

# General Education Terms

---

## A

---

**Ability grouping** – Assigning students with similar skills to learning groups.

**Absence** – Any part of a school day when a student is not in school.

**Academic Achievement** – What a student has learned from classroom instruction.

**Academic Advisor** – The member of the teaching staff assigned to provide school advice and guidance to students.

**Accountability** – The expectation that schools and/or educators should be held responsible for improving student achievement and should be rewarded or sanctioned for their success or lack of success in doing so.

**Accreditation** – Official recognition that a person or an organization meets specific requirements to be able to deliver instruction.

**Accuracy** – The ability to correctly read, write, and solve problems.

**Achievement Gap** – A consistent difference in academic test scores between groups of students. The gaps most frequently referred to are those between white students and minority groups such as African-American and Hispanic students.

**Achievement Tests** – Tests used to measure how much a student has learned in various school subjects.

**Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)** – The minimum level of improvement established

by the federal government, that public schools must achieve each year.

**Administrator** – A school district employee, such as principal, director, or superintendent, who is responsible for directing and managing a school or program.

**Advanced Placement (AP) Program** – A series of high-level courses that high school students can take to earn college credits.

**Advisory Group** – A small group of students who meet regularly with a school staff member to discuss school work and requirements.

**Advocate** – (noun) Someone who acts on behalf of another person.

**Advocate (To)** – (verb) To support or speak in favor of an idea, issue, or person(s).

**Affective** – A term which refers to emotions and attitudes.

**After-school Program** – Programs run by schools and/or organizations that provide recreational and learning activities for students after the end of the regular school day or on the weekends.

**Alignment** – How well the skills and knowledge taught in schools match the requirements of state and/or federal learning standards.

**Alternative Assessment** – Any form of measuring what students know and are able to do other than traditional tests. Examples are: oral reports, projects, performances, experiments, portfolios (collections of student's work), and class participation.

**Alternative School** – A public school designed by a school district to serve students whose needs are not being met in the traditional public school environment.

**American College Test (ACT)** – The ACT is one of the two commonly used tests designed to assess high school students' general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work.

**Appeal** – A request for a person or entity with greater authority to review and change an earlier decision.

**Apprenticeship** – A combination of on-the-job training (OJT) and related classroom instruction under the supervision of a trade professional.

**Aptitude Tests** – Tests that attempt to predict a person's ability to do something.

**Articulation Agreement** – An agreement between a high school or skill center and a community or technical college that allows the high school or skill center to offer college credit for a secondary career and technical education (CTE) course.

**Assessment** – Teacher-made tests, standardized tests, or tests from textbook companies that are used to measure a student's skills or knowledge.

**Associate Degree** – An award showing that a student has completed a two-year course of study in a community college.

**Average** – Usual, expected, or ordinary performance.

**Average Daily Attendance (ADA)** – The total number of days of student attendance divided by the total number of days in the regular school year.

**AVID** – AVID stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination and is a fourth-through twelfth-grade system to prepare students for four-year college eligibility. Schools that participate in AVID are required to meet staff training and membership requirements.

---

## B

---

**Bachelor's Degree** – An award that normally requires at least four years of full-time equivalent college courses.

**Basic Skills** – The fundamental skills needed to succeed in school and eventually in life. Historically, these skills have included the ability to read, write, and calculate (math).

**Becca Bill** – A Washington state law that requires school districts to take specific actions when students are absent. The law is RCW 28A.225.030.

**Below Average** – Under the usual, expected, or ordinary quality or performance.

**Benchmark** – The level of performance students should show by a particular point in their schooling.

**Best Practices** – Classroom instructional strategies that have been demonstrated and accepted by the professional community to improve student learning.

**Bilingual Education** – School program where two languages are used to teach the curriculum so that students gain knowledge of both languages.

**Block Scheduling** – Usually used in middle or high school, this scheduling allow student to have fewer classes per day and longer time in each class.

**Bond Measure** – An agreement by the citizens of a school district to repay the money borrowed by the school district for major construction or purchases, such as new school buildings, computers, or school improvements.

**Boosters** – A volunteer organization, usually parents and alumni, whose sole objective is to provide ongoing financial assistance in support of a schools' extracurricular programs, for example athletic program boosters or music boosters.

**Breakfast Program** – A program using state and federal dollars to provide low-cost or free breakfasts to low income students.

**Budget** – The plan for how to spend the school's or school district's funds.

**Bulletin** – A printed news publication.

**Bullying** – Repeated negative behavior that a person uses to take advantage of someone with less power. A bully is someone who uses bullying behavior.

---

## C

---

**Cadre** – A group.

**Calendar Day** – Refers to all days of the week, including weekends and holidays.

**Career and Technical Education (CTE)** – Classes that allow students to get credit for training in a skill or trade while still in high school. CTE classes may be held on-site or at a skill center.

**Categorical Funds** – Funds from the state or federal government granted to qualifying school districts for specific programs and/or for particular groups of students.

**Certificate of Individual Achievement** – An official document available for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) who are unable to take the High School HSPE (with or without accommodations).

**Certificated Staff** – School employees who are required by the state to hold teaching certificates. Also referred to as **Certified Staff**.

**Character Education** – A method that teaches students about basic human values.

**Charter School** – A school that is run by a group of organizers other than the school board and free from most state and local regulations.

**Classroom Management** – The way a classroom is organized to make instructional time as productive possible for all students.

**Class Size** – The number of students enrolled in a school classroom.

**Closed Campus** – A school where students are not allowed to leave the school grounds during the school day without permission.

**Cognitive** – A term which refers to reasoning or intellectual capacity.

**Cognitive Development** – The changes in the way children think, process information, and learn as they grow up.

**Cognitive Learning** – The mental processes involved in learning, such as remembering and understanding facts and ideas.

**Collaboration** – Individuals working together to accomplish goals.

**Collaborative Learning** – An instructional strategy where students of different abilities

and interests work together in small groups to solve a problem, complete a project, or achieve a common goal. Also known as **Cooperative Learning**.

**College Readiness** – The level of preparation a student needs to be ready to enroll and succeed, without remediation, in credit-bearing college course.

**Community Schools** – Schools that provide essential services, such as medical and dental services, nutrition classes, parent programs, and social services, for both students and families.

**Community College** – A two-year college, may also be known as a **Junior College**.

**Competence Tests** – Tests created by a school district or state that students must pass before graduating.

**Complex sentences** – Sentences with more than one clause or verbal phrase.

**Comprehension** – This is a term used to describe the interpretations, understanding, and meaning readers construct as they listen to and read stories.

**Computer-assisted Instruction (CAI)** – Educational programs delivered through the use of computers and educational software.

**Conflict Management** – A strategy that schools use to prevent and address conflict among students. It usually includes a set of expectations for behavior.

**Conflict Resolution** – A defined practice based on an understanding that there are various perspectives to address and solve a problem.

**Constructivism** – A learning theory that states that students learn by creating their own knowledge. Also known as **Discovery Learning**.

**Contempt of Court** – Someone who has willfully violated a court order can be judged to be in contempt of court.

**Contempt Hearing** – The court hearing where a judge determines whether or not someone is in contempt of court.

**Content Standards** – Standards that describe what students should know and be able to do in core academic subjects at each grade level.

**Content-related Vocabulary** – The words a student must know to communicate effectively about subject area material such as math, social studies, science, etc.

**Context Clues** – The words, phrases, and sentences surrounding an unfamiliar vocabulary word that help the student arrive at a possible definition.

**Continuous Progress** – A system of education in which individuals or small groups of students go through a sequence of lessons at their own pace, rather than at the pace of the entire classroom group.

**Conditional Certificate** – A temporary teaching certificate given to a person who has expertise in a particular subject and that has been hired by a school district because they cannot find a certificated teacher with an endorsement in that subject.

**Core Academic Subjects** – The academic subjects schools and districts require all students to take in order to be eligible for grade promotion and graduation.

**Core Curriculum** – The main body of knowledge that all students are expected to learn.

**Credit** – A unit of coursework given for satisfactory completion of the course.

**Criterion-referenced Tests** – Tests designed to measure how thoroughly a student has learned a particular subject compared to an established benchmark.

**Critical Thinking** – Logical thinking based on sound evidence.

**Cultural Competence** – A set of attitudes, awareness, knowledge, and skills that enables effective teaching in racially, culturally and socio-economically diverse classrooms.

**Curriculum** – The subject matter that is to be learned.

**Curriculum Materials** – Text, audio, video, and/or electronic media used to teach the curriculum of a school or subject area.

**Cut Score** – The minimum score needed to pass a test.

**Cyber Schools** – Educational institutions that offer most or all of their instruction by computer through the internet.

---

## D

---

**Decoding** – The process of translating individual letters or groups of letters into sounds so that the reader can pronounce a word.

**Descriptive Sentences** – Sentences that contain modifying words or phrases

(adjectives and adverbs) and are more elaborate than simple sentences.

**Detention** – A disciplinary action that removes a student from the classroom to another designated space within the school.

**Developmentally Appropriate** – Curriculum and instruction that is based on the mental and physical development of the student.

**Developmental Screening Tests** – Tests used to identify students who may have physical, behavioral, and/or developmental disabilities or delays, or sensory impairments.

**DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills)** – A testing tool that helps teachers determine at what level students in grades Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> are able to read and write.

**Differentiated Instruction** – An instructional technique that includes various ways to teach content and assess learning. It is used to meet student needs and differences in readiness, interests, and learning styles.

**Diploma** – A certificate conferred by a high school, college, university or other educational institution as official recognition for the completion of a program of studies.

**Direct Instruction** – A teaching technique in which the teacher presents the content and students are expected to respond in a specific manner.

**Discipline** – All forms of corrective action or punishment used with students.

**Distance Learning** – Taking classes in locations other than the classroom or places where teachers present the lessons including online, DVD, or telecommuting.

**Diversity** – Diversity involves recognizing a variety of student characteristics including those of ethnicity, language, socioeconomic class, disabilities, and gender.

**Dismissed** – When a court case is dismissed, it ends.

**DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment)**  
A tool teachers use to assess and record Kindergarten to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students' reading development.

**Dropouts** – Students who leave high school before graduating.

**Dual Credit** – A course or program where high school students can earn both high school and college credits for the same course.

**Dual-language Program** – A school program designed to serve both language minority and language majority students at the same time. Students from two language groups receive instruction in both languages. Also known as **Dual Immersion Program**.

**Due Process of Law** – Ensures that a person will be notified and have an opportunity to be heard before any public entity can change her/his rights.

**Dyslexia** – Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities.

---

## E

---

**EALR (Essential Academic Learning Requirement)** – Washington State's definition of what all students should know and be able to do as a graduate of public schools.

**Early Childhood Education** – The education of pre-school age children.

**Electronic Media** – The different electronic sources such as television, web pages, e-mail, CDs, etc. that may provide information or be used to share information.

**ELL (English Language Learner)** – A person learning English whose primary language is other than English.

**Emergency Expulsion** – Immediate removal of a student from school or class for an indefinite period of time.

**Emergent Literacy** – The view that reading and writing learning begins at birth and is supported by adult interactions.

**Emotional Development** -The ways in which individuals learn to interact in socially acceptable ways, establish and maintain relationships, and view themselves in positive ways.

**Enrichment** – Topics and activities that are not considered part of basic education.

**Environmental Education** – An educational practice that builds students' awareness of the natural world and how to protect it.

**Equal Access** –Case law based on religious non-discrimination. It requires schools that allow extra-curricular, voluntary-participation student clubs to meet on school property to also allow extra-curricular school use to religious groups.

**ESL (English as a Second Language)** – English language instruction for students whose primary language is not English.

**Evaluate** – To conduct a careful appraisal or study of something and determine its worth or value.

**Expenditure** – All amounts of money paid out by a school system.

**Experiential Education** – Education that emphasizes learning from experiences rather than from lectures, books, and other secondhand sources and which may take the form of internships, service learning, school-to-work programs, field studies, or similar experiences.

**Expulsion** – Removal of a student from school, class, or sometimes district property for an indefinite period of time.

**Extra-curricular Activities** – Activities that are not part of the required curriculum and that take place outside of the regular course of study.

---

## F

---

**Fact Finding Hearing** – A court procedure where a judge determines whether a legal case can be made against an individual.

**Familiar Sounds** – Sounds that students hear or speak in their primary language.

**Family involvement in education** – Another term for parent participation in the education of their children .

**FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)** – A federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.

**Financial Aid** – Grants, loans, and funds provided by the government for college expenses, such as college tuition, textbooks, and sometimes the living costs of students.

**Fine Motor** – Functions which require tiny muscle movements, for example, writing or typing.

**Fluency** – The ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with proper expression and comprehension.

**Formative Assessment** – A test that determines what students have learned at a particular time in order to plan further instruction. Also known as **Formative Test**.

**Free or Reduced-Price Meal** – A federal program that provides breakfast, lunch, and/or after school snacks for students from low-income families.

**Functional Illiteracy** – The inability to read or write well enough to perform many basic, necessary tasks in daily life.

---

## G

---

**Guardian** – Person legally placed in charge of the welfare of a minor or of someone incapable of managing her or his own affairs.

**GEAR-UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs)** A federal grant program created to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in college.

**Gender Bias** – The idea that one gender or the other is short-changed by school practices and expectations.

**General Educational Development (GED) Test** – A high school equivalency test certifies that a person has the skills and knowledge equal to those of a high school graduate.

**General Vocabulary** – Words that are critical to understanding the main idea, events, characters, themes of a lesson.

**Generalize** – To arrive at a broad conclusion based upon a small piece of evidence. May also be referred to as **Generalization**.

**Genres** – A term used to classify literary and informational works into categories, such as biography, mystery, historical fiction, etc.

**Gifted and Talented Program**- A program that offers advanced coursework to students identified as being academically gifted or talented.

**GLE (Grade Level Expectation)** – The essential content or subject matter to be learned by students at a specific grade level.

**Grade Point Average (GPA)** – A system of scoring student achievement. Student's GPA is computed by multiplying the grade received in each course by the number of credits offered for each course, then dividing by the total number of credit hours studied.

**Graduate** – A student who has received a diploma for successfully completing a program or school's course requirements.

**Graduate School** – University level school that provides instruction and degrees beyond the bachelor degree.

**Graduation Requirements** – The courses and number of credits required by a school district or the state to receive a high school diploma. The state provides a minimum set of requirements, and school boards can set additional graduation requirements for their school district.

**Grant** – Funds provided for students to attend college that do not have to be repaid.

**Graphic Features** – Maps, diagrams, graphs, charts, or pictures that help make the text meaningful and interesting to readers.

**Graphing Calculator** – A calculator with a larger display that draws and displays math functions and data.

**Gross motor** – Functions which require large muscle movements, for example, walking or jumping.

**Guidance Counselor** – School staff member who provides academic advice to students and their families, helps them address learning problems, and assists students in career and personal development.

**Guided Practice** – A teacher-led activity that the class completes together.

---

---

## H

---

---

**Head Start Program** – A federally sponsored preschool program for children from low-income families.

**Health Education** – Curriculum that addresses physical, mental, emotional, and social health.

**Hearing Examiner/Officer** – The decision-maker in school discipline hearings.

**Heterogeneous Grouping** – The practice of grouping together students of varying abilities, interests, or ages for instruction.

**Higher Education** – Study beyond high school at a college or university that results in an associate, bachelor, or higher degree. Also known as **Post-secondary Education**.



**Higher-Order Questions** – Questions that require thinking and reflection rather than single-solution responses.

**Higher-Order Thinking Skills** – The ability to understand complex concepts and apply sometimes conflicting information to solve a problem that may have more than one correct answer.

**High Frequency Words** – High utility words which make up 50% of printed text, for example: *A, the, this, that*, etc.

**Highly Qualified Teacher** – Teachers are required by federal law (NCLB) to meet following three criteria to be considered highly qualified:

- 1) Holds at least a bachelor's degree.
- 2) Holds full state certification.
- 3) Demonstrates subject matter knowledge and teaching skill in each core academic subject assigned to teach.

**High School** – Generally grades 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Homeschooling** – Teaching children at home. This instruction must be supervised by a certificated educator, and families must keep documentation of students' annual progress.

**Homework** – Regular assignments to be completed outside the classroom.

**Honors Program** – Courses a school or district designs and offers to students to challenge their learning beyond the regular curriculum.

---

**Idiom** – An expression that does not mean what it literally says, for example, “you drive me crazy”, “hit the deck”.

**Illiteracy** – Lack of reading and/or writing skills.

**Immersion** – A program that teaches children to speak, read, and write in another language by instructing them in that language.

**Inclusion** – The practice of educating all children of various needs and capabilities in the same classroom.

**Incomplete** – A temporary grade stating that a student has not finished all class assignments at the end of a grading period.

**Independent Study** – An opportunity for students to conduct self-directed learning and receive credit.

**Individualized Instruction** – A practice provides each student with the lessons and assignments according to her/his strengths and needs. Students work at their own pace to learn the material. Also called **Individualized Education, Differentiated Curriculum, Individualized Education, or Differentiated Instruction.**

**Inference** – A conclusion reached after reading text and using past knowledge and experience to understand it.

**Informal Knowledge** – Knowledge about a topic that students learn through experience outside of the classroom.

**Inquiry** – A process in which students explore a problem, and create and work through a plan to solve the problem.

**Inquiry-based Learning** – An instructional method where students create questions about a phenomenon, fact, or piece of literature, and work to answer their

questions through an exploration of the topic.

**In Loco Parentis** – Refers to an individual who takes on the parent role and responsibilities for a child without formally adopting him/her.

**Integrated Curriculum** – The practice of using a single theme to teach a variety of subjects.

**Internship** – Workplace learning that gives students an opportunity to apply their knowledge and learn new skills.

**In-service** – Continuing professional education for educators. Also known as **Staff Development** or **Professional Development**.

**Instructional Aide** – A school employee assigned to help teachers with the education of students. Also known as an **Instructional Assistant, Paraeducator, or Paraprofessional**.

**Interactive Learning** – Occurs when the teacher or computer software adjusts the instruction in response to the learner's needs.

**Interdisciplinary Curriculum** – A way to organize curriculum in which content is drawn from two or more subject areas to focus on a particular topic or theme. Also referred to as **Multidisciplinary Curriculum, Integration, or Integrated Curriculum**.

**International Baccalaureate (IB)** – IB courses are offered as part of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, a rigorous two-year curriculum (geared primarily to students aged 16 to 19) that leads to a degree that is widely recognized internationally. It prepares students for a university education, with a specific focus on

the ability to communicate with and understand people from other countries and cultures.

**Interpretation** – The process of verbally communicating information from one language into another language keeping the intent and meaning of the original information.

---

## J

---

---

## K

---

**K-12** – Refers to Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade education.

**Kindergarten Entry Age** – The age when children are eligible to enroll in Kindergarten, usually at least 5 years old.

---

## L

---

**Language Arts** – Another term for English curriculum. The focus is on reading, speaking, listening, and writing skills.

**Learner-centered Classroom** – Classroom in which students are encouraged to choose their own learning goals and projects. Also known as a **Student-Centered Classroom**.

**Learning Contract** – An agreement between a student, teacher, parent (or other adult as a family member) detailing how the student will work toward specified learning objectives.

**Learning Disability** – A condition that interferes with a student's ability to learn. Also known as a **Learning Disorder**.

**Learning Styles** – Differences in the way students learn best including through hearing, seeing, or doing the learning task.

**Letter of Recommendation** – A letter written by a teacher or other adult that supports a student's application for a program, college, or a job.

**Levy** – (noun) An additional sum to property taxes within a school district for education-related expenditures. Residents of the school district vote on whether to pay these levy taxes.

**Levy** – (verb) To impose taxes.

**LEP (Limited English Proficient) Students** – Students who are reasonably fluent in another language but who have not yet achieved comparable skills in reading, writing, listening, or speaking English. Also known as **English Language Learner (ELL)**.

**Literacy** – Ability to read and write. Also refers to other types of knowledge and skills such as scientific literacy, computer literacy, etc.

**Literal** – The common or ordinary meaning of words.

**Local Revenues** – The money a school district receives from local taxes, investments, and student activities.

**Long-Term Suspension** – Exclusion from school for more than 10 days.

**Looping** – A school practice where the teacher moves with his or her students to the next grade level, rather than sending them to another teacher the next school year.

---

## M

---

**Mainstream** – To place students with disabilities into regular classrooms with the supports defined in their Individualized Education Plan.

**Magnet Schools** – An alternative public school that often focuses on a particular area of study, such as performing arts or science and technology, in addition to the core curriculum.

**Manipulatives** – Any object, for example, blocks, toothpicks, or coins, that can be used to represent or model a problem situation or develop a mathematical concept.

**McKinney-Vento Act** – Federal legislation that provides educational services to homeless students which are equal to all other enrolled students, and ensures that homeless children and youth have equal opportunities to enroll in, attend, and be successful in school.

**Measurement of Student Progress (MSP)** – Beginning in the 2009-10 school year, the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) for grades 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> will be replaced by the Measurements of Student Progress (MSP) to identify students' abilities in math (grades 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>), reading (grades 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>), science (grades 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>), and writing (grades 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>). The testing window for the MSP will be in May beginning spring 2010.

**Mediation** – A strategy for conflict resolution which relies upon a neutral third party work to help parties arrive at an agreed upon compromise.

**Mentor** – To serve as a role model for another person.

**MESA (Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement)** – The MESA program

assists academically disadvantaged students, especially students of color, girls, and students in poverty, by helping them to prepare for and successfully complete a 4-year college program.

**Middle School** – Schools for students in the early adolescent years, generally grade 6<sup>th</sup> through grade 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Modeling** – The practice of demonstrating to the learner how to do a task, so that the learner can copy the model. It often includes thinking aloud or talking about how to work through a task.

**Multi-age Classroom** – A classroom that includes children from different grades.

**Multi-disciplinary Curriculum** – Generally refers to learning a particular topic area through the viewpoint of more than one subject.

**Multiple Intelligences** – A theory of intelligence developed in the 1980s by Howard Gardner that broadly defines intelligence beyond mathematical and linguistic, to include musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, and intrapersonal.

---

## N

---

**National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)** – Also called “the Nation’s Report Card,” this federal test uses groups of students in grades 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> from around the country to measure progress in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, geography, and the arts. Scores are reported nationally and by state, but not for individual students or schools.

**Navigation 101** – A program for students in grades 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> with the goal to help students make plans, set class schedules, and prepare for life beyond high school.

**Neighborhood Schools** – Public schools nearest to students’ homes as determined by school district attendance boundaries.

**No Child Left Behind (NCLB)** – A federal law that requires yearly student testing, consequences for schools or districts that do not meet standards, and requires all teachers and assistants to be highly qualified.

**Non-verbal Communication** – Messages sent by way of gestures and other body language, and drawings.

**Notice** – Notification of an action that usually contains information about legal rights to appeal a decision.

---

## O

---

**Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)** – The primary state agency charged with overseeing K-12 education in Washington State.

**Office of the Education Ombudsman (OEO)**  
A state agency that helps resolve problems and disputes between families and schools. ([www.waparentslearn.org](http://www.waparentslearn.org))

**Ombudsman** – A person that helps resolve conflict or disputes.

**On-Time Graduation rate** – The number of students who started grade 9<sup>th</sup> in the fall of a particular year and are expected to graduate four years later.

**Open-Ended Question** – A question that can be answered in more than one way and may have more than one correct answer.

**Outcomes** – What students are supposed to know and be able to do.

---

---

## P

---

---

**Parent Involvement** – The participation of parents in the education of their children.

**Parent Teacher Association (PTA)** – A national, nonprofit organization, independent of the public school system that supports family involvement in schools and advocates for children. When student members are included, the name often becomes PTSA or Parent Teacher Student Association.

**Parent Teacher Conference** – A meeting where the parents and the teacher of a particular student discuss present and future academic progress.

**Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)** – A local, school-based, organization of parents, and others to support family and public involvement in the school and advocate for students.

**Pedagogy** – The art or profession of teaching.

**Peer Mediation** – Programs in which students are trained in conflict resolution and assist other students to work through problems without using violence.

**Performance Assessment** – A test that determines what students know through their ability to perform certain tasks.

**Performance Criteria** – The skills or knowledge that will be evaluated as a student completes a task.

**Performance Tasks** – Activities, exercises, or problems that require students to show what they can do.

**Per-pupil Expenditures** – Expenditures made by schools, a school district, or the state divided by the total number of students in the school, school district, or state.

**Petition for Readmission** – A request to have a student return to school before the end of an expulsion or suspension.

**Phonemic Awareness** – The ability to identify and combine individual sounds (phonemes) into spoken words.

**Phonics** – An instructional strategy used to teach reading. It helps beginning readers by teaching them letter-sound relationships and having them sound out words.

**Picture Dictionary** – A dictionary that defines words using pictures and graphics.

**Placement Exam** – A skills test given to new students to determine what class or courses are best for their abilities and interests.

**Policy** – A piece of legislation, norm, or regulation.

**Portable** – A building, often with one or two rooms, that is used as a classroom and can be moved when it is no longer needed.

**Portfolio** – A collection of work that demonstrates and documents the student's learning progress over time. It might include writing samples, examples of math problems, and results of science experiments.

**Prerequisite** – A course that must be completed before a student is allowed to register for a more advanced course.

**Primary Language** – A student's first language. The language spoken at home.

**Principal** – The certificated hired by the Superintendent to manage the day-to-day business of the school, supervise and evaluate school staff.

**Professional Development** – Programs that allow teachers or administrators to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to perform their jobs successfully. Also known as **Inservice**.

**Proficiency** – The ability to do something at grade level.

**Prompt** – Pictures or words to which a student responds orally or in writing.

**Pull-out Programs** – The practice of providing instruction in small groups outside of the regular classroom in order to give particular students additional learning opportunities.

**Pupil** – A student.

**Purge** – An action to be done by an individual found to be in violation of a court order.

---

## Q

---

**Quick Write** – An exercise where students quickly write down everything they know about a topic.

**Quota** – The number or amount constituting a proportional share.

**Quotation** – The repeated statement from a person or from text. When written, it is enclosed in quotation marks.

**Quorum** – The minimum number of members of a group required to be present at a

meeting in order to make decisions for an organization.

---

## R

---

**Readability** – The level of difficulty in a written passage.

**Reference Tools** – Materials for students to refer to in order to check spelling, word meaning, grammar, etc., such as picture dictionaries and/or bilingual dictionaries.

**Remedial Class** – Instruction, usually in addition to regular classroom learning, that provide additional time or attention for a student to learn what's expected at their grade level.

**Report Card** – The record of student attendance and grades for each grading period and the entire school year. Student report cards are sent home for parent review each grading period.

**Response to Intervention (RTI)** – A tool that helps educators identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, provide evidence-based instructional strategies, monitor student progress, and adjust the interventions in response to students' reaction to the intervention.

**Rubric** – A grading or scoring system that lists what work students must show to be proficient. Also called a **Scoring Guide**.

**Running Start** – A college preparation option that permits students in grades 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> to take courses on local community and technical college campuses and earn credit toward both high school graduation and a college degree.

---

---

## S

---

---

**Sanctions** – Another word for punishment.

**Scaffolding** – An instructional technique in which the teacher breaks a complex task into smaller tasks and supports students as they learn, and then gradually shifts responsibility for learning to the students.

**School-Based Management** – A system of school governance by which many school level decisions are made by the individual school rather than at district or other agency level. Also known as **Site-Based Management** or **Site-Based Decision Making**.

**School Board** - The school board is formed by School Board Directors or members. They set goals and policy, hire and supervise the Superintendent, and manage the finances of the school district.

**School Board Directors** – Citizens who live within a school district and are elected by other citizens to be part of the school board of directors.

**School Choice** – The opportunity for families to choose which schools their children will attend.

**School Culture** – The values, cultures, safety practices, and organizational structures that cause a school community to function and react in particular ways. Also known as **School Climate** or **School Environment**.

**School Day** – Any day, including a partial day, when students attend school for instruction.

**School District** – The organization responsible for providing free public education for school-age children residing

within a specific area of a city, county, or state.

**School-Family Partnership** – Collaborative relationships between educators and family members based on mutual respect, trust, equality and shared goals that support and focus on student academic success.

**School Improvement Plan (SIP)** – The long-term plan schools create with staff and parents to ensure that all students are achieving at high levels.

**School Improvement Status** – The consequences faced by schools and districts that do not meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) required by No Child Left Behind federal legislation.

**School Readiness** – The basic background and knowledge that children are usually expected to have upon entering kindergarten.

**School Records** – Any information about a student kept by the school.

**School-to-Work** – A curriculum that integrates academic study with up-to-date career and technical education and work-readiness skills.

**Scientific-based Research** – Research about educational programs and activities that uses systemic and objective procedures that provide results considered reliable and valid.

**Section 504 Plan** – Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 extended civil rights to people with disabilities. It allows for reasonable accommodations as necessary for each student. Services, accommodations, and program modifications for students who qualify under

Section 504 are outlined in a document called “504 Plan.”

**Self-correction** – Student recognizes and corrects error without input from others.

**Self-efficacy** – Learners' beliefs about their capacity of succeeding when learning specific topics or tasks.

**Self-esteem** – An affective or emotional reaction to the self.

**Sign Language** – A way of communicating that uses signs made with the hands, facial expressions, and body movements.

**Sight Vocabulary** – Words that a reader can immediately read without having to decode. Also known as **Sight Words**.

**Snow Day** – Refers to a day that schools are closed because of unsafe winter weather. It can also refer to the day added to the school calendar that replaces the missed school time.

**Social Studies** – Includes the subjects of civics, geography, economics, history, and the skills of research, reasoning, and analysis that students should be able to use in their studies of these subjects.

**Social Promotion** – The practice of promoting students to the next grade whether or not they have accomplished the goals of their current grade.

**Special Education** – Instruction provided for students with disabilities according to the requirements of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). (See also Special Education Glossary section of this publication)

**Special Needs Students** – Students who require special instructional programs to reach their learning potential.

**Standardized Achievement Tests (SAT)** – A test widely used as a college entrance examination. Also known as the SAT Reasoning Test (formerly called the Scholastic Aptitude Test).

**Standardized Testing** – A test provided in the same format for all who take it.

**Standards** – Statements of what students should know and be able to demonstrate.

**Statute** – A piece of legislation, law.

**Story Elements** – The critical parts of a story include character, setting, plot, problem, solution.

**Student-centered Classroom** – Classroom in which students are encouraged to choose their own learning goals and projects. Also known as **Learner-centered Classroom**.

**Student Learning Plan (SLP)** – A formal education document to provide regular communication to parents about the student's continued academic progress and to assure that students are on track for high school graduation.

**Student-led Conference** – A variation of the parent-teacher conference in which the student prepares for the conference and leads it by showing the parents or family members samples of her work and discussing areas of strengths and weaknesses.

**Student Study Team** – A team of educators and school staff that comes together at the request of a classroom teacher, parent, or counselor to develop a support system to



meet the needs of a particular student. Also referred to as a **Multi-disciplinary Team** or **Student Intervention Team**.

**Student Teacher** – A teacher in training whose practice teaching is supervised by certificated staff or teacher.

**Substitute Teacher** – A certified teacher who teaches classes when the regular teacher is absent.

**Summary** – A condensed form of a particular piece of information.

**Summons** – An official call or notice to attend court at a specific date and time for a particular purpose.

**Superintendent** – The person hired by the School Board to manage the day-to-day business of the school district. The superintendent evaluates other district administrators and principals.

**Superintendent of Public Instruction** – The individual elected by the state's voters to lead the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

**Supplemental Education** – Additional instruction to basic education.

**Suspension** – A disciplinary action that removes a student from school for a definite period of time. Long-term suspensions last for more than 10 days; short term suspensions last fewer than 10 days.

**Syllabus** – An outline and description of a course.

---

---

**T**

---

---

**Teacher Certification** – Official state recognition that a person meets state standards and is qualified to be a teacher in Washington's public schools.

**Team Teaching** – An arrangement by which two or more teachers teach the same group of students.

**Tenure** – The legal provision that people in certain positions may be fired only for specific cause.

**Thematic Units** – A unit of study that uses a specific theme. Sometimes thematic units include all core subject areas.

**Think, Pair, Share** – A cooperative learning strategy where students first **think** about a topic, **pair** with another student to discuss their ideas, and then **share** with the whole class.

**Title I** – A federal program that provides funds to improve the academic achievement for educationally disadvantaged students who score below the 50th percentile on standardized tests.

**Total Physical Response (TPR)** – A language-learning approach that emphasizes the use of physical activity to increase vocabulary retention.

**Tracking** – A teaching practice that groups students to receive instruction according to their abilities.

**Transcript** – A copy of a student's permanent school record that shows courses taken, grades, graduation status, and attendance and often includes assessments such as PSAT, SAT, ACT. Also known as **Student Records**.

**Transfer of Learning** – The ability to take previously learned knowledge or skills and apply them to new situations.

**Translation** – The process of transcribing written information from one language into another language keeping the meaning and intent of the original information.

**Truancy Petition** – Paperwork submitted by a school district to juvenile court listing the number of school days missed by the student and the actions taken by the district to help the student return to school. This paperwork must be submitted before the student can be summoned to juvenile court for a hearing.

**Truant Students** – Youth ages 8 to 18 who do not attend school every day as required by Washington State law.

**Tutor** – Person who provides extra help for students with their schoolwork. A tutor may be another student or an adult.

---

---

## U

---

---

**Unit of Study** – A segment of instruction focused on a particular topic.

**University** – An institution of higher education and research, which grants academic degrees in a variety of subjects in both undergraduate and postgraduate education.

---

---

## V

---

---

---

---

## W

---

---

**Whole Language Approach** – A teaching method that emphasizes reading for meaning in context.

**Work-based Learning** – Supervised learning activities for students that occur in paid or unpaid workplace assignments, and for which course Credit is awarded. Also known as **Work-site Learning**.

**Work-study Program** – A Financial Aid program that provides jobs for students to earn part of their college related costs.

**Writers' Workshop** – A classroom practice that teaches students how to write through a short strategy lesson, an opportunity to write independently, and a discussion of how the writing lesson was used to change or improve their skills.

---

---

## X

---

---

---

---

## Y

---

---

**Year-round Schooling** – A school calendar that gives students shorter breaks throughout the year, instead of a traditional three-month summer break.

---

---

## Z

---

---

**Zero Tolerance** – School district policy that defines specific punishment for students who break certain rules.

**Notes:**