# **Performance-based Pathway Tools and Resources**

**Performance-based Pathway Description:**

This packet contains tools and resources to support the implementation of the **Performance-based Graduation Pathway** in Washington schools. In order to graduate from high school, students in Washington State must complete 1) a High School and Beyond Plan, 2) the credit and subject area requirements, and 3) a graduation pathway option ([see linked graphic](https://www.sbe.wa.gov/our-work/high-school-diploma)), along with any other local requirements. The graduation pathway options provide students multiple ways to show readiness for their individual education and career goals. The pathway a student completes must align with the student’s postsecondary goals as described in their High School and Beyond Plan. School districts decide which pathways to offer, and are encouraged to offer as many options as possible.

The **Performance-based Pathway** allows students to show what they know and can do in real-world, hands-on ways that align with their individual goals for life after high school. This student-centered pathway is intended to be customizable, with the aim of being relevant and engaging to the student. There is a lot of flexibility as the learning experience:

* May take a variety of forms;
  + Examples: project, practicum, work-related experience, community service, cultural activity
* May result in a variety of student work that can be evaluated
  + Examples: performance, presentation, portfolio, report, film, exhibit
* May, or may not, be done as part of a class where the student also earns credit

The performance-based pathway is combinable with other ELA and math pathway options, meaning the student can do one pathway in ELA and another pathway in math. For example, a student could pass the state assessment in ELA and then focus their performance-based pathway in math.

To meet the graduation pathway requirement, the learning experience must:

* Provide evidence that the student meets or exceeds state learning standards in English language arts (ELA) and/or mathematics (depending on if the student plans to or needs to meet their pathway in both subjects, or in only one)
* Align with the student’s High School and Beyond Plan goals
* Meet state requirements ([WAC 180-51-230 (7)(f))](https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=180-51-230) regarding the safety and quality of the learning experience and the assessment criteria for determining the student has demonstrated the learning standards

Local Policy

School districts must adopt a local policy that meets state requirements before offering the performance-based pathway option. The [Washington State School Directors’ Association](https://www.wssda.org/) has developed a model policy and procedure for the performance-based pathway (2415 and 2415P) that districts can locally customize then adopt.

Most school districts that are interested in offering this pathway should be able to offer it beginning with the Class of 2025. Some districts that have already laid groundwork may be able to begin with the Class of 2024. For example, districts that are already doing mastery-based learning and districts that have a local culminating project requirement may be able to develop this new pathway faster.

Tools and Resources

This packet contains guidance and resources that educators can use to help students design their projects, to help students manage their work, and to guide educators in evaluating the students’ work. The resources provided are:

1. **Focus Standards Lists:** These documents explain which standards from the Washington State Standards have been selected as focus standards for Math or ELA Performance-based Graduation Pathway projects. The lists were vetted and feedback provided by educators from across the state, and finalized by staff from the State Board of Education and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
2. **Rubrics**: These sets of scoring criteria provide clear guidance to educators about how to evaluate students’ final products and determine whether the student has successfully completed the pathway. The rubrics were vetted and feedback provided by educators from across the state, and they were revised and finalized by staff from the State Board of Education and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
3. **Task Models:** The task models outline the required components that must be included in each student’s work, regardless of how they design their project. These documents also provide examples of what student projects could look like and checklists that students can use to keep track of their progress as they work on the various components of their project.
4. **Student Checklists:** These simple checklists will help students manage their projects and ensure that they have completed all the requirements.

Project Support Strategies:

Schools may design a variety of ways to support students in crafting their projects, engaging in research and creation, getting feedback, revising, and polishing final products. Some schools may design elective or core classes in which students work on Graduation Pathways; other schools may bring in community volunteers to mentor students in their Pathway projects; some schools may use enrichment blocks or Advisory classes to support this work; other schools may design other creative approaches. No matter how the school chooses to provide student support, these steps will probably be helpful:

1. The student works with a mentor or mentors to design their project in alignment with their own High School and Beyond Plan.
2. The student and mentor/s establish a timeline with specified project benchmarks, check-ins, and opportunities to get feedback
3. The student works on their project, receiving feedback and revising along the way. During this process, both the students and the mentors use the Graduation pathway rubric/s to self-assess or give feedback.
4. The student turns in a final product and is evaluated using the ELA and/or Math Graduation Pathway Rubric. The final product must include a short reflection (written, oral or recorded) about how this project connects with the student’s High School and Beyond Plan, including a self-evaluation of the skills and learning that were gained.
5. We estimate that this process would take approximately a semester to complete.