

# 2018 FEPP LEVY PROPOSAL: *SEATTLE PROMISE INVESTMENTS*

## BACKGROUND

In today's labor market, a post-secondary degree, credential, or certificate has become a necessary asset towards obtaining a living wage job. By 2020, 70% of all jobs in Washington State will require some post-secondary education.<sup>i</sup> However, only 31% of Washington's high school students go on to attain a post-secondary credential by the age of twenty-six.<sup>ii</sup> In Seattle, nearly 75% of all high school graduates enroll in a post-secondary institution – well above the state average of 60%<sup>iii</sup> – yet many do not persist through completion. This, and other factors, has led to a skills gap across our state and is inhibiting the ability of employers in our city to fill local jobs with local community members.

What many refer to as the “leaky pipeline” describes how the skills gap is exacerbated and emphasizes the need to support students not just with enrollment in post-secondary programming but in persisting through degree attainment. In particular, persistence rates for students attending public 2-year institutions tend to be lower than rates at public 4-year institutions and disproportionately impact students of color and those from underserved populations. It is within this context, and in response to growing workforce gaps, that Mayor Jenny A. Durkan has proposed the creation of the Seattle Promise to ensure Seattle's young people participate in Seattle's growing economy. In November of 2017, Mayor Durkan signed Executive Order 2017-14 launching exploratory efforts to develop a program to expand access to post-secondary opportunities for eligible graduates of Seattle public high schools and “reduce and remove the financial barriers” that limit the number of graduates who attain education and career readiness training beyond high school.

A report published by Seattle Public Schools found that for the class of 2015, “historically underserved students of color (Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Pacific Islander) attend college at a rate of 17 percentage points lower than White, Asian, and Multiracial students.”<sup>iv</sup> Furthermore, historically underserved students who do attend are more likely to enroll in a 2-year institution and require remedial coursework.<sup>v</sup> Data for the graduating class of 2015 indicates that of Seattle Public Schools students who attended community colleges, 52% required enrollment in pre-college, remedial courses – slightly higher than the state average of 50%.<sup>vi</sup> Persistence rates for this same graduating class affirm Seattle's own leaky pipeline disproportionately affects students attending 2-year institutions, perpetuating gaps between many students of color and their peers.

While the overall college-going rates in Seattle are encouraging, gaps persist when the data is disaggregated by income and demographics. Research finds affordability, college and career awareness and exposure, and academic readiness are all variables that contribute to college access and completion gaps, which further exacerbate income and employment gaps later in life. The Seattle Promise is designed to include this best

thinking. The program will provide supports in high school and college that will give students the best possible chance to accomplish post-secondary success.

## PROGRAM GOALS AND OVERVIEW

The overarching goals of the Seattle Promise program is to:

1. Increase the number of Seattle public high school graduates who earn a certificate, credential, or degree, and
2. Prepare students to succeed and participate in careers in Seattle's growing economy

With those aims in mind, The Seattle Promise provides tuition plus college and career readiness supports at the high school level and program persistence and advising supports at the college level for students who graduate from a Seattle Public School (SPS) high school and attend any of the three Seattle Colleges (North, Central, and South). The Seattle Promise is a universal program meaning **ALL** SPS high school graduates are eligible to participate. In the 2019-20 school year, all Seattle public high school students will be eligible for the Seattle Promise with the program reaching full portability across the Seattle College system by 2021-22. At that point, it is estimated that the program will serve annually 1,360 high students across 17 high schools, and 544 first-year and 326 second-year students across all three Seattle colleges.

	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
<b>Participating High School Students</b>	<b>1,360</b>	<b>1,360</b>	<b>1,360</b>	<b>1,360</b>	<b>1,360</b>	<b>1,360</b>	<b>1,360</b>
13th Year Students	420	544	544	544	544	544	544
14th Year Students	129	252	326	326	326	326	326
<b>Total 13th/14th Year Students</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>870</b>

Below is a description of the program's primary components which include tuition, student wraparound/program, and non-tuition financial supports:

### Tuition Support/Scholarship Design

The two-year scholarship (up to 90 credits), is a "last dollar" award that covers the remaining tuition balance after other financial aid, grants, and scholarship awards have been applied up to the cost of tuition at one of the Seattle public, two-year colleges. The scholarship is portable, meaning students can use the scholarship at North Seattle, Seattle Central, or South Seattle College. There are no high school GPA, citizen status, or income level eligibility requirements.

### Student Wraparound/Program Supports (High School and College-Provided Supports)

In addition to tuition assistance, Seattle Promise participants are provided wraparound program supports to help students navigate the college-going process as well as the academic terrain of college.

*High school-provided supports* contribute to cultivating student college readiness and include:

- Seattle Promise program staff working with students to apply for the Seattle Promise scholarship (and others they are eligible for), FAFSA/WAFSA, and for the application to the college(s) of their choice
- College 101 sessions for students and families that provide insight into what to expect when they start and an overview of possible courses of study and career pathways
- Academic workshops to prepare for placements tests and college-level math and English
- Field trips to campuses to learn about important logistics such as registration, advising, identification cards, tours, etc.

After graduation, Seattle Promise students continue to receive *college-provided supports* that transition them from high school, through the summer months, and into their post-secondary experience. This includes:

- Week-long “Summer Bridge” programming focused on building classroom and personal success and navigating the higher education system.
- Seattle Promise staff who worked with students in high school will serve as a single point of contact on campus, meeting with students quarterly and connecting them to student support services, college resources, and providing general guidance.

### Non-tuition Financial Support

Tuition is just one obstacle that prevents students from completing college. Textbooks, course fees, child-care, transportation, and other non-tuition expenses can add up, particularly for low-income or first-generation students. Non-tuition financial supports help to lighten the financial burden for targeted populations of Seattle Promise students, minimizing variables that may draw away from college enrollment and completion.

## **BUDGET OVERVIEW**

The average annual cost of the Seattle Promise program is anticipated to be \$6.3 million. The table below outlines the costs associated with tuition, student wraparound/program supports, and the non-tuition financial supports described above. The cost assumptions for the Seattle Promise program are based on data and trends from South Seattle College’s 13<sup>th</sup> Year Promise Scholarship Program and informed by other similar national promise programs.

Component	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	Total	% of Total
<b>Tuition</b>	\$1.9	\$2.8	\$3.1	\$3.1	\$3.2	\$3.3	\$3.4	\$20.9	48%
<b>Wraparound / Program Support</b>	\$2.2	\$2.5	\$2.6	\$2.7	\$2.8	\$2.9	\$3.0	\$18.7	43%
<b>Non-Tuition Financial Support</b>	\$0.4	\$0.6	\$0.6	\$0.6	\$0.7	\$0.7	\$0.7	\$4.2	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4.5</b>	<b>\$5.8</b>	<b>\$6.3</b>	<b>\$6.5</b>	<b>\$6.7</b>	<b>\$6.9</b>	<b>\$7.1</b>	<b>\$43.8</b>	<b>100%</b>

- **Tuition** is designed by taking into consideration “last dollar” and potential shift in college going culture for Seattle public school students.
- **Wraparound/Program Support** provides staffing to facilitate high school and college-provided supports as well as funding to support speakers, transportation, supplies, equipment and/or materials needed to implement student support programming.
- **Non-tuition Financial Support** are set aside funds for income qualified students who have additional financial need to cover costs associated with fees, books, transportation, etc.

## EVALUATION

Similar to other promise programs around the country, the Seattle Promise program will measure its overall success by increasing college completion or program participants. Gaining access to a post-secondary education is no longer an adequate measure of accomplishment. Research shows that programs that focus solely on matriculation may result in improved enrollment but may not move the needle on graduation rates. Instead, there needs to be greater emphasis on ensuring students graduate from college, prepared, and with a certificate, credential, or degree that will enable them to access and thrive in the local jobs of today and tomorrow.

The Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL) has convened a Seattle Promise Design Team comprised of City, Seattle College, Seattle Public School District staff, and other post-secondary stakeholders. The team is charged with the task of creating a Seattle Promise implementation plan by December 2018 that finalizes key program components including a comprehensive evaluation strategy with clear outcomes and indicators, and a robust approach to collecting and analyzing student and program data. Though the work of the Design Team in this area is just emerging, the group intends to explore the following aspects as potential outcomes, indicators, and methodologies.

Outcome(s)	COLLEGE ACCESS	MATRICULATION	PERSISTENCE	COMPLETION
<b>Evaluation Question(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Does Seattle Promise remove student barriers and prepare students to enroll in Seattle Colleges?</i></li> <li>• <i>Are students academically prepared for college?</i></li> <li>• <i>Are students socially and emotionally prepared for college?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Are students enrolling in the Fall at one of the Seattle Colleges?</i></li> <li>• <i>What portion of students' financial aid package is funded by Seattle Promise?</i></li> <li>• <i>Did students enroll in remedial courses?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Do students continue to enroll?</i></li> <li>• <i>What are SPS students' intended pathways?</i></li> <li>• <i>Are students achieving academically while at Seattle Colleges?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Did students graduate, transfer and/or complete programs?</i></li> <li>• <i>What type of degree or certificate did students earn?</i></li> </ul>
<b>Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• #, % of students academically on track (meeting math/reading standards, GPA, passing core classes, credits earned, etc.)</li> <li>• #, % demonstrating increased college knowledge and skills (admission process, career awareness, goal setting, time management, etc.)</li> <li>• Increased family knowledge and support of postsecondary and career pathways</li> <li>• #, % completing FAFSA/WAFSA</li> <li>• #, % graduating high school on-time (within 4 years)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• #, % of SPS graduates applying to Seattle Promise</li> <li>• #, % of SPS graduates applying to Seattle Colleges</li> <li>• #, % of SPS graduates enrolled at Seattle Colleges</li> <li>• #, % of SPS students enrolling in any postsecondary institution</li> <li>• #, % enrolled full-time at Seattle Colleges</li> <li>• Decreased rate of remediation</li> <li>• #, % receiving student supports (e.g., summer bridge)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• #, % persisting to 14<sup>th</sup> year</li> <li>• % maintaining satisfactory academic progress (GPA, credits, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• #, % graduating within 150% of normal time</li> </ul>

## EQUITY

Seattle Promise will open the doors to college for a significant number of students in Seattle who wouldn't otherwise consider post-secondary education as an option. Core to the program is a deep commitment to equity and ensuring that financial and systemic barriers are greatly reduced, particularly for those that have historically not had access and/or an opportunity to attain a college certificate, credential, or degree. Toward that end, the Seattle Promise is a universal program that fundamentally changes the college-going culture for students and families and provides the financial and individual support needed to help students persist to completion.

As a program that will be available to all Seattle public high school graduates, Seattle Promise will change the overall culture of families for whom the option of going to college was thought of as unattainable, to one where college attendance and the career opportunities it opens up are just as much a reality for them as it is for others. One of the reasons why other Promise programs across the country have been successful in creating this culture shift is the simplicity and universality of the message "free college" - best practice suggests that any attempt to put further qualifications on that commitment only muddles potential enrollees understanding of the program.

In the example of the Kalamazoo Promise, the Upjohn Institute's study showed that after 10 years of the program the principle beneficiaries were minority and female students. This program proved to be a game changer for students and families from those demographics. We have already seen similar results from students who have participated in the Seattle Promise. At Ingraham High School, half of the students who applied for the Seattle Promise, mentioned they did not have a plan for college and would probably not have gone to college or any post-secondary program.

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<sup>i</sup> Georgetown Public Policy Institute (n.d.)

<sup>ii</sup> Washington Round Table (2016)

<sup>iii</sup>. ERDC (2014)

<sup>iv</sup>. Seattle Public Schools (n.d.)

<sup>v</sup>. ERDC (2014)

<sup>vi</sup>. ERDC (2014)