, as \$X million of previously allocated funding has been removed from the state budget. This decision will have significant implications for the program's effectiveness and ability to provide books to young children. State Superintendent Chris Reykdal expressed his concerns about this development, stating that "the Imagination Library of Washington risks losing their effective, statewide infrastructure" if funding is halted. Despite this setback, Reykdal plans to advocate for renewed funding in the supplemental session next year. To continue supporting the program, Reykdal's agency will use limited discretionary funds to keep it funded for another year. The ultimate goal is to secure permanent funding from the Legislature next session. The Imagination Library offers a bilingual option, providing books in both English and Spanish, making it accessible to families with diverse language backgrounds. The organization's Executive Director, Brooke Fisher-Clark, praised the state superintendent and OSPI for their investment in the program, highlighting its potential to be "absolutely life-changing" for Washington students. Reykdal also addressed policymakers gathered in Olympia for the first week of the 2024 Legislative Session. He provided updates on student learning, postsecondary readiness, student health and well-being, school funding, and more. The state's public schools continue to perform well, with students making gains in math and English language arts compared to other states. Washington's eighth graders are among the top 15 in the country for their math and reading abilities. Additionally, the number of students enrolling in public school, attending regularly, completing advanced coursework, and graduating on time has increased. The Class of 2023 achieved a record-high graduation rate of 83.6%. Reykdal emphasized the importance of addressing student mental and behavioral health needs, which have become increasingly critical since the pandemic. OSPI is implementing programs to support these efforts, leveraging state funds, federal grant awards, and pandemic relief funding. This decision will impact the state's K-12 public education system in Olympia, where Superintendent Reykdal recently addressed policymakers. He expressed pride in Washington's public schools and the accomplishments of their students. The state's initiative operated through the Association of Educational Service Districts (AESD) provides trained staff to schools across the state who deliver foundational prevention education and training for students, staff, and families. This year, this initiative provided services to over 3,600 students in more than 100 schools. ===== In Washington state, dual credit courses were offered to approximately 50,000 students across 143 schools, providing both high school and college-level credits simultaneously. Six thousand five hundred graduates from the Class of 2023 earned the Seal of Biliteracy for demonstrating proficiency in multiple languages, with students earning certificates in 87 different languages - a record high in any US state. Launched in 2018, Washington's Imagination Library expanded to statewide coverage in 2023, distributing over 780,000 books to nearly 115,000 children aged five and under. More than 5,200 preschoolers received additional support through the transitional kindergarten program to ensure a successful transition into kindergarten. The state also provides various resources for students, including learning standards, instructional materials, and special education support programs, aiming to provide equal opportunities in education. Looking forward to seeing everyone at the meeting tomorrow and discussing our strategies for converting teachers with expired provisional or initial certificates. If you hold a full Washington Teaching Certificate, then you may be eligible to upgrade to a residency or professional certificate. # Conversion Options - **Provisional to Residency**: Select this if you have an expired Provisional or Initial Teacher Certificate and do not qualify to upgrade that certificate to the 2nd tier certification. - **Initial to Continuing**: Upgrade your expired Initial Teacher Certificate if you meet the requirements for the second-tier certification, prior to its expiration date. - **Residency to Professional**: Select this if you have met the requirements to upgrade your Residency Teacher Certificate to the Professional Certificate. # Why is there a change? The Washington state Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction recently adopted new discipline rules that will take effect next month. These changes are intended to address issues caused by COVID-19, such as increased cell phone use and anxiety. However, some student advocates say these rules undermine student protections. What do the changes mean for you? If you hold a full teaching certificate, then these limited certificates might not be an option for you. The new rules aim to maintain limits on long-term suspensions and expulsions, improve communication between schools and families about student behavior issues, and reduce bureaucracy. This appears to be some rollback to a bygone era of zero-tolerance policy... Which we know within the Black community is a streamlined pathway from the school to the prison," Harris said. Developing the rules The emergency rules implemented last August changed the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's discipline policies by providing definitions for discipline, corrective action, classroom exclusion, and emergency removal of a student from school. Under these rules, teachers can exclude students from the classroom for a maximum of two days at a time if their district's local policy allows for it. The emergency rules also removed a provision requiring educators to "identify other forms of discipline that school personnel should administer before or instead of administering classroom exclusion, suspension, or expulsion." This provision isn't in the new permanent rules, either. But Katie Hannig, a spokesperson for the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, said Wednesday that "the updated rules do not remove the requirement for educators to consider alternative disciplinary actions prior to classroom exclusion." She pointed to a different part of the rules that says, "Except in emergency circumstances, the teacher first must attempt one or more alternative forms of corrective action." The primary difference between the emergency and permanent rules is that under the new permanent rules, schools must collect data on disciplinary actions taken at each school and submit it to a statewide database. OSPI collaborated with the Association of Washington School Principals, the Washington Association of School Administrators, the Washington State School Directors' Association and the Washington Education Association when crafting the 2024 emergency rules. Washington Educators Association Soundview Council President Filma Fontanilla described the rules as "a step forward." "Educators need additional resources to support students in meeting behavioral expectations and to address their unmet needs," Fontanilla said in an emailed statement. Concerns about public input The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction began the permanent rulemaking process in October 2024 and filed proposed permanent rules based on the emergency rules in January. There were opportunities for public comment on the proposed permanent rules between late February and early March of this year, including at four in-person meetings in the Tri-Cities area, Spokane, Federal Way, and Vancouver. The process to enact the emergency rules did not require the agency to seek public comment. While League of Education Voters Foundation staff attended OSPI's public hearings and participated in the public comment period earlier this year, Holzapel said the nonprofit still found the state agency's community engagement lacking. "We're really concerned about the lack of public hearings that there were, the lack of announcement around them," Holzapel said. "They weren't really communicated to local schools or parent groups or student groups in the area." The four public hearings were each held from 4 to 6 p.m., which Holzapel said limited in-person access to parents and students. The League of Education Voters Foundation had a meeting with OSPI staff about their concerns on May 29. Holzapel said the group's main ask was to "start this process over" and bring more voices into the process, including young people who've faced disciplinary action. "Let's bring in parent groups, let's bring in student groups, and let's have a holistic discussion on what our values are, what the intentions are of these rules," he said. While a second meeting has been scheduled, Holzapel said that agency staff have indicated the permanent discipline policies will go into effect unchanged on July 11. "We are committed to monitoring the implementation of the updated rules closely and making adjustments as needed," Reykdal said. The state school superintendent announced that his agency will fund a program that provides free books to young children locally and statewide for one year. The program was initially funded by the Legislature but was cut due to Washington's budget deficit. ===== The Washington state Department of Education has introduced new policies aimed at reducing long-term suspensions and expulsions, while maintaining communication with families over student behavior issues. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has been criticized for its community engagement and public hearing process. Holzapel, a nonprofit representative, stated that the agency's efforts were insufficient, particularly in communicating with local schools and parent groups. ===== The state of Washington's schools will face a significant decrease in funding, amounting to \$137 million, if states lose access to federal K-12 funds. This represents 15.6% of the state's total federal funding for schools. Superintendent Chris Reykdal has expressed his commitment to early literacy, and recently announced that he is using limited discretionary funds to support the Imagination Library of Washington for an additional year. The program provides free books to children from birth to age five and has shown promising results in preparing them for school. The Imagination Library's impact was highlighted by a 2025 survey, which found that over 90% of parents believe the program is helping their child prepare for kindergarten. This initiative aligns with Reykdal's priorities for early literacy. Meanwhile, Barbara Bishop, an 85-year-old Washington resident, has achieved her long-held goal of earning a high school diploma. She quit school as a teenager to help support her family but later returned and successfully completed her degree. The Imagination Library has expanded access to its services statewide since 2022, with over 120,000 children benefiting from monthly book deliveries. Despite facing funding challenges during the legislative session, Superintendent Reykdal is working to keep the program funded for another year through limited discretionary funds. Additionally, Littlerock Elementary's Watch DOGS program aims to increase parental involvement in schools. This initiative has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from students, teachers, and volunteers, who appreciate the opportunity to engage with adult mentors during school hours. Lastly, the Imagination Library of Washington continues to provide essential services to young children across the state, offering age-appropriate books and promoting early literacy.

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