

ROADMAP FOR EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT IN THE WASHINGTON STATE COURTS

FINAL REPORT
July 1, 2017



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Board For Judicial Administration (BJA) Court Education Committee

July 1, 2017

I. BACKGROUND

Context

The Court Education Committee (CEC) of the Washington Courts Board for Judicial Administration (BJA) obtained funding from the State Justice Institute in the spring of 2016 to undertake a comprehensive Washington State Education Improvement project.

The purpose of the project has been to:

“Improve state court capacity for assuring effective high quality court education throughout Washington State,” by:

- completing an education needs assessment and establishing a vision for court education in Washington State;
- inventorying and assessing the desirability and feasibility of a variety of learning and education approaches;
- preparing a comprehensive 3-5 learning and education strategic agenda;
- establishing improved court education function governance and aligning education efforts among court committees, associations, and commissions;
- identifying and addressing court education function priorities; and
- preparing this Roadmap to Court Education Improvement in Washington State.

All of the activities undertaken by the project, as shown below, have been aligned closely with the purpose of the CEC and the scope of its efforts as described in the CEC charter as amended in September 2015.

Court Education Committee Purpose and Scope

Purpose: Improve the quality of justice in Washington by fostering excellence in the courts through effective education.

Scope: The CEC will promote sound adult education policy, develop education and curriculum standards for judicial officers and court personnel, and promote coordination in education programs for all court levels and associations.

Court Education Committee Composition

- Three BJA members with representation for each court level
- Education committee chair or designee from:
 - Appellate Courts
 - Superior Court Judges' Association (SCJA)
 - District and Municipal Court Judges' Association (DMCJA)
 - Annual Conference Education Committee Representative
 - Association of Washington Superior Court Administrators (AWSCA)
 - District and Municipal Court Management Association (DMCMA)
 - Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators (WAJCA)
 - Washington State Association of County Clerks (WSACC)
 - Washington State Law School Dean

BJA Established Court Education Committee Powers and Duties

- To plan, implement, coordinate, or approve BJA funded education and training for courts throughout the state.
- Assure adequate funding for education to meet the needs of courts throughout the state and all levels of the court.
- Collect and preserve curricula, and establish policy and standards for periodic review and update of curricula.
- Develop and promote instructional standards for education programs.
- Establish educational priorities.
- Implement and update Mandatory Continuing Judicial Education policies and standards.
- Develop working relationships with the Policy and Planning, Legislative, and Budget and Finance, and BJA standing committees.
- Develop and implement standard curriculum for the Judicial College.
- Provide education for judges and administrators that focuses on the development of leadership skills and provides tools to be used in the daily management and administration of their courts.

Contents Overview

This document provides a summary of the CEC’s recommendations for improving court education in the Washington Courts. In particular, in Section II we describe:

- the desired components for exemplary court education as gleaned from an analysis of experiences in the Washington Courts over the past few decades; and
- results of an assessment of adult education approaches used in Washington State and other state courts and the education profession generally.

Section III describes the five strategic priorities the CEC identified as needing to be addressed over the next five years to support the Washington Courts provide quality justice throughout the state. Section III also includes a description of a general improvement approach for addressing the five strategic improvement priorities. Finally, an “At-A-Glance” two-page summary of the project is included as Attachment A at the end of this document and an assessment of approaches to education is included as Attachment B.

II. EXPECTATIONS FOR EXEMPLARY COURT EDUCATION

Components of Exemplary Court Education

The CEC has identified five essential components for exemplary education in the Washington Courts:

- Accessible education for the entire court system.
- High quality learning for all judicial officers.
- High quality learning for all court and clerk personnel.
- Effective partnerships and support for court education.
- High quality sustainable infrastructure for court education.

With regard to accessible education for the entire court system, the CEC stresses that the keys to accessibility encompass both making education readily available using a variety of delivery formats and making education as relevant as possible to the particular content needs and learning styles of individuals. This includes:

- Promoting the use of a variety of in-person, on-the-job, and remote group and individualized-education approaches.
- Providing individualized comprehensive educational opportunities across the state and for all levels of court.
- Increasing the capacity to be more proactive in identifying and responding to education needs, such as the implications for courts, judges and court and clerk’s office personnel of emerging trends and recent legislation.

- Providing access to self-paced educational opportunities.

High quality learning for all judicial officers and high quality learning for all court and clerk personnel – the second and third component of exemplary education identified by the CEC – stress that the need to recognize that not only does subject matter content education need to change with changes in legislation, court interpretation and policy, but also that education needs evolve over the lives of judge, court personnel, and clerk careers. As one result, this component emphasizes:

- Providing all judicial officers and court personnel comprehensive training when they initially join a court.
- Providing on-going individualized professional development for judicial officers and career development programs for all court and clerk personnel.
- Providing on-going training on implications.
- Providing subject matter skills training.
- Providing mentors, on-line chat, on-line subject matter discussion and guidance, and other on-demand resources.
- Providing problem-solving, leadership, communications, court management, strategic planning and thinking, and other generic administrative skills, as well as on-the-bench focused skills education, to all judicial officers.
- Providing general leadership, and position and career targeted, court management education to all court and clerk personnel.

The CEC recognizes that a variety of trends – including declining or stagnant resources for court education in recent decades, the cost/benefits of providing education primarily using face-to-face approaches, and the evolution of technologies to support education – have resulted in a need to develop effective partnerships and support for court education. This includes:

- Coordinating education programs and curriculum across all member associations.
- Institutionalizing on-going productive working relationships with other BJA committees and groups.
- Formalizing on-going productive working relationships with executive and legislative branch groups.
- Formalizing instructional standards for effective education.
- Formalizing partnerships with other public and private groups to provide education.
- Establishing on-going partnerships with other state, regional, and national court education groups.

Finally, the need for high quality sustainable infrastructure for court education is essential to providing quality education in the Washington Courts. This includes numerous components such as:

- Dedicated resources.
- Predictable but flexible resources.
- Adequate resources to support all CEC functions, including policy formation, and program development, implementation, and evaluation.
- Resources to support participation in programs offered outside of the state such as at the National Judicial College.
- Resources for outreach to legislature and others about the critical need for court education.
- Access to technology, facilities and other hard infrastructure for supporting individualized and group education using a variety of approaches.

Assessment of Approaches to Education

The CEC assessed the pros and cons of the various approaches to court education used in Washington State and other courts across the country and identified what it would take to make each approach work successfully. In particular the CEC reviewed the following education approaches:

- Face-to-face;
- Blended-learning;
- Webinars;
- Online and phone based mentoring;
- National program participation (NJC, ICM and others);
- Listservs;
- Just in time updates and resources;
- Needs assessment and individualized planning;
- Management fire brigade; and
- JIS regional trainings.

Although the details of the assessment are presented in Attachment B, viewed collectively, the implications of the approaches for court education improvement include:

- no single approach alone can address, adequately, the numerous education needs of either individuals or the Washington Courts as an institution;
- every approach requires considerable supporting infrastructure, maintenance, and assertive management;
- every approach but particularly more expensive approaches -- such as face-to-face and blended learning focused approaches -- need to be carefully aligned, coordinated, and sequenced across associations and commissions;
- the many positive socializing and networking opportunities that accompany conferences and other face-to-face gatherings that include education programs, also need to be incorporated into other training approaches; and

- other opportunities for socialization and networking opportunities, independent from education programs, need to be developed.

III. IMPROVEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

Strategic Priorities

The CEC has identified five strategic priorities for improving Washington Court education over the next few years. Taken together the five priorities take into account: (1) the purpose of the CEC, (2) the challenges most likely to confront the courts over the next decade, (3) the implications of approaches on education policy and practice, (4) best education practices; (5) the components of exemplary education, and (6) likely changes in the composition of the Washington Court workforce over the next decade.

The five strategic priorities are to:

- Establish and maintain sufficient resources dedicated to Court education.
- Address the current and expected turnover in the Washington State Courts workforce over the next five years.
- Address aspects of the culture of the Washington Courts that emphasizes using conferences as the primary forum for education.
- Build local, regional, state, and national partnerships with court, government, and private sector education providers.
- Clarify the role of the CEC and align that role with judge, court administration, clerk associations, and Washington State Supreme Court Commissions and other education providers.

General Improvement Approach

The CEC membership believes that institutionalizing the CEC as the hub of a network of collaborative organizations who collectively must provide education would provide the best opportunity to: (1) fulfill the BJA mandated purpose, powers, and duties of the CEC, and (2) address the five strategic priorities identified above. The primary role of the CEC as the hub of this collaborative should focus on:

- leading education efforts in the Washington State Courts by establishing the strategic direction for court education, and monitoring and reporting performance;
- coordinating the work of a network of collaborative education partners; and
- advocating for court education and generating support for effective education funding and service provision.

Partners in the network should not only include all of the Associations and groups with representatives serving of the CEC but also commissions, tribal consortiums, and local, regional and national court education service providers.

The role of the education collaborative partners should include collectively:

- identifying education needs not only for the membership of a particular association or group but for the courts generally;
- providing education, including offering education using a variety of modes;
- promoting sharing of education opportunities and resources across organizations;
- advocating for funding of education in the courts generally in addition to funding for a particular organization; and
- advocating for the role of the CEC as the leader and spokesperson of the collaborative court education network.

2017 –2018 Priority Implementation Projects

The CEC will focus on completing the following three priority projects to implement its general improvement approach over the next two years:

- Demonstrate A Coordinated Approach For Planning and Providing Multi-Association/Commission Court Education For 2018-2019;
- Clarify the CEC Role as the Coordinator of a Multi-Partner Washington State Court Education Collaborative Network; and
- Establish a Multi-Functional CEC/Court Education Collaborative Website.

The implementations activities and time frame and staffing for each activity are presented in Action Plans 1 – 3 below.

2017 – 2018 Action Plan 1: Demonstrate A Coordinated Approach For Planning and Providing Multi-Association/Commission Court Education For 2018-2019.

<p><u>Purpose:</u> Demonstrate the CEC’s role of coordinating a court education network using existing resources and education opportunities in 2018-2019.</p>	<p><u>Time-Frame and Staffing:</u></p>
<p><u>Implementation Activities:</u></p>	
<p>1. Prepare a final 2018 – 2019 Court Education Program Work-Plan that specifies topics, methods, and faculty.</p>	<p>CEC by January 2018.</p>
<p>2. Conduct a needs assessment and ID ways the CEC can demonstrate leadership, coordination, and advocacy roles throughout project.</p>	<p>CEC, Commissions, and Associations by June 2018.</p>
<p>3. Prepare a comprehensive calendar of all education events and topics for 2018-2019.</p>	<p>CEC by January 2018.</p>
<p>4. ID common core competencies, curriculum topics, and opportunities for program coordination across all Associations and Commissions.</p>	<p>CEC, Commissions, and Associations by June 2018.</p>
<p>5. ID opportunities for program development, train-the-trainer sessions and resource sharing across Associations and Commissions for each of the education approaches outlined in the Education Approaches Assessment.</p>	<p>CEC, Commissions, and Associations by June 2018.</p>
<p>6. Prepare a summary of Educational Collaborative Network collective opportunities.</p>	<p>CEC, Commissions, and Associations by June 2018.</p>
<p>7. Hold an education summit with Association, Commission, and court education planning teams to review results of Tasks 1-6 and collectively prepare a Master program agenda.</p>	<p>CEC, Commissions, and Associations in Fall 2018.</p>

2017 – 2018 Action Plan 2: Clarify the CEC Role as the Coordinator of a Multi-Partner Washington State Court Education Collaborative Network.

<p><u>Purpose:</u> Operationalize the multi-organizational court education network and establish the role of the CEC as network coordinator.</p> <p><u>Implementation Activities:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ID ways the CEC can demonstrate leadership, coordination, and advocacy roles throughout project. 2. Present to BJA CEC <u>Roadmap For Education</u>, including goals for exemplary court education, approaches assessment, strategic priorities, network strategy, and priority projects. 3. Present to Associations and Commissions CEC <u>Roadmap For Education</u>. 4. Present to Supreme Court and AOC personnel CEC <u>Roadmap For Education</u> results. 5. Present to legislative and executive branch representatives CEC <u>Roadmap For Education</u> results. 6. Present to national court education groups and associations, such as NACM, National Judicial College, CEC Education <u>Roadmap For Education</u>. 7. Present to community and public representatives CEC <u>Roadmap For Education</u> Results. 8. Establish CEC new member orientation program with supporting materials. 	<p><u>Time-Frame and Staffing:</u></p> <p>CEC on-going.</p> <p>Judge Jasprica in September 2017.</p> <p>Commission and Association CEC representatives by December 2017.</p> <p>CEC chairs and AOC representatives by December 2017.</p> <p>CEC members, on-going.</p> <p>CEC members, on-going.</p> <p>CEC by January 2018.</p>
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2017 – 2018 Action Plan 3: Establish a Multi-Functional CEC/Court Education Collaborative Website

<p><u>Purpose:</u> Identify the form, contents, and processes of a website. Develop a detailed implementation plan for establishing these essential tools for supporting court education.</p> <p><u>Implementation Activities:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ID ways the CEC can demonstrate leadership, coordination, and advocacy roles throughout project. 2. ID improvements that could be made in existing AOC website to better promote role of CEC and support court education. 3. ID desired website functionality, design, and types of contents. 4. Survey Associations and Commissions about desired website contents, functions, and design. 5. Scope-out the costs and effort required to implement comprehensive website. 	<p><u>Time-Frame and Staffing:</u></p> <p>CEC/AOC subcommittee, on-going.</p> <p>CEC/AOC subcommittee by January 2018.</p> <p>CEC/AOC subcommittee by June 2018.</p> <p>CEC/AOC subcommittee by June 2018.</p> <p>CEC/AOC subcommittee by January 2018.</p>
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Attachment A: The BJA CEC Education Project At-A-Glance
Attachment B: Education Approaches Assessment Summary